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Youth Culture and Migration Heritage in Western Sydney

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Photos: Tom Cliff

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The Migration Heritage Centre leads and supports projects ranging from the identification and preservation of the material heritage of migration, to providing a voice in public discussion about the role and value of cultural diversity in the community.

The MHC is an initiative of the NSW Government through a partnership of the Community Relations Commission, Heritage Office, Ministry for the Arts, Tourism NSW and Premier's Department. www.migrationheritage.nsw.gov.au

Executive Summary

This report is the first in-depth exploration of identity and popular culture among Middle Eastern and Asian youth. It documents preliminary research findings on the contribution of Middle Eastern and Asian youth to Sydney's cultural life and migration heritage. While young people from these communities, the largest migrant communities in NSW, are often negatively portrayed, this research has focused on their social practices of cultural invention, opening up new and creative means of mobilising cultural difference.

These young people's cultural negotiations between migrant family background and the wider society *require real engagement with difference and provide rich resources for invigorating the multicultural fabric of the nation*. Their repertoire of cultural skills and their involvement in different cultural worlds are often viewed as evidence of not 'belonging' to the mainstream or dominant culture. However, the results of our research reveal that the 'in-betweenness' of these young people often enables them to move easily between different social and cultural groupings, embracing cultural diversity as inherent and integral to their everyday experience, that is, 'normal' to urban life.

In this report, we document the changing nature of friendship networks and family relations, the particular meanings and uses of different languages and expressions, and the patterns of consumption of Middle Eastern and Asian youth. In these everyday activities these young people contribute to a changing migration heritage and are redefining what it means to be Australian.

Main Trends

- Young people of Middle Eastern and Asian backgrounds often express *a sense of 'being in-between'* as they negotiate life between their cultural backgrounds, friends and the wider Australian society.
- Rather than simply harking back to homeland traditions, ritual and ceremony, memory and ancestry, migrant youth *actively create* new linkages, attachments and affinities between and across different cultures.
- The frequent sense of cultural ambiguity felt by these young people has led to *new means of sharing, adapting and fusing spaces, languages and (life)styles* in their quest for their own modes of cultural expression and social belonging.
- These young people's strongest links to their cultural backgrounds are found in *family relationships*, which ironically are also at times a source of conflict and tension. There is a distinct *lack of role models for migrant youth*, and when one is nominated it is usually a member of the immediate family (mum, dad, or older sibling).
- There is a *strong sense of kinship and belonging to their cultural background when they feel that it is threatened* (for example, maligned in public debates) or when they are in situations where they feel or are made to feel 'alien'.
- Australian culture is often perceived in a very stereotypical manner: light hair, blue eyes, surfies, laid back, barbecues, beer drinking, and so on. Nevertheless, most youth in this study strongly identify with *being Australian*, particularly on a civic level (being an Australian citizen, obeying local laws, taking an interest in what happens here).
- *Friendship networks* are an important source of belonging and security because they enable the *sharing of common understandings of migrant experiences*.
- Other factors such as religion, gender and being from western Sydney are also fundamental parts of these young people's identity. *Being from western Sydney*, in particular, is at times appropriated as a marker of pride rather than negation.
- These young people can be *both very localised and highly mobile*—often travelling from outer suburbs to the city to take part in particular activities.
- Young people *claim non-designated spaces such as shopping centres, clubs, car parks and railway stations for their social activities*. These spaces are marked out as particular territories for gatherings with friends, relatives and acquaintances.
- Popular culture such as fashion, music and leisure activities at these sites reveal a *rich variety of influences and borrowings* ranging from black American street culture (language and dress) to the more subtle impact of parental control, and global and local mainstream youth cultures.
- This creative appropriation of spaces and styles signifies a social inventiveness *generating new forms of popular culture which are rapidly being incorporated into the city landscape*. In this way these young people, who are often politically and economically disadvantaged, actively disrupt the available mainstream youth culture. In doing so they, whether consciously or not, assert new ideas, meanings and practices of culture.
- In short, rather than looking backwards for cultural definition, Middle Eastern and Asian youth contribute to *an emergent and evolving migration heritage*, though always with significant cultural borrowings and evocations. This is 'living' migration heritage, central to the making of a vibrant, culturally diverse Australia in the twenty-first century.

While these trends are strongly apparent in the research, it is important to also bear in mind restraining factors. The operation of power relations remains significant, for example in the social hierarchies at play in the urban landscape and in the nuances of social control which deem youth culture somehow of less worth than mainstream artistic production.

This study provides a new impetus for the social and political inclusion of migrant youth in wider community processes. Young people are drawn more to cultural mixing and amalgamation, circulating as they do in multicultural situations every day. As the flow between cultures, languages and looks may be accompanied by a sense of discrimination, alienation and confusion, most Middle Eastern and Asian youth also demonstrate strong strategic attachments to identity. They are both proud of their migrant backgrounds *and* able to move between different cultural spheres. This suggests that these young people may be the first generation to move away from explicitly ethnically defined cultural identities, focusing on other categories such as region, occupation or gender to define their place in Australian society.

We advocate the participation of culturally diverse youth in the daily processes of local government, policing, welfare, education and within cultural institutions such as the media and arts organisations. Such widespread collaborative participation would be an active mechanism for inter-cultural and inter-generational communication, and would provide government and organisations with a broader knowledge and understanding of the changing everyday experiences of being young in culturally diverse Australia today. This form of partnership is likely to be of substantial benefit for young people themselves as well as the wider community.

The most important outcome for encouraging cross-cultural collaboration between migrant youth and those in positions of influence would be to assist in rupturing social segregation and in stimulating practical awareness and appreciation of cultural difference and diversity.

This study has not focused on the social problems associated with youth—drugs, crime, unemployment or racism. These issues have too often become the exclusive focus of research, not only because they are crucially important aspects of the lives of many young people, but also as a result of media interest in the sensational, 'newsworthy' aspects of young people's transgressive behaviour. GENERATE is conscious of these issues, but pays more attention to the everyday experiences, practices and attitudes of ordinary young people.

This report provides only a brief glimpse of the popular culture of Middle Eastern and Asian youth and the experience of being young and of migrant background in western Sydney. For some, the movement between cultures and between family, friends and the wider society and mainstream institutions such as school and the media is more stressful than for others. There are institutional constraints, issues of responsibility and structural influences. Cultures are not homogeneous and static. Diversity, change and even conflict should not be considered illegitimate (Vasta 1994: 23). Cultural multiplicity is not simple fluidity (Amit-Talai 1995: 229). We hope that this report will be a series of guideposts for the exploration of this multiplicity which is our contemporary heritage. We hope that it will be a first step in recognising the *generative* contribution of migrant youth to changing notions of Australian culture and the place of migration heritage in its formation. There are many possibilities.

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Generate

These young people have grown up within the discourse of multiculturalism

GENERATE is a research, training and exhibition project. It is a collaboration between the Migration Heritage Centre (NSW State Government) and the Institute for Cultural Research (University of Western Sydney), in association with the Powerhouse Museum and with the active involvement of young people from western Sydney.

Initially conceived by Ien Ang and Mandy Thomas from the University of Western Sydney and Bruce Robinson from the Migration Heritage Centre in the NSW State Government's Premier's Department, the Project began in late 2000, and has since developed a profile of contributing to both youth and migration studies. GENERATE was intended firstly to realise the contemporary nature of migration heritage, and secondly, to highlight the positive contribution that young people from migrant backgrounds make to the creation of that heritage, and to a dynamic Sydney and Australian culture.

The Project has three main phases: firstly, research which underpins the entire project; secondly, the development of a creative team that will, through a process of mentoring, work with other young people to develop material for a major public exhibition; and lastly, the exhibition itself, which, like youth culture, will have its own dynamic and innovative form. It will provide an opportunity for young people to be able to translate the codes of their culture to a wider audience.

From February to July 2001, a team of six researchers, all from second generation Asian, Middle Eastern and Islander backgrounds, began interviewing young people in western Sydney. The participants are all second generation, Australian born children of overseas born parents, or those who came to Australia at a very young age. The focus has been primarily on Middle Eastern and Asian youth, the most recently arrived migrant communities whose socioeconomic and cultural experiences are different from the young people from more established migrant communities in Sydney. These young people have grown up within the discourse of multiculturalism (a term which often came up as they grappled with the question of what is Australian culture). They are also the most negatively portrayed group in the media and it is an express hope that these generalised stereotypes and perceptions can be eased by the research that has come from the GENERATE project.

The research questions focused on friendship groups, leisure activities, consumption patterns, including consumption of media, the use of public spaces and attitudes towards culture and identity. Over 50 in-depth interviews were carried out and this data was added to by material from focus groups and from activities such as shopping days, the Big Night Out and the researchers' own ethnographic observations and descriptions of particular research sites in Sydney. Through this process the project hopes to provide an opportunity for a wider understanding of the complexity and diversity of young migrant identities and the contribution they make to Australian heritage.

GENERATE maintains a participatory ethos with young people actively involved as researchers, as members of the advisory committee, and ultimately as producers of material for the exhibition and events held throughout the life of the project (2001–2002). Drafts of this report were also circulated to the youth researchers for further comment and clarification before publication.

It should be noted that the methodology is qualitative in nature. That is, we can't generalise the results to the entire youth population of Sydney. The experiences of these few do not stand in for the experiences of the many. But from the wealth of material that has been generated during the research phase, particular themes relating to migration heritage began to stand out. These frames of reference, including family (who pass on 'values' and points of continuity such as language), friends, and locality (being a 'Westie') are cited as integral constituents of young peoples' identity and have therefore become the focus of the following report.

BEGINNINGS

Beginnings

Every day in Sydney's backyard, young people from migrant backgrounds are generating new forms of cultural expression: in their music, fashion, cars, computers, media consumption and social lives, everything from getting dressed and 'making-up' for a night on the town, to driving around and just hanging out. This is *living* migration heritage. Rather than an ephemeral phenomenon, traces will remain for the next generation to take and appropriate as their own, building on it to reflect new surroundings, and new social settings.

This scenario of dynamic cultural fusion not only reflects these young people's sense of place in Sydney and Australian society but can also tell us something about how the idea of Australian identity and culture is changing. With each generation, changes take place in the cultural, political and economic environments through which young people pass. For example, contemporary Middle Eastern and Asian youth can access global youth culture, diasporic connections with their parents' 'homeland', and mainstream Australian culture as it is interpreted by their peers, in their schools, and in the local communities they grow up in, including that diverse region known as western Sydney.

At the same time young people's activities are affected by the socioeconomic circumstances of their families and the wider urban environment. Economic disadvantage may restrict the possibilities for their involvement in many forms of conspicuous youth culture, or may mean that they inventively produce new cultural forms. Finding an outlet for cultural expression and activities that we enjoy, or finding representations of ourselves that we can relate to, is an impulsive human need, and part of how we define those spaces where we are most comfortable. And these comfort zones can be multiple and diverse.

GENERATE research would question whether there really is such a thing as a 'typical experience' for young people. Youth culture is actually marked by diversity: whether the flamboyant street machine or the less audible but no less creative underground 'zine', from independent punk rock to diasporic fusions of Latin and Arab music. This diversity is reflected in young people's responses in this study: for every answer to a question there was always an alternative perspective. But what is apparent in most of the stories we have gathered is the desire of young people to make their mark in an independent and distinctive way, at the same time as they wish to foster the grounds of belonging to a social group or to several social domains.

The research in this report is focused upon the popular culture of young people. Popular culture is the stuff of everyday life: language, food, fashion, media texts, how we move around, how we work, what we do in our leisure time. What we consume or create in popular culture is also reflective, if not part of, the conscious construction of our identity (Willis 1990, Friedman 1994). Subculture groups are a good example: think of the 'goth' community in inner Sydney, the surfing community in the eastern suburbs. Dress, leisure activities, music, even the places they hang out, all demarcate that particular subculture. And any one person can occupy overlapping spaces (that is, you might wear a suit and work in the CBD during the day, and be a punk rocker at night). Youth styles are 'significant boundary markers between groups' (Clarke 1983, cited in Wulff 1995b: 71). Transnational, national, regional and even local (several youth workers commented on the microcosm of their localities; how they do things in Parramatta may not be how they do things in Blacktown or Liverpool) are all significant influences with their own contributions to the construction of subcultures and the identity of young people, including those from migrant backgrounds. More broadly, popular culture provides the repertoire of representations that underpin a culture, for example, the dominant representations of Australian culture might include 'the bronzed Aussie' or 'the Man from Snowy River'. But these images are being challenged and new ones being formed.

It is ironic that heritage in many ways connotes tradition, something that is durable but fixed in the past. Popular culture on the other hand is by its nature more transitory, and youth culture even more so. In what sense then is youth culture meaningful to the formation of our heritage? In what sense is cruising in a street machine, or modifying a computer case, or wearing a particular brand name, or hairstyle, or listening to particular music, meaningful to the formation of Australia's migration heritage and subsequently, Australian culture and identity?

Youth culture is very aural and visual, connected to display and performance. It radiates an image of how a young person wants to be seen and where, or with which 'group', they belong. It's also a way of standing out, of displaying independence. But most of all, youth culture encompasses the universal tendency to create community. Even in the groups of young people observed in shopping malls, while there will be individual touches to mark out difference, certain brand names and hair styles will dominate. The predominant impulse, which impacts heavily on young people's production and use of popular culture, is 'belonging'.

BELONGING

Belonging

Youth culture is perhaps multicultural in the truest sense of the word. Young people appear more culturally competent to operate most efficiently in this city. They handle multiple cultural frameworks (Amit-Talai 1995: 228) every day. They are translating not just for their parents (and in some cases not just language but also the social, political and organisational structures of mainstream Australian society) but for themselves as they move between different cultural spaces (filtering messages from parents, peers, extended family, teachers, youth workers, media, institutions of authority such as police and local councils). Here, migration heritage is about how the different social worlds of young people from different backgrounds overlap, intermesh or remain separate. This heritage is a negotiation between different realms of belonging.

Youth demonstrate a flexibility in their everyday lives to deal with the multiple cultural spaces they have to operate in. On several occasions in this and other contemporary studies (see Noble et al.1999) there are examples where for young people it is no contradiction to come from one cultural background but describe themselves as another when they are with friends. Ethnicity becomes a convenient label demarcating networks of friends rather than a particular cultural group.

Nor is it a contradiction to feel both strongly connected to their parents' heritage and to their understanding of 'Australian' culture; of being both very strongly attached to their roots as well as very Australian. This is the genesis of the expression of contemporary migration heritage.

When we're together as a family I feel very Filipino because its something Filipinos are very proud of, their family bonds .... I'm Australian because I take an interest in the running of Australia, I'm concerned with the issues that affect the people in Australia, that's what makes me Australian. I listen to Australian music, I watch Australian movies, the Olympics, so I would say I am part of that culture.
Marielle, 16 years old, female, Filipino background

Marielle's comments point to the institution that most young people stated was an important source of values and belonging. The family was the frame of reference from which most took their bearings, and more often than not the source of their role models. But the family was also a point of tension.

family

FAMILY AND BELONGING

By far the majority of young people that took part in this study, rather than expressing a deep attachment to a 'homeland' per se, felt a sense of closeness and continuity of traditions in the connections to their family, where shared meanings created a sense of comfort.

Q: Tell me about when you most identify with your cultural background.
I guess it would be with family and friends. Like my family and friends, I'm not saying all Turkish is the same, but my family are really, really close. We get together. There's people you've known all your life that are just as close as a brother or sister. We have dinner, we go to dinner, we go out to movies together, we go to peoples' houses.
22 year old Enver, male, Turkish background.

This feeling of belonging was extended to wider family and community ceremonies such as festivals, weddings, and other shared traditions.

Q: Are there moments when you feel very strongly Turkish?
Yes, probably when I'm around the people whether it be at a wedding or a festival, it always brings out your Turkish side and makes you proud of who you are. I guess it's the shared values and beliefs in marriage and culture and everything else that makes you Turkish.
20 year old Emine, female, Turkish background.

The relationship that young people have to their parents' country of origin is almost always described and experienced through family relationships. In this way, maintaining a migrant cultural identity is expressed through getting family together, taking care of family members and sharing social occasions.

Q: How would you describe your own cultural background?
People who are of a Lebanese background are very proud people. I'm really proud of my culture and this pride, it was put on by the people around me by the Lebanese background. Ever since I was born 'Yeah you're Lebanese, you should be proud of it' and that's what I am. It's very family orientated. I think it's very more family orientated than most cultures.
19 year old Rana, female, Lebanese background.

Mostly we go to Lebanese weddings and parties and I do feel comfortable there because we are all connected to each other, we are all the same, we think the same.
17 year old Eman, female, Lebanese background

Religion, at times, connected them deeply to their parents' cultural background. It is an element of everyday life that clearly defined behaviour which can be both constraining and difficult, something to work at, or provide a sense of security.

I'm Catholic. And it's part of my identity because it shapes my morals, the way I live my life. I've got certain beliefs, like pre-marital sex and things like that, that definitely shapes the way I see things, do things and analyse things.
Marielle, 16 years old, Filipino background

I'm Muslim so I don't steal (...) and I'm trying to live life as a good Muslim but it's hard and I'm working on it.
Mustafa, 20 years old, Lebanese background

On the other hand, family and familial ties may also be perceived as a liability and a factor that creates new stresses for young people, providing a negative sense of value in their background. For example Linda, below, describes her sense of being Vietnamese as related to a notion of constraint.

Q: Are there moments when you feel strongly Vietnamese?
Not really, no. Wait, hang on, except when I have to go out, in terms of social life and lifestyle it's a lot more strict and there's a lot more rules. I've been brought up that way. Because my parents always told me about how it was so rough for them coming over to Australia, and I get the lecture all the time about how I have to try really hard so I don't get stuck in factory work and things like that.
18 year old Linda, Vietnamese background

There is a dynamic tension between release and restraint that affects every young person, regardless of their cultural background. Release from 'tradition', and the restraints of former social mores is made available by changes in the conditions of possibility. There are therefore inevitable tensions between the individual and the collective, between young people who want to adopt values and a lifestyle that is different from their family's expectations. Because of social change, parent culture is not always useful as a tool for survival for the younger generation who must then develop their own resources (Wulff 1995a: 9).

Some interviewees felt Anglo-Australians were 'lucky' as they didn't have to juggle the demands of their parents with the expectations of their peers. But this may also represent the misconceptions about relationships in the Anglo community that was at times articulated by young people who had limited contact with Anglo youth.

Both the difficulties and the pleasures of families are often centred on the way in which many migrant families value dependence upon parents and older relatives. The conflicts most frequently revolved around personal freedoms, particularly for young women. For young men the conflicts more commonly rose in relation to their careers, and the way they spent their time and money. 'Freedom' was something longed for by several young women in particular, suggesting that a sense of restraint often governed their home lives.

The freedom, the freedom. To be able to live my own life and to be able to go out when I like. It's something I yearn for, honestly.
Marielle, 16 years old, Filipino background

The pressure to conform to expected gender roles was often felt more intensely by young women than young men. In this way young women were more likely to be thought of as 'cultural custodians', that is, maintaining traditions (Vasta 1994: 23). This was reflected mostly in controls on their leisure time away from home and their relationship to young men.

Girls can't have boyfriends and you're not supposed to do things till your married, you can't do things because other Turkish people are going to see you and it doesn't look good. (...) I do have some of the traditions in me but being so strict, like my parents aren't that strict, but being so strict can be really frustrating. *(On following her parents' views?)* Some things I do but some things I don't like being so strict on boyfriends. I think in these days and especially in Australia you should let your children go out with someone. If you don't go out with them, how are you supposed to know 'yes this the right person for me' or know that he is not or she isn't? So you should be able to go out and experience life yourself. Whereas their parents were like 'Oh this is what you have to do' and they have always agreed to it but I think it's changed now. You don't have to do everything your parents say.
21 year old Refika, female, Turkish background

Also in terms of gender differences, young women tended to have more private and personal aspects to their cultural expression, whereas young men were more public in their display, particularly for young men from Middle Eastern backgrounds. This is not to say that young women and Asian groups are not displaying their cultural interests and sensibilities, but the focus on physical display by many young Middle Eastern men makes them more visible.

It is understandable at times that people feel a sense of anxiety when confronted with this. While young people from many different backgrounds are out and about clubbing, performing karaoke, having picnics at beaches and parks, cyber-gaming and occupying public spaces for simple practices such as shopping or meeting friends in cafes, our attention is drawn more to larger groups and to those who are noisier and more physically demonstrative. Young men rarely

...young women tended to have more private and personal aspects to their cultural expression

appear vulnerable, carrying themselves with control and power. For this reason they in particular are often the focus of intense policing. Yet while they may be seen as threatening, their activity in public space is an attempt at subverting their usual position of marginalisation (by being not only young, but young and from a non-Anglo background). They deliberately mark out their 'difference' and loudly demonstrate it for all to see (see Collins et al. 2000: 168). The process of this revalorisation is at the heart of much of the conflict between young people, the community and authorities as they are all forced to negotiate urban space.

Life goals was another area where gender differences were apparent. A significant number of the young women saw being married as an important role in their future.

I cook a mean pasta (laughs) and I help my mum when she cooks so when I get married I'll know how to cook all the Lebo food.
19 year old Adele, Lebanese background

Adele's comments reflect an importance given to continuity in traditions of food and rituals of the kitchen—already a gendered space—involving mothers passing on knowledge to their daughters, embedded in practices of marriage and socially acceptable roles for women and men.

Some young women focussed their leisure activities around their boyfriends, and in some cases this encouraged a loss of interest in education and career.

Q: Are you in a regular group of friends?
Before when I was in high school, yes I was, but ever since I started dating my boyfriend and I stopped attending high school, the only person I hang around with is him.
17 year old Shanly, female, Filipino and Chinese background

Differences with parents were more easily articulated than similarities. Very often parents were viewed as strict, cautious, protective and conservative.

Q: How would you describe your own cultural background?
Strict. Because our ancestors, mum and dad, came from overseas to a strange land and did not know this culture so they were very cautious of us. *(On the 'cautious')* As in you're not allowed to walk around alone when you were young, not allowed to go to the front yard when you were young, not allowed to hang out too late. (*On whether this has changed*) It has because we actually loosened them up. We stood our ground and stayed out late, adapted to the Australian culture.
19 year old, John, male, Turkish background

There are different points of view. Like sleeping over at people's houses. My sister says, 'Oh, can I sleep over at this person's house?' and its a guy but a whole lot of people are going, but that's OK in Australia, but in the Philippines it's I don't know, weird or something. And my parents say 'What, why? No, you are not allowed' and she goes 'Why? Its not fair, everyone else is doing it', 'It doesn't mean you have to', 'Oh its not fair' and she storms off to her room.
19 year old Marjay, male, Filipino background

Sometimes the difference between young people and their parents was seen in terms of education and opportunity rather than values.

Q: How do you see yourself as different from your parents? How are you the same?
Easily. Cause my mum got married at 20 and had kids. She wasn't educated, her friends were her brothers and sisters, you know stuff like that makes us two, completely different. (*On values*) That has a lot to do with our upbringing as well. The world revolves around the house and the kids.
20 year old Safiye, female, Turkish background

Young people generally felt more open-minded and flexible than their parents. This was also reflected in their choice for personal relationships. In the same way that many young people had diverse friendship groups, so too were many open to the possibility of having long term relationships with people from other backgrounds. But while many young people didn't feel it was an issue, others felt that taking a partner from the same cultural background would please their parents and would also be easier in terms of sharing a life with someone with shared understandings. This supports other studies (see Wulff 1995b: 69), which found that 'best friends' and marriages tended to not be ethnically mixed, that is, the closest relationships maintained cultural boundaries. However, the cultural networks of friendship in this study were not always the same (as shown in the following section), and very often best friends came from very different backgrounds.

I want my boyfriend to be Muslim. Lebanese Muslim. Because if we get serious, and he wants to come ask for my hand (get married) my parents aren't gonna accept a Christian guy.
17 year old Eman, female, Lebanese background

I'd rather him to be brought up just like me because that way I can understand him and he can understand me.
15 year old, Manaya, female, Lebanese background

(On her parents) We have different views as well, like marriage. They say to me I've got to marry someone Turkish whereas I feel that that's ridiculous because they moved here and we were born here and we were brought up in a multicultural country where the percentage of Turkish people is 0.01. So I think that it's really unreasonable for them to expect me to marry someone Turkish. But I would prefer to marry someone Turkish. (*On why she would prefer this*) Easier. Same religion, same background, you speak the same second language, your parents, your family will get along.
20 year old Guliz, female, Turkish background

Guliz expresses the contradiction of thinking it's 'ridiculous' but 'preferring' it anyway. Despite these tensions, it is apparent that the family is a central 'place' for developing and adapting a sense of belonging, and directs much of the way in which individual young people relate to wider society. This is seen in one of the striking findings of the study: a distinct lack of role models for these young people.

ROLE MODELS

Where role models were nominated they were usually a family member—mum, dad or an older brother or sister. The formation of values in particular still strongly occurred within the family.

Q: Who are your role models?
Family. I'd probably look to family for morals, role model. (*On why*) Truthfully? I reckon my family kicks butt! My family is the best, man. My family is really good. I look at my other friends and their family and like their mum's divorced or 'this is my step sister'. I don't know like different stuff like that and then I think: 'Oh, wow. My mum and dad have been together for like 30 years and my sister's married and they have a kid and we all keep in contact and (are) close'.
20 year old Guliz, female, Turkish background

Sometimes, it was apparent that particular individuals had a profound effect upon some of those interviewed. In the following case, Jamal believed his life had changed completely through the influence of his girlfriend.

My girl is my role model. I know it sounds corny but I did a lot of shit in my life and she showed me that that's not the way to live and that even though life may be hard you have to struggle. I'll be honest I used to rob people and I used to hurt people and I thought that was OK, because my family was poor and they were rich so it was OK for me to take their shit, but then came along my girlfriend and she showed me that just because someone had more money from me it didn't make it OK for me to take their stuff and that they probably suffered to get that thing. She helped me get educated. She screamed at me when I wanted to give up because school was too hard and wouldn't let me give up. If it wasn't for her I'd probably be locked up or dead right now.
23 year old, Jamal, male, Lebanese background

Sometimes role models were significant because they expressed something about the migrant experience. In the following case, Cathy Freeman is a model because of the pride in her culture.

Role models? My mum, my best friend, Cathy Freeman too because she's not ashamed of her culture and I admire that.
18 year old Susan, female, Lebanese background

Occasionally, a more well known role model was nominated; in the case of Malcolm X perhaps because of an affinity some young people have to what they know of black American resistance against discrimination and marginality, which they see mirrored in their own experiences.

Q: Who are your role models?
I don't know if you've heard of him but Malcolm X. I know it sounds stupid but he's really my mentor. I love what he has done for the African Americans. It's just I look at him and I think 'Wow'. I hope I can do something like that. But I'm really inspired by him.
21 year old Refika, female, Turkish background

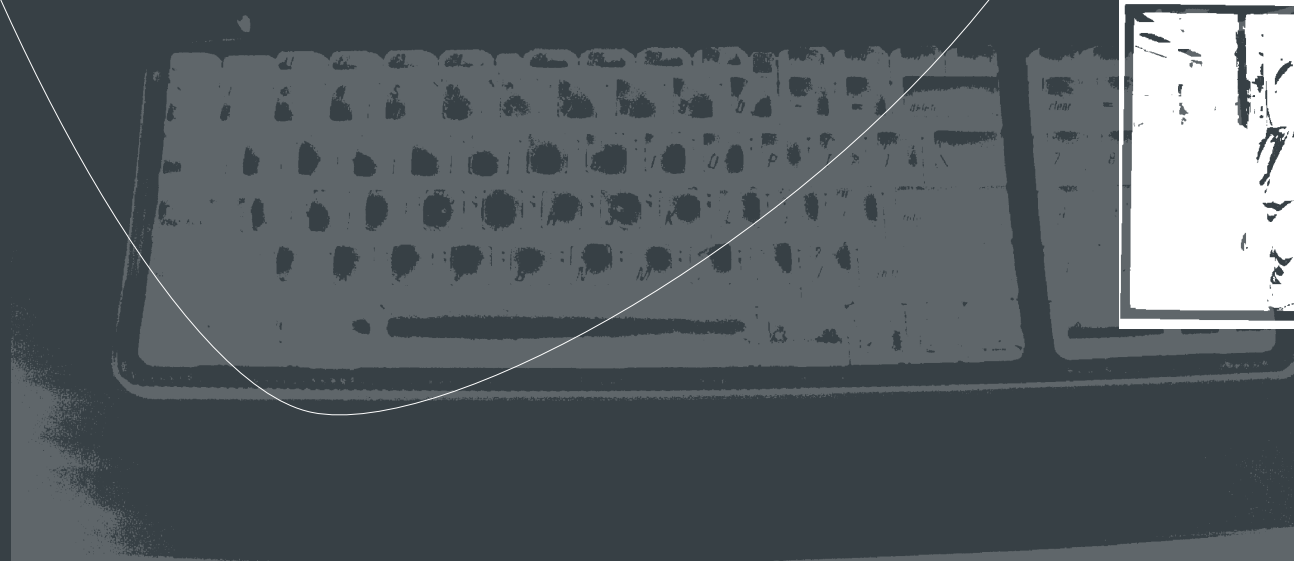
Likewise, the attraction to well-known individuals with a similar background may call young people out of their immediate social situation to a larger global affinity with others.

Q: Do you have any favourite celebrities?
Chow Yun-Fat because he's an Asian identity.
22 year old Chi, male, Chinese-Vietnamese background

The lack of a relationship with potential 'Australian' role models is notable. No politicians, no statespeople, no community leaders (apart from Cathy Freeman) were mentioned. It is apparent that these young people are turning to that cultural material in their families to which they can relate, and also to global influences, to express their identities in Australia and to confront their given everyday situations.

But young people must still negotiate the dissonance that can occur when the basic social groundwork that is normatively established in the family has to be reconciled with their wider mobility in mainstream Australian society. It is this process that often makes young people feel 'out of place' and distant from the everyday experience of other people around them—that they are 'in between'.

BEING IN BETWEEN



Being in Between

For young people growing up in Australia, but with parents from elsewhere, there is a spectrum of understandings about where they 'fit in'. Their heritage can be both a source of pride or discomfort. Other research has shown that young people from migrant backgrounds tend to follow one of the following scenarios:

- They immerse themselves in their first language culture, maintaining the culture of their parents in Australia;
- They totally reject their migration heritage and cultural background; or
- They reconcile their identity by selecting and adopting different aspects of the two cultures until they feel comfortable (Guerra & White 1995: 5).

But young people can also pass through one of these stages and shift to another as they get older, or 'rediscover' their cultural heritage that they may have once thought to be totally 'uncool'.

Ideas about whether young people feel connected to Australian culture or accepted by wider Australian society were often mentioned in discussions about cultural background.

Q: How would you describe your own cultural background?
Well my sort of cultural background it's a mix—like I can't say I'm Turk because I'm Aussie sort of thing. You know what I mean? (*If she were asked?*) I'd say I was mixed. I fit in fine. My best friend is an Aussie. I don't feel like I don't belong.
20 year old Guliz, female, Turkish background.

Well I can't decide what I am. Sometimes I'm like 'what's up bro' and other times I'm like 'g'day mate'. Sometimes I eat woggy food and sometimes I eat meat pies.
15 year old Manaya, female, Lebanese background

Q: Do you feel Chinese?
Not really, sometimes when around other Chinese, because they bring out the Chinese in you. Or when you are around no Chinese, because you are the only one there. I don't really think about it, it's not an issue.
18 year old Vivien, Chinese background.

That it is 'not an issue' to be identified as Chinese or not, Lebanese or not, is not uncommon, perhaps indicating a trend towards an ambiguity in cultural background for some young people, or the rise of other defining issues such as occupation or gender. While for Guliz and Vivien there is a sense of comfort in being 'unidentifiable', for others this feeling is discomforting. Some young people took the path of then identifying more with their parents' background than with their perception of 'Australian' culture.

Q: Would you describe yourself as being Australian?
I don't know. I find myself laid back and easy going but it doesn't mean that I'm necessarily Australian. I'd consider myself as Turkish even though I was born here, lived here and have the whole accent thing going. (*Whether she's stuck in between?*) Not really, I consider myself to be Turkish. (*If somebody asked?*) I'd say Turkish. They always ask me. (*On the look of an Australian?*) Fair, white coloured hair, light eyes.
17 year old Sarah, Turkish background.

While some young people feel grounded in their parents' cultural background others feel an in-betweenness and uncertainty about their roots. Some even felt 'lost'.

Q: How would you describe your cultural background?
I really don't know because I was born in the Philippines, studied Chinese there, then came to Australia to get away from our Dad over there, and was basically raised to be an Australian. I'm lost.
17 year old Shanly, female, Filipino and Chinese background.

Q: How would you describe your own cultural background?
It's really hard to define myself in that way because, I'm in Australia right now, I was born in France, my parents were both born in Cambodia, but their background is Chinese but they were in Vietnam and they spoke Chinese and Vietnamese. My mum speaks eight languages and my dad about six. So it's really hard to say 'Oh I have an Asian background, I was born in France and living in Australia', you know, I get this identity crisis, you know you've got people saying well what nationality are you? So I think, I'd say it's just an amalgam of everything put together, I do get little bits here and there. I do find that I am Asian, I do have that cultural thing because of family, from my parents and things like that. But I do have the Australian in me as well, but I think I have some of the French thing as well from growing up there, so yeah.
Haline, 20 years old, female, Cambodian, Chinese, Vietnamese and French background.

For some, like Shanly and Haline above, it is because of the mixture of ancestries or the movement through numerous countries before settlement in Australia. But for Siv, below, while there is not particular attachment and belonging to a parental homeland, the experience of displacement and the trauma of her own parents' migration is deeply felt.

And how would you describe your cultural background?
I'd say it's very broad because ... I'm Chinese, my parents were born in Cambodia, however they're ethnically Chinese. And I was born in Thailand but I grew up in Australia, so it's broad because I identify with all these places, by the fact that our movement, our passageway into this country involved all of these places. Like I wouldn't be here, if there wasn't a war I wouldn't be here, I'd be living my life over there.

And what that has to do culturally with that is that I still attach some suffering from that place because of what my parents have been through, so I identify with that place because that's where they suffered and I think they still do, even though they don't show it. And to not recognise that part of me is to not recognise their struggle, to demean everything they've been through. Because I still see it you know, it's still a part of them and ... especially because I grew up in Cabramatta, there's a lot of Asians there so you grow up knowing you're an Asian. It's sort of embedded in you that you're different. (…) And so because I grew up here and my parents still maintain their culture, like you grow up eating rice every day, and also your celebrations and traditions like Chinese New Year, or we pray to our ancestors at certain times of the year where we have a feast and a ceremony at home. So you grow up sort of thinking you're Australian, but you don't grow up with, Home and Away or something, and you don't have roast dinners, instead you have rice dinners. But then you still speak with an Australian accent. (…) So it's bicultural, tri-cultural whatever.

Q: So where do you feel you belong then?

I don't feel I belong in any specific culture at all, none whatsoever.

Siv, 21 years old female, Chinese-Cambodian background.

The feelings of separation or connectedness to a migrant background also seemed dependent on the circumstances that a young person could find themselves in. There are moments when a sense of difference is reinforced in what they consider to be very 'Australian' settings, and this in turn reinforces a feeling of attachment to their heritage.

Q: Tell me about when you most identify with your cultural background.

I think I most identified with my cultural background when I was in a position where I was like 'I'm so not like this'. I went to a friend's birthday party when I was—it was at uni and she was graduating and she was English, like Australian and everyone was just having beer and it was so different. I went 'Oh my God!', that's when I felt very Turkish.

22 year old Ebru, female, Turkish background

Distinctiveness can also engender a sense of isolation. A sense of pride in one's heritage can be bruised by a feeling of non-acceptance by wider society. The sense of privilege that is often attributed to 'Aussies' is sometimes expressed by culturally diverse young people as something they lack. Not belonging is most explicitly expressed in personal experiences of racism.

People having been rude or mean just because of you being Asian, that is what I incorporate into my idea that I'm not a part of Australian culture. And I feel like I'm a good person and I've been a good ambassador for the country when I've been overseas. And I find it funny because you feel like it's your home and you've done things for it yourself but it won't recognise you. So I don't know, it's like I say I am but I'm not because it says I'm not, right, so that's why I feel I'm not. I don't feel it. I can say I am because I feel like I've done a lot for Australia but it doesn't recognise me.

Siv, 21 years old female, Chinese-Cambodian background

This feeling of isolation from being 'Australian' is another point when some young people feel even closer to their cultural backgrounds. Reema and Rana, below, are clearly able to articulate their pride in being Lebanese, but at the same time feel even more connected when they experience discrimination or when they perceive that their cultural background is being unfairly portrayed.

Yeah, I guess when they're bagging (Lebanese) out in the media. You feel protective. When you sit with people from other cultures you see the difference. It's like they don't see where you're coming from. It's good to be a Lebo though. (...) You're so connected.

19 year old Reema, female, Lebanese background

Q: Are there moments when you feel very strongly Lebanese?

Yes. And that's when I see discrimination, racism. When I hear about what's happening in the Middle East. The war. The civil war between the Palestinians and the Jews. That just makes me really patriotic and I'm not Palestinian but I am Arabic and they're my roots and I just feel strongly towards that issue. Just when I see that discrimination, I just feel so strongly Lebanese. Because I do feel that if you're not from a Western background people treat you differently.

19 year old Rana, female, Lebanese background

Rana's comments also show the inevitability that diasporic connections and global networks, not just home-grown popular culture, will impact on Australia's heritage.

For others, like Safiye below, not being attached to their parents' cultural background is a deliberate decision to separate themselves and be independent.

Q: How would you describe your own cultural background?

I don't think I have much of one at the moment. I had one, when I was younger but I feel like I have—I've distanced myself off from it. I don't know if it's always been like that. (*On what changed*) Just my friends and me making my own decisions in my life. It just happened, doing my own thing.

20 year old Safiye, female, Turkish background.

In this way, being 'Turkish' may well signify a deeper connection to family and the social world of the Turkish people in Australia, while being 'Australian' may reveal an independence and autonomy from those connections. It was very common to cite 'freedom' as an Australian value that was sometimes at odds with parental expectations.

Q: Would you describe yourself as being Australian?

Yeah I do. *(On why?)* Because that whole multicultural (thing), the way I see people. You know I don't judge people by their tradition or anything. I am more free with myself and by what I do. *(On being 'free'?)* When I say free I mean … freedom of … see in the Turkish tradition if I wanted to do something I might be held down by what the Turkish tradition sees it to be true. Whereas being Australian, if I have a goal or a dream to achieve, I would do it without any boundaries stopping me, without any barriers around me. *(Whether he feels a part of this culture?)* Of course.

20 year old Hurcan, male, Turkish background

This view of Australian culture as somehow 'more free' was fairly persistent among the youth interviewed. Many also expressed a perception of Australian culture that was stereotypical and this in particular raises some crucial questions as to the representation of what it is to be Australian.

ON BEING AUSTRALIAN

'24

On Being Australian

magazines, advertising, public figures, and television programs continue to market an ‘ideal’ image of Australians.

The relationship between migration heritage and the wider form of Australian society is the crucible of second generation identity formation. In this context it is not only a young person’s migrant background which impacts on how they may or may not incorporate different aspects of wider social norms into their sense of self, but other factors, some of which have already been mentioned such as family, religion and gender, and others including socioeconomic status and the age at which migration occurred.

It’s those differences that constitute young peoples’ own versions of what it means to be Australian. Being an ‘Aussie’ was frequently seen as a look (fair, light eyes), dressing a certain way (very casual), being interested in barbecues, sport and drinking, and, as noted above, granted a freedom from parental control. Even particular foods were seen as ‘Australian’, such as meat pies, steak or lamb.

Q. What is your favourite food?
I’ve got a lot of favourite foods. I enjoy all sorts of foods, I mean I eat all sorts of backgrounds. I eat Australian food, I like eating steak.
Q. What do you eat at home?
Sometimes I cook like an Australian meal. Lamb cutlets or something. Peas and potatoes, whatever you call it.
21 year old Andrew, Vietnamese background

Q: What does the term Australian culture mean to you?
I don’t know—barbecues?
19 year old John, Turkish background

Q: What do you eat at home?
Lebanese food, unless my Dad decides he wants to be an Aussie and cook roast lamb or something.
19 year old Adele, Lebanese background

While several young people described Australian culture as being multiculturalism itself, it was a significant finding that many did not have a sense that their own cultural background was valued as being part of what it is to be ‘Australian’, and that the stereotype of Australian culture as being about ‘Anglo’ culture was continuing to have a hold over perceptions of national identity. Any reference to an ‘Aussie’ was usually a reference to someone from the Anglo community.

The linkages and connections to being Australian were varied, sometimes more to do with a feeling of rejecting an ‘ethnic’ background, sometimes related to consuming Australian cultural icons, or participating in Australian civic life, and sometimes about a set of values.

I am Lebanese but I think I am more Australian. I think like that because I am a single unmarried mother. (...) I identify with the Australian background all the time, it is my life and I am raising my son to be an Aussie.
18 year old, Janet, Lebanese background

Well technically I am, being an Australian citizen and all. (...) I take an interest in the running of the country, I’m concerned with the issues that affect the people in Australia, that makes me Australian as well.
Q: What does Australian culture mean to you?
Everything possibly Australian would come to mind, lamingtons, vegemite, kangaroos, and Akubra hats. I would think of the Aboriginal people, the didgeridoos, the beach, the barbecues, Crocodile Dundee, the Olympics even, the sporting people like Cathy Freeman, Ian Thorpe.
Q: Do you see yourself as part of that culture?
Yeah I do. I listen to Australian music, I watch Australian movies, the Olympics, so I would say I’m part of the culture.
16 year old, Marielle, Filipino background

In this last comment the focus on consuming cultural products as an indication of Australianness doesn’t seem to indicate as strong a connection as citing values or a cultural relationship. Being Australian for Marielle is more a technicality rather than a cultural resource that she can use in her everyday life. Compare this with the strong connections to parents’ background noted earlier, or the sentiments in the following statement.

I’m an Arab and I love being an Arab. Wouldn’t wanna be anything else. How do I describe it? Proud, yeah, we’re proud.
Q: How do you define being an Australian?
Eating my meat pie and drinking my beer. Seriously.

Q: Would you describe yourself as an Australian?
I’m a Lebo Australian.
22 year old, Haisam, Lebanese background

I’m an Aussie. Well, I don’t look like one but I’ve been born and raised here so that’s what I am.
Q: How do you define being Australian?
Eating my meat pie, drinking my beer on the beach. I love that life. I think it’s a changing concept that until maybe 10 or 20 years from now we won’t have a definition of. (*Why?*) Because Australia is only new and it needs more time to develop before it can reach a stable identity (laughs).
Mustafa, 20 years old, Lebanese background

Q: Would you describe yourself as Australian?
Not really. *(Why?)* Because our lifestyle is much different than theirs, even though we live in Australia. We have a different way of raising our children, we eat different foods, and we do just about everything different to them, even though we are Australian.
Manaya, 15 years old, Lebanese background

This contradictory message, that young migrant people think of themselves as Australian but feel distant from their image of an ‘Aussie’ reveals the profound ways in which mainstream images, magazines, advertising, public figures, and television programs continue to market an ‘ideal’ image of Australians.

Significantly, diasporic media (such as watching imported videos and satellite TV in Turkish, Chinese, Arabic, or Filipino, or listening to radio from Lebanon, China and Vietnam, for example) is popular with some young people some of the time. Some youth are also active consumers of internationally originating forms of pop culture such as Japanese *anime* (animation) and *manga* (comics). For 19 year old Mi Ha, a Chinese-Cambodian from Cabramatta, her favourite TV programs are Chinese soap operas hired from the local video shops.

Young people who watched movies in a language other than English explained their interest in terms of their sense of affinity, not only for the language but for the entire cultural package they could relate to. Steven watches Chinese movies every weekend.

Q: So why Chinese movies and not...English videos?
Maybe because I’m Chinese myself and I can relate to it. Yeah so, it’s like you get a better feeling, because you understand Chinese you know. (...) It’s kinda like, Chinese movies from my point of view they have more emotions, not saying that Aussie movies don’t, but the way they move, the way they talk, the way they interact, you can relate to them, because they’re from your own culture you know.

Q: So how did you first get into watching Chinese movies?
I think my parents did that (laughs). Ever since I was born they started watching, so they started socialising me in an environment of movies.
Steven, 16 years old, Chinese-Vietnamese background

More mainstream shows which were frequently mentioned as being popular included *Videohits*, *The Simpsons*, *Seinfeld*, *Ally McBeal*, *Everybody Loves Raymond*, *Friends*, and *Sex in the City*. It would seem our heritage is at times heavily marked by USA popular culture. Like fusion music, the easy consumption of both Ally McBeal and diasporic TV epitomises the mix of influences on this new generation of migrant youth.

But the only thing that I watch, that I can't miss is *Ally McBeal*. Don't ask me why … don't ask! I just watch it. (...). *(On watching Turkish videos)* Yeah I watch Turkish videos. We've got it at home, the Turkish cable (TRT). Two shows that I watch that are Turkish shows on once a week. *(On why she thinks many Turkish youth don't like to watch the Turkish videos/TRT?)* Like when you start, like at the beginning I was like 'I'm not going to watch Turkish stuff.' But when you start watching it, like its good. You shouldn't just dismiss it without trying it. *(On what made her change her mind?)* I was just sitting there one day and it was on and I just watched it and (I said) 'oh this is good!' See the thing with Turkish series, whatever, they relate to you. Like English stuff relates to you too but Turkish stuff relates to you in a different way. That's just like with friends as well. With a Turkish friend you can tell them different stuff that they'd understand whereas with an Aussie friend you couldn't tell them the same thing.
20 year old Guliz, female, Turkish background.

Guliz's remarks perhaps exemplify not only the experience of being a migrant but a more universal experience. The environment, what we do, what we create, relates to different people in different ways. Being able to enjoy different layers of culture from different sources becomes the norm.

Ironically, this norm is not what is represented in the Australian media landscape. Young people did sometimes express feeling disturbed by the fact that they were not represented on television or mainstream media.

You look at Australian soapies, are there any Asians in it? No. And when they are it's like they're just there because they need one Asian in there or something. It's like you can't have two, you can't have three. You know if there's one, that's enough. And there are always, I notice when they're on TV they're there when its an 'Asian' issue or when the issue is about being Asian, not being Australian. It's not just *a normal Australian life* and there's an Asian in there, or a lot of them in there because you know there's not just one Asian in Australia. That's what you'd think if you just watched TV and you didn't live here. And in that way I don't feel Australian because in the media we're invisible and we don't exist until you know a boatload of illegal immigrants come to the shore or someone gets shot in Cabramatta. We're only here when they need it so ... I find that a lot of people in real life who don't converse every day with Asians will also believe that and then when they realise that's not the real way Australia is, they're very shocked themselves because they probably had their own idea of Australia where Asians don't exist.
21 year old Siv, female, Chinese-Cambodian

But, as Stephen demonstrates, young people are able to make a distinction between the image and what 'being Australian' really entails.

Q: Ok if I said the term 'Australian culture' what does that mean to you?
I normally think of Aussies, of 'surfies', but I think that's because of the way I've been taught and told.
Q: By whom?
By society, the media. The men are supposed to be macho and good-looking, and the girls are supposed to be beautiful and tall. That's what comes to my mind but when I really think about it, I think Australian culture deals with different people, their interrelationships with one another and how they behave. The way they help people, the way they communicate with language and I think Australia is a more accepting culture than others, so Australian culture is a more warming feeling, more accepting. More positive.
Q: Are you part of that culture?
Yep definitely.
16 year old Stephen, Chinese-Vietnamese background

Media

Media choice among the young people interviewed, contrary to the popular belief that most young people aren't interested in anything substantial, showed an interest in Australian politics and current affairs, in global news (sometimes accessed through the Internet) and in very specific topics (magazines like *Hot Fours* and *Rotaries*). Magazines related to cars, computers or technology were most popular with young men, and the women's lifestyle magazines generally more popular with young women although these were also read at times by young men too.

Many young women stated a level of influence in terms of fashion from magazines such as *Cleo*, *Cosmopolitan* and *Dolly* in particular. And even though the women depicted in these magazines are generally Anglo, where they relate to these magazines is around the universal problems of love and 'guys'.

Yeah I read a lot of magazines like *Cleo* and *Cosmo (Cosmopolitan)* and *Dolly*, stuff like that. When I was young I'd buy *Smash Hits* and *TV Hits*. But then as you grow up you start getting *Dolly* and *Girlfriend*. Now that I'm 21 I read more of *Cosmo* and *Marie Claire*. It's basically all advertisements but the articles talk about different issues like about guys. It's just more mature and I can relate to it more.
21 year old Refika, Turkish background

In spite of numerous stereotypes about Australia and being Australian, many young people felt that Australia is transforming, and that they themselves had the choice of participating in what they perceived to be the activities of mainstream, or dominant society, or not. It is a period of transition for them.

Q. OK if we use the term 'Australian culture' what does that mean?
The first thing that pops into my head is meat pies and football and all that sort of stuff.
Q: And do you see yourself as part of that?
Slowly, slowly I reckon Asian people are becoming—something like that.
Q: Being more what, Australian?
Not like Asian people fully just being Australians and forgetting their own culture, no. But Australians are more accepting of our culture.
17 year old Jessica, Chinese background

Q. So what do you adopt?
I take the things that I think will give me a positive effect on my life later on. I try to adopt things from either race that are good qualities and leave those that are bad. For example the generosity of Australians and the strong work ethic of the Chinese. (…) I don't think racial identity would be a problem any more because you have so many people who you can classify as Australian these days. It's the cliched version of Australian lifestyle and thinking of giving everyone a fair go, being a lot more broad-minded than a lot of other nationalities. And being less opinionated than everyone else.
Q: Do you see yourself as Australian?
I'm Australian because I've adopted those concepts in my identity but nothing else. I haven't accepted beach, booze and beer into my life.
22 year old Chi, male, Chinese-Vietnamese background

This is the sense of bricolage, of picking and choosing elements of cultural resources that is a major element of migration heritage. This cut-and-mix is very present in language.

REDEFINING LANGUAGE

Many young people identified a difference between their parents and themselves as their ability to be proficient in English. This gave them power and control in their domestic situations, as they were frequently called upon to translate for older relatives, not only language but issues, organisations and structures in wider society. When younger people were not totally fluent in their parents' language, which was common, the result was an inevitable difficulty in communication. Imagine the difficulties of communication when at times up to three different languages occur in one sentence (recalled by a Cabramatta focus group participant).

Even language wise, even though I speak Chinese I'm not articulate in Chinese and they're not articulate in English, so how do you go between that and explain what you want. How can you talk to them about things they're probably not used to talking about. And another thing is I think my parents are really smart, but I can't have those conversations that I think kids who grow up just speaking English with their parents can. Because they can, like my dad talks about politics and things, he watches the world news and he knows more about politics than I do, I can say that honestly. But just imagine if I could talk to him about things like that or with my mother as well. Because my mother talks to me a lot, but it's the Chinese/English thing if only we could speak the same language. If we were both articulate in the same language then that would be so good.
21 year old Siv, female, Chinese-Cambodian background

Language is also a site for the creation of new forms of cultural expression. There are new slang terms in our vocabulary which refer to dress and fashion in particular associated with demarcating groups of young people. 'habibs and sharons', 'FOBs', 'VCs', 'honkies' are all ethnically or regionally specific terms.

There is a recognisably distinct set of 'accents' and uses of words. Ways of speaking are changing. 'Aye' at the end of sentences is commonly used by young Middle Eastern people, as is explicit deployment of black American street talk such as 'bro', 'man', 'mother-fucker', and 'mo-fo', in particular public circumstances by both Asian and Middle Eastern young people. It is a form of display and belonging as much as the other elements of popular culture mentioned later in the report (cars, technology, music and so on). Language, like dress and looks, is an explicit marker of community. It is both a means of, and for the communication of ideas about belonging and identity (James 1995: 43).

Under assimilation policies, language, that is mother tongue other than English, was not encouraged. Today, there are weekend schools throughout western Sydney, teaching young people language (although young people at times complained about being forced to go by their parents). For others, learning the language is a process of cultural reclamation, and a mark of distinction.

Q: Are there times when you feel strongly Filipino?
I guess when I'm around my grandparents, because my grandparents on my father's side passed away so all we've got left is my grandparents on my mother's side, so I don't know when something might happen, so you spend time with them and my grandfather can't really talk English so well, so I think that's why I can talk a lot of Tagalog because I always talk with him. Like he can understand me, if I make a mistake he won't be able to tell me what I'm saying wrong but he can understand me anyway.
Q: So, speaking, interacting with your grandparents does that make you feel more Filipino?
Yes, to me it does.
19 year old Marjay, a Fine Arts student, Filipino background

Speaking a community language, including friendship slang, is an important means of maintaining cultural identity, and encoding a sense of belonging. Shifting between spaces of belonging requires young people to be bilingual, even trilingual. So much so that these young people have come to embody cross-cultural translation. Very often, the separation of different spaces is used to manage the necessary translations that need to be made as they shift between cultures (from their parents' home to the mall with their friends, for example). In each space, very different means of behaviour, speech and values can be adopted.

Young people's sense of connection to, or disconnection from 'being Australian' or 'being migrant' is influenced by many factors: whether their parents lived in several different countries or came from different backgrounds; whether they feel close to their immediate family in Australia; whether they take pleasure in the festivals, ceremonies and rituals of their community in Australia; and whether or not they feel connected through other mechanisms such as sporting interests. In general the strongest attachment is felt by those who feel closest to their parents and other family members. This emotional attachment connects them to their parents' personal stories and cultural values and gives them a confidence and pride in their background. The family still remains the formative site of cultural fission or union, and intimately links young people to different cultural worlds, or sets them apart and unanchored.

This conflict at times places even more importance on friendship networks where shared meanings and comfort zones are implicitly understood. Friendship is also important for providing collective support of choices, activities and cultural expressions.

FRIENDSHIPS

Friendships

Family may be the basis for enduring connections to cultural backgrounds, but the relationships that young people have in friendship groups heavily influences their sense of comfort in Australia. In some ways, friends are even more crucial for their contemporary momentum in redefining Australian culture. Friendships were commonly where ethnicity was either most challenged or most asserted.

The notion of 'being Australian' in terms of the values of cultural diversity was most frequently realised in friendship networks, which could emphasise other forms of belonging and acceptance than young people were experiencing in their homes, or in their relationships with wider Australian society. It is in these different friendship networks that young people make more sense of where they are placed, their cultural affinities and where they are more heavily involved in cultural expression.

Friendship groups were formed through family connections, school, university, through work, and through living in the same neighbourhood. Groups could be very multicultural or at times quite homogenous, depending on the opportunities that young people had to meet others. Often an individual would have both a set of friends who were from a similar background and a set of friends who were more diverse. Groups could also consist of former school friends, and new friends at university or work. These groups did not necessarily overlap.

I hang out with two groups. One is predominantly made up of Anglos. The other is multicultural. Within the second group, the group is basically made up of people from the Middle East, Asian, Africa and Polynesia.
18 year old Tim, Malaysian background

Q: How is the group made up?
Basically we're all mixed. (*On the 'mixed'*) I've got a couple of Indian friends, Malaysian but my best friend is Aussie. Turkish people? I don't really have many Turkish friends besides you guys. (*On why?*) Cause there aren't really—like where I work, where I live there isn't really many around sort of thing. You basically become friends with the people you hang around with, the people you see the most.
Guliz, 20 years old female, Turkish background

Many young people expressed a sense of mobility, not only in their movement around the city, but in their movement between friendship groups.

I have a whole heap of friends, like a different set for uni, a different set from school, like that. Because when I started uni I had to make a new set of friend 'cos none of my friends are really like into art, so friends at uni are totally different from the ones I had before. None of them are Filipino so I had to, not really conform, fit in, because none of them are Filipino. Back in school it was predominantly Filipino.
19 year old Marjay, a Fine Arts student, Filipino background

Most young people interviewed expressed a deeper connection with people from other migrant backgrounds than with Anglo-Australians, often stating that others from migrant backgrounds would understand their family situation better, would relate to their responsibilities towards their family, and would have similar connections to traditions of homeland.

Q: How is the group made up?
Well my school friends and cousins are mostly wogs and my girlfriend's friends are mostly Aussies. *(On the 'wogs')* We have Turkish mainly and Italian, Maltese. *(On which group he gets along better with?)* The wogs because we have the same family traditions. We just connect more, the same life, we have more in common.
19 year old John, Turkish background

Q: How is your group made up?
It's mostly Lebanese, but the ones that aren't Lebanese are from non-English speaking backgrounds. That's because we can relate to each other.
19 year old Rana, Lebanese background

Q: How are the groups made up?
Just by people that want to be with people they are similar to. (...) I don't hang out with no Christian guys, it's not cos I don't like them it's cos I hang with my boys and we grew up together. A lot of people that are Muslim chill with Christian brothers though so I don't see any racism there. But the Lebs do hang out with the Lebs and the Turks with the Turks but I also see a lot of mixed groups like at school.
20 year old Mustafa, Lebanese background

A major difference between the social experiences of parents and young people was in the diversity of their friendship networks. Having a diversity of friendships was often viewed as being more 'open-minded' and more 'tolerant'.

Q: How do you see yourself as different from your parents?
I reckon in terms of friends—although they may have a couple of friends outside of the Turkish background they mainly have Turkish friends. Whereas I've got (friends from) Aussie or different cultures.
17 year old Sarah, Turkish background

This sense of developing more tolerance through more diverse friendships was also applied to the perception of other groups. This diversity could only be achieved by crossing over boundaries; physical (spatial divides in the city) and perceptual (overcoming stereotypes).

Q: How are you different from your Anglo/Asian friends in terms of beliefs and values as well as appearances?
I've noticed that people of my culture are not open-minded. It's always what their parents tell them and what they've grown up around. But I'm more open-minded, that's because I haven't grown up around people of my own culture all my life. I used to live in Coogee which was mainly Anglo-Saxon, I went to school in Coogee so that was Anglo-Saxon. That's why I'm more open-minded than my Lebanese friends who have been surrounded by Lebanese people all their life.
Q: What do you think (your Lebanese friends) are less open-minded about?
Just their views on Anglo-Saxons, their views on Asians. Because they haven't interacted with them they have the views of their parents who haven't interacted with them. So just generalisations which reflect ignorance. I mean until you interact with a person then you can make judgements.
19 year old Rana, female, Lebanese background

It seems that a critical mass of one cultural group most commonly works against social mixing.

Q: How do different groups get on?
They pretty much get along and all talk to each other. The Filos (Filipinos)—they get along with their own kind of people. *(On why she thinks this is so)* Maybe because it's such a big group like maybe 30 people in the group. Because there's so many they just interact with each other.
17 year old Sarah, Turkish background

When a young person was the 'only Asian' or 'only wog' in the group they were often very positive about this experience, as they were not identified for their ethnicity but for other qualities. The points of commonality came through a shared understanding of contemporary Australian life and a shared love of pop culture.

Q: How are you different from your friends?
Obviously all my friends are Aussie and I'm not. Their families are way different from mine. Their parents, they've got a different line of values. I'd say my parents are more strict with things than theirs. *(For example?)* Going out. Like I can't go out to a club or something without my brother because it's just the whole family thing. *(Whether she feels she can still relate to her friends)* I reckon I can relate to them a fair bit because we have the same taste. In terms of anything—music, fashion, people.
17 year old Sarah, Turkish background

While conflict of values was mentioned in family relationships, it was not mentioned with friendships which were seen to be more supportive and sharing. The more mixed groups were easily able to identify how they connected, whether through work or shared interests.

The activities that these groups engaged in involved collective, social activities: going to the same places frequently, and dressing in similar ways for example. These friendship groups then form their own micro-cultures, with their own meanings allocated to various experiences, but managed within the group in their everyday practice (Wulff 1995b: 65).

As noted earlier, friendship groups would be more often than not ethnically mixed—'all wogs together'—but where there were distinct boundaries formed between groups it was often as a result of external factors which hindered interaction between young people. At times, as participants in a focus group in Cabramatta stated, it wasn't that they had anything against young people from other backgrounds, it was just that they never had the opportunity to meet. An important dimension of culturally homogeneous groups is that they most commonly only meet their own group in important socialising environments like school, and this could continue after school too.

Friendship

Q: Are there any identifiable groups around here?
In my, like sort of area most people stuck with their own culture, I guess. Like there was a Leb group, there was a Tongan group. Some were mixed but mostly everyone stuck with their own. I mean we were groups with Turks but of course we were friends with other people around us but we just kind of stuck with the Turks, as in lunch times and stuff like that.
21 year old Pinar, Turkish background

We mostly have Filos at school and those who were from a different background sort of hung out with each other. In my school Filos hung out with Filos and whatever other background you are, you sit somewhere else.
17 year old Shanly, Filipino and Chinese background.

Families also inadvertently at times supported more homogenous friendship groups, but this was related to preferences for their children to 'hang out' with other young people from the same background.

Friendship groups highlight the importance of the use of space particularly in the urban context. As large numbers of young people can congregate in public areas such as streets, cafes and shopping malls, there is a constant negotiation of ownership between them, commercial and residential stakeholders, and local authorities. Friends will have defined places to 'hang-out', both private (people's homes) and public spaces, which also gives them an understanding of place.

Q: Are there any identifiable groups at your school?
Well in the cafe you've got the wogs, you just know that they're there. Just the rest of them mix with anyone really. (*Other groups?*) There's Filos, a really big group of Filos in the cafe and then you've just got Aussies and that. The Aussies actually are kind of with the wogs but then you've got the other Aussies who are up against the wall of the library, like all the surfies and that are along that side. (*On whether culture determines where they will be in the school?*) No, it's all mixed up. Like with the Filos, they're all Filos but with the wogs and the Aussies they're together.
17 year old Sarah, Turkish background

The regional space of western Sydney is also becoming increasingly important as a marker of identity for migrant youth living in this area.

When a young person was the 'only Asian' or 'only wog' in the group they were often very positive about this experience

Living in

WESTERN SYDNEY

Living in Western Sydney

As a frame of reference, most of the young people interviewed had a strong connection to their local areas or to the western Sydney region. Being from western Sydney was a major element in how the young people in this study constructed their sense of belonging and therefore it will impact on the construction of our migration heritage as well.

I define myself as being a south-westerner if that makes any sense. I think there are more of the cliques in the city groups than in the south-west. I wouldn't say Australian but I would say south-westie.
20 year old Haline, female, Cambodian, Chinese, Vietnamese and French background.

A significant number of those interviewed expressed a sense of living in a disadvantaged area; an area that was often negatively portrayed in the media.

Q: What about western Sydney, do you feel like it's part of your identity?
Yeah it is definitely. Part of my identity is being from south-western Sydney. And also feeling different when I went somewhere else. I didn't notice that regionally you were different until like I'd gone into high school and I had to go to meetings, conferences and things like that, and I had to speak in front of an audience. And students were so articulate, people were different, some people were political, I never really understood things like that I never knew ... it was so different and I felt very ignorant. But you know it's like I'm not dumb but I felt ignorant. And I felt that people looked upon me and saw that I was from that area and that we were all hooligans or trash. Just trash and not really worth it, you know what I mean. Like my parents, my dad was actually a process worker, something like that I'm proud of it as well. But then again I hate it, I feel like it's sort of holding me back as well. Because we know that it's not bad but then it's sooo bad, it's like the cage with a door open but you just don't know how to get out you know? You're just in the cage but you want to be out there and not just regionally just mentally in your head you want to surpass all this, you know shit about where you're from and everything but it's hard.
21 year old Siv, female, Chinese-Cambodian

Of course it's part of my identity. Western Sydney is very diverse, culturally, so obviously that's influenced me. (...) I have lived in a more Anglo-Saxon place like Coogee, but I've only lived there for half of my life and the second half of my life I've lived in western Sydney, and that second part of my life was the more important part of my life because it was a more impressionable part of my life. Because I was an adolescent growing up and obviously what was around me is going to influence me more than childhood I think. Because when you say western Sydney you associate western Sydney with gangs with crime with violence such as Lebanese gangs, Vietnamese gangs, and when someone asks me 'where are you from?' and I say, 'Canterbury, western part of Sydney' immediately they'll think of what they've been hearing in the media and therefore it does influence my identity. And I'm proud of that identity, I'm not ashamed of that at all.
19 year old, Rana, female, Lebanese background.

Like Rana, others felt a sense of pride in belonging to an area that was mocked or viewed negatively by the privileged areas of Sydney, reappropriating the scorn into something positive.

The way we dress, the way we act, it's so different. Like my friends and I will go to the city or Chatswood or something and everyone is so dressed, so proper. It was so funny, we went to the J-Lo concert thing, and the girls in front of us they were so proper, they just stood there calmly. And we were being loud and I distinctly heard one of them say 'Damn Westies' (laughs). It was so funny that people could pick out that we were Westies. I can feel it in me. It's a place I can always come back to. (...) We were on the train back (from Darling Harbour) and we could see Penrith outside the train window, and I said 'Ah we're back here from being in the Harbour', and (my friend) said to me 'But it's a place I will always come back to' because we've got so many memories there, it's a great place.
16 year old, Marielle, Filipino background

Yeah, it's cos I'm ghetto (laughs). (...) But I like being scum. That's if scum involves being laid back and accepting of everything and not having a silver fork in my mouth then hell, I love being a Westie piece of scum.
Mustafa, 20 years old, Lebanese background

Local spaces provided security in the proximity of family networks and familiarity. Cabramatta, for example, is a 'symbolic location' in Sydney, but also 'a vital source of social and cultural identity which provides young people with a sense of connectedness and respite from the racism of everyday life' (Maher et al. 1999: 138). Our discussions with young people from Cabramatta revealed the way in which it was experienced on a daily basis as 'familiar' and comfortable, a place where they lived, went to school, shopped with friends and went out to eat, while at the same time recognising the particular pressures upon young people from disadvantaged areas.

The western suburbs provided many young people with a sense of community and of belonging, but it was also felt to be misunderstood and negatively portrayed. Young people realise they are living in areas that are poorer and with higher migrant populations, often creating a sense of disadvantage. Their local area is both the site of belonging and the place in which many witness social marginalisation. Combine this with the impulses, push and pull dynamics between community and contemporary Australian life, outlined in the previous sections, and an intense set of dynamics is brought to life which impacts on the creation of popular youth culture.

THE POPULAR CULTURE

of Middle Eastern and Asian Youth

The Popular Culture of Middle Eastern and Asian Youth

For young people, 'hanging out', is the foremost aspect of their social lives and allows them to both reinforce friendships they already have, and to meet new people. Places come to be marked out by the particular activities that occur in them, such as listening to music, dancing, cruising, cyber-gaming, promenading, shopping and so on. It is within the collective that popular culture is both created and consumed.

Young people regularly travel around the city and have attachments not just to their local areas but to particular sites where the combination of leisure activities and the possibility that they will meet people, whether friends, relatives or others 'like them', makes these places of ongoing connection and pleasure. 'If I go to Oxford Street or Darling Harbour on a Saturday night I know I'll be safe because fifty of my cousins will be there too' (19 year old Hiba, Lebanese background, GENERATE researcher).

They are actively and dynamically creating meaning out of their environments, but these meanings can change as youth find new places to hang out, to shop and to socialise. Different groups can also understand the same place in very different ways: a mall can be a social space, or a space of threat, for example. Young people are involved in constructing a sense of place that is more 'about experiencing a city and not just living in it' (Malone 2000: 137),

Mobility is itself an essential part of youth culture. At night and on weekends young people are travelling throughout the city to go to clubs, go cruising, shopping or just hanging out with their friends somewhere different. At locations as diverse as George Street, Liverpool Shopping Mall, Oxford Street, George's River National Park, Chinatown, Brighton le Sands, Eastern Creek Raceway, Darling Harbour, Chatswood, Norton Street Leichhardt, Parramatta Park and Bondi, young people are out to meet their friends, have fun and be seen. Outside the city the Central Coast and Wollongong are increasingly popular as day trips.

Movement into the city also means another form of escape from parental supervision.

Another trend is that most clubs that young people will visit are located in the city. (...) It's simple: the city is big! So you don't need to worry about bumping into a Turkish uncle, aunty or even a brother and sister who will 'dob' you in to your parents. You can act the way you want, hang around people of the opposite sex and in general have a good time without the paranoia of being watched.
Ozdem, 20 years old, Turkish background, GENERATE Researcher.

New 'trendy' sites are being created. Burwood and Brighton le Sands now have a variety of cafes, lounge bars, and shopping strips associated with the latest Mall developments.

Brighton is a popular place for young people to hang out, particularly on Sunday nights. The cafes, ocean strip and car parks all make it a perfect place to go to. The atmosphere at Brighton is mixed and generally there is something for everyone. For those interested in cars they can hang out in a car park, for those interested in a night out they can sit in one of the 'packed-out' cafes. Brighton became popular, particularly after the police began cracking down on defected cars at Bondi. Also Brighton is close to both Cronulla and La Perouse so if Brighton gets boring they could always relocate to either of those places. Brighton is one long strip along the beach. It is basically made up of 2 blocks of cafes, restaurants and clothes stores. Across the road is the beach, the pavement is lined with palm trees and benches to sit on. Across the ocean is Sydney Airport. The lights and the image of the aeroplanes taking off make it a perfect setting.
19 year old Hiba, Lebanese background, GENERATE Researcher

In truly adaptive fashion, the urban industrial landscape becomes the young person's panorama. Where Brighton and Leichhardt seem to appeal more to young Middle Eastern and European people, George Street and Chinatown in the city are popular sites for young Asian-Australians. In George Street the amusement arcades and cyber-cafes attract young people from all over Sydney—from as far as Campbelltown and Sutherland. Again, it's about display. Crowds gather around the dance machines to watch the best performers, some of whom practise up to five hours a day.

Young people reappropriate public spaces that become part of the production of their culture—the stage or theatre for display and performance. These can include car parks, fast food restaurants, shopping centres and railway stations.

Q: So where do you and your friends hang out after school?
A: Livo! (Liverpool)
C: After school, Cabra.
A: On Tuesdays we get off school early and we sometimes plan to go shopping or watch movies or something.
Q: So what do you mainly do when you hang out?
A: Talk, movies, shopping. We mainly just play games. We go to people's houses.
Q: What other places in Sydney do you hang out?
A: In the city! Parramatta.
Q: Whereabouts in the city?
A: In Darling Harbour, and George Street. On George Street we play games, and we eat and take photos and walk around and chat. For example, Planet Hollywood and Playtime. And Maccas to eat.
15 year old Maria, Laotian, 16 year old Tang Thai, 15 year old Jane, Vietnamese background, from Green Valley, Lansvale and Bonnyrigg

Shopping centres have become crucially important social spaces for young people in general, as they provide a safe, temperature controlled space with varied, cheap activities—shopping, eating, going to the movies, or just hanging out. They are particularly important for communities of young people who often have large extended families and pervasive social networks. To meet in the shopping mall is to catch up with your cousins and school friends, to buy the latest clothes, and even start up that romance. At the same time many young people have part-time jobs, mostly in places like cafes and fast food outlets. Work and leisure at particular sites like shopping malls mutually reinforce each other.

On Thursday nights hundreds of young people 'hang out' in malls in western Sydney, wandering through in twos and threes, congregating in larger numbers in the food courts and in the outside entrances. It's the boys who are more visually obvious, partly because they often collect in groups of up to about twenty and are noisier and more striking in their style of behaviour and fashion. It's an energetic, boisterous meeting place, with flamboyant greetings, calling out to girls and to each other and engaging in conversation. Young men greet each other with displays of mock fighting, hugging or parodies of social closeness such as gripping each other's cheeks. The fashion and demeanour of the young men, although a mixture of styles, has some distinct elements which are borrowed from black American street culture (baggy trousers, baseball caps and so on). In a display of affinity to this style it is not uncommon for the boys to call each other 'bro' or use other similar slang.

The social experience of the shopping mall and other public spaces in Sydney appears to play a role in carving out new social behaviours, at least in terms of providing a forum for their display. Public space also provides an opportunity for the formation of new alliances among youth from different cultural and class backgrounds. But the first impulse seems to be finding the familiar, or looking for the connection that already exists.

We then walked around for a while just interviewing random people. We noticed that there was a mixture of people in Darling Harbour; some of them were from the North Shore and some from western Sydney. However there was no difference (at face value this is) between the two and unless they told us where they were from we wouldn't have noticed.

Most people were just out to have a good time. A lot of them planned on hitting the clubs after just walking around the city for a while. (...)

We spoke to a group of people that were also '(my last name)' and tried to establish a relation or connection. We realised we were all going to the same wedding in a month.

It seemed that establishing a connection was very important. People would ask where we were from and if they knew the area, or lived around there or they would ask last names and schools and things. It seemed like if we did however connect, then it was like we were already friends. The funniest thing I learnt is it doesn't matter where in Sydney you're from; you will always be connected somehow to someone. It was amusing to see the way people asked 'what area are you from?', 'are you related to such and such?' or 'where did you go to school?' in order to establish some kind of connection.

19 year old Hiba, Lebanese background, GENERATE researcher, commenting on the Big Night Out when researchers travelled throughout Sydney to document youth mobility and leisure activities.

MUSICAL CULTURES

It is probably in music more than any other form of popular culture that the remix is indicative of the remix of youth culture—taking forms from ethnic, mainstream Australian and global influences and producing a new sound.

Q: What kind of music do they play in Lebanese clubs?
Lebanese dance music. And this is a sudden interest. I haven't been interested in Lebanese music all my life. I've only been interested in it for about two years and that was influenced by my trip to Lebanon. I went over there before I started uni. And that just got me listening to it.
19 year old Rana, Lebanese background

I like dance and Arabic music.
Tarek, 19 years old, Lebanese background

Music highlights the global connections between Australian migrant communities and 'homelands'. In an alternative entertainment circuit, singers from India, Lebanon, Turkey, the Philippines and so on regularly perform in Sydney. Hong Kong pop stars sell out the Entertainment Centre (but are never advertised in the mainstream media).

Music also highlights the diversity of youth: interviewees mentioned grunge, punk, 'indi' rock, 60s, to a heavy dose of Top 40 American and British R'n'B as their preferred sounds.

While the music itself might be a boundaryless fusion of hip hop and traditional, it is in the spaces that it is performed or played where music also sometimes solidifies boundaries: particular nightclubs whether in Oxford Street or in the west are known to be places where large numbers from a particular community will gather. The motivation again relates to creating comfort zones.

'Mavis'- Westella Dance Parties
This is the one event that every Turk, no matter what else is on that night, will make an appearance at this dance party. Whether you live in Penrith, Liverpool or Concord we all know when the parties are on! The event is organised by a group of Turkish people that go by the name of 'Mavis'.
The music that is played is from all different genres ranging from dance, Top 40 and R'n'B to remixes of Turkish pop songs.
There are many different reasons why the youth are attracted to this event. Some go to meet other Turkish people. Others go because it's the only place they can dance to Turkish music without their parents around. For some this is the meeting point of their future husband or wife.
20 year old Ozdem, Turkish background, GENERATE researcher

Some young people from migrant backgrounds are actively involved in performing and recording hip hop music. At a youth cabaret in Bankstown (2001) a young Middle Eastern man rapped a song about Aboriginal reconciliation, relating his own experiences of exclusion with those of Aboriginal people. This was one example of a very local appropriation of a global cultural form that has become representative of feelings of marginalisation, whether in the US or Australia.

Like hip hop, 'car culture', that is, creating hot rods or street machines, is also a very visible and contentious form of cultural expression by young people, young men in particular.

CAR CULTURE

For many young men, mainly from Middle Eastern backgrounds, cars and cruising are an important social experience.

Q. Have you got a car?
Yes, I have three cars, one's my everyday get-around Daihatsu Feroza 4WD, the second is a ute that I use for work and the third is my Honda CRX which is a full show car that I occasionally drive on weekends. The future fourth is on its way which will be a definite RX series 6 or 7 *inshallah* (God willing).
22 year old Haisam, male, Lebanese background.

For some young men, almost all their available income and time is spent on doing up their cars. The main elements to a successful car transformation are to make a car powerful and noticed: modifying the engine; adding mag wheels and spoilers (trim); lowering the car; adding a powerful sound system. Finally you do a luscious paint job in a shimmering colour and you have a street machine for everyone to hear and admire.

Q: Do you go out cruising?
Every now and then. (...) Basically, looking around, seeing what everyone else is doing. Just to drive and maybe find someone on the road that wants to have a bit of fun. Not necessarily to drag maybe just to pop the lights and take off. Nothing more sinister or dangerous. *(Is there a point?)* Oh there is a point. Who knows what you could meet, or who you could meet or what you could see on the roads. You just go for a drive, its a good (way to) relax. It's a good switch off, turn some music on. (*Where?*) Go to places where you've never been, just see different people. (...) You just end up going to Bondi, parking your car, get something to eat. It's a beach, it's different from where you live. (...) It's not St Marys culture, there's nothing really in St Marys really for people to see and do. The beach is like 'wow! lets go to the beach', take it all in, relax, shut up. (...) And also it depends. You gotta be in a quality car to go cruising. You can't just grab like your 'Datto' (Datsun), (...) so you go in a car that's a good car.
24 year old Stephen, Turkish background

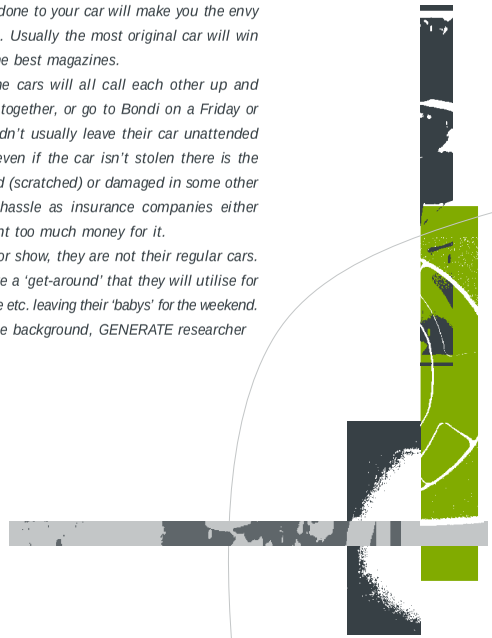
Q. Are you interested in cars, or doing up cars?
We generally drive then we find a spot to park and we sit on the side of the road. We enjoy our ice cream and the kebab and sit on the side of the road and chill.
22 year old Enver, male, Turkish background

Not only boys though are interested in cars. There are a few young women who also incorporate street machines into their lifestyle.

Q. Are you interested in cars, or doing up cars?
Definitely. (...) It's something that belongs to you. I know its pretty ridiculous. It's like buying something designer. Like why do people go out and buy Jag or Guess? I think it's the same thing.
Q: Do you go out cruising? And if yes, where do you drive around?
Yeah, definitely. *(On where?)* To Wollongong. *(On why?)* Because its nice scenery there as well. Nice long drive, dead straight road. It's just fun 'cos you're all in the same car. *(On who?)* Your friends and yourself. It's a time when everyone's kind of relaxing and just driving by. Funny things always happen when you're cruising along. (...)
Q: How much time would you spend doing that every week?
If I had all the time in the world, I'd cruise. It's the best thing, it's relaxing.
22 year old Ebru, female, Turkish background.

Ebru was fairly exceptional. Most young women were not interested or played a more supporting role to the boys' activities. As noted earlier, much of the activity of young women is less visible than that of young men, except in the realm of fashion and style which in itself is a highly expressive narrative.

Cars play a fundamental part in Brighton. A lot of people will do a few laps around Brighton just to show their cars. Guys in cars are usually the envy of everyone there. They will drive around with a car full of friends 'pumpin' their system and picking up girls.
Normally they will then move on to one of the car parks along Brighton. In the car parks they will show their cars and listen to some music. Girls will walk past the car park hoping to get picked up by a guy in a nice car.
The cars are not the most practical cars to drive, there are certain roads they can't drive on, certain places they can't park and it depends on the weather, if they can drive or not. Because the cars usually have a large number of defects, driving in the rain is especially not recommended. Driving into a puddle has the ability to knock a car's rear bar off.
The car is a status symbol, the guy with the nicest car will get all the pretty girls. Also because a lot of the car parts are acquired illegitimately the person with the best car is also seen as the most 'connected'. Driving a nice car is a sign of elevated status. It is a sign of how much money you make and how creative you are. Having something unique done to your car will make you the envy of all the other car owners. Usually the most original car will win the car shows and be in the best magazines.
Normally the owners of the cars will all call each other up and drive down to Wollongong together, or go to Bondi on a Friday or Saturday night. They wouldn't usually leave their car unattended out of fear for its safety, even if the car isn't stolen there is the possibility of it being keyed (scratched) or damaged in some other way. Insurance is also a hassle as insurance companies either won't insure the car or want too much money for it.
The cars are usually just for show, they are not their regular cars. Most of these guys will have a 'get-around' that they will utilise for driving to work, or to the store etc. leaving their 'babys' for the weekend.
19 year old Hiba, Lebanese background, GENERATE researcher



STYLE MERCHANTS

Shopping was one of the most popular activities for young women from all backgrounds. Shopping combines the social pleasure of being with other people with the enjoyment of seeing new products and styles. Young men were less into shopping as an activity but the shopping mall was no less important as a site for social interaction.

Most young people expressed an interest in fashion even though they almost always say their own style is unique and not following any particular trend. Fashion is perhaps the greatest indicator of the twin impulses to belong and to remain distinct, both from friends and from family. There is a great desire to be both accepted for one's fashion sense and to stand out.

I don't want to be seen as conservative but I don't want to be seen at the other extreme either. Umm, I'm creative. I may not look it today (laughs) but yeah, creative. I don't want to buy something everyone has like you know how camel colour is really in? Yeah, I'm interested in different things. Original but not too wacky, not too extreme but original and not conservative, not boring. Any ideas? What have other people said?
19 year old Rana, Lebanese background

Most of the ways in which young people described their own fashion was about displaying their identity, that is, saying something about who they thought they were. This includes very important value sets, and the question of what they are willing to hang on to, what to let go of, and what to negotiate is apparent in the descriptions of their own fashion style.

In spite of never seeing themselves as having a distinctively 'ethnic' style most young people could identify the styles of other cultural groups that they saw. These ranged from the Asian 'honkie' and 'VC style', to the sports-wearing 'habib' and trendy 'sharon' styles of Middle Eastern youth, and the 'casual', 'daggy' or 'surfwear' styles of 'Aussies'.

'Honkies' are people from either Taiwan or Hong Kong with a very fashion conscious perspective and they all try to keep up with the current trends. (...) They like to try and act cool and flatter themselves. I just find it disturbing that a man can be that vain. *(On his look?)* My parents don't have a problem with it but my sister says I look like I just got off the boat from mainland China. I dress like what she calls a mainlander.
Q: What does that mean?
Mainland Chinese just have no taste in clothing. They wear whatever comes out of the closet.
Chi, 22 years old, male, Vietnamese background

Q. How would you describe the fashion that other cultural groups wear, like Asians, Middle Eastern, Anglos etc?
Well, if you see any Adidas pants walking 500 metres away, you can always tell it's an Arab. If you see someone wearing microfibre clothes, it's an Asian.
Q. Do you reckon you dress like a typical Asian?
No.
Q. What's typical?
Girls wear size 5 pants that flare out at the bottom so far, they drag along the ground. Platform shoes that are so high that you'd probably stack it and break your ankles. Tight, tight, small, little singlet tops—that, yeah. Well I don't fit the typical Asian girl figure, so I guess that's probably why.
Jessica, 17 years old, Chinese background

Q: And what does VC refer to?
That refers to the 'vietnamese communists', who try to be rebellious, that's kind of their main motto, try to be rebellious. Also there are other groups called 'honkies' and they're mainly Chinese, and their motto is to live life very colourful, so they tend to wear very bright and colourful clothes. And they're mainly into the weird and cool stuff.
Q. Any other groups that you notice?
There are 'surfies', they're mainly Aussies, and they wear these three quarter pants, three quarter shirts. And they're very casual very cool, they like going to the beach, they mainly go discos and everything.
Q: And where do these different groups hang out?
'VCs'—mainly Cabramatta. 'Honkies'—city, Haymarket and stuff. 'Surfies'—maybe the beach, Coogee.
Q. And how do different groups get on?
I don't think they really interact with each other, it's like they all live in a subculture by themselves. They just do whatever they want.
Steven, 16 years old, Chinese-Vietnamese background

The 'habibs' usually hang out outside of the cinemas and near the food courts—it is also common for them to walk around in groups of 5–6. The 'habibs' refers to the group of girls aged 14–17 and the group of guys aged 14–19 that will usually only rock sportswear. (...) Another group of girls is mainly referred to as the 'sharons' because of the way they dress. The main age group for them is 13–16. They will normally get very dressed up and walk around in their finest gear. They don't normally stay in a certain spot unless they are eating at one of the food courts. Otherwise they will walk around hoping to get noticed by the boys. (...) The basic motto for these girls is 'less is more' with tight pants, singlet tops and boob tubes being the norm. (...) It was obvious that they took a lot of pride in their appearance and were confident in themselves. Music was also a heavy influence for this group, with artists like Jennifer Lopez and Britney Spears being idolised by the girls.
Hiba, 19 years old, Lebanese background, GENERATE researcher.

On wearing the Hijab
The scarf is a traditional Muslim headdress. It is worn as a form of modesty to stop men from looking at women in a sexual manner. It is also shown as being a symbol for being religious and for dedicating their lives to living the Muslim way. Yet its wear has increased greatly by young girls 14-17 in the Auburn area. In order to find out why, I did a semi-formal group interview with five girls. Two of them wore the scarf, two did not and one had just recently taken it off. I asked them what the scarf meant to them and they told me that they wore the scarf and the modest clothes because it stopped people from looking at them. They said that it was a religious symbol and they were dedicating their lives to Islam. I asked the two that did not wear it what they thought and they stated that they were not ready for it because wearing it required a commitment and they were not ready to commit. The girl that took the scarf off said that she took it off because she wasn't really ready to make the commitment so she decided to take it off. Deep down she didn't want to wear it.
The girls that wear this scarf are not really overly religious, they do not fit into the stereotype of the suppressed female, they are outspoken and assertive yet they choose to wear it. One of the girls wearing the scarf has a boyfriend, whilst the two that do not wear it and have never worn it do not have boyfriends. They go out regularly, the only difference is they do not show their hair in public.
I asked them if they thought the scarf has become a sort of fashion statement and they said yes. I asked them why and one of them said: 'well boys like good girls that they can marry, they don't want someone that has been with everybody, when we wear the scarf they know that we don't go out with everyone only the people we really like'. Another girl that had worn the scarf for over five years said 'everyone is wearing it so everyone else will, but they aren't truly ready, they just wear it because their friends do'. The group seemed to agree with that girl's explanation most. I asked them what they think contributed to the scarf's success as a fashion statement and one said 'there are people that are truly religious and they set an example for everyone else, a lot of people just copy those people'. Although these girls wear the scarf, their older sisters don't wear it. It is actually the younger girls that are wearing it not the older girls. A lot of people seem to think that these girls are forced to wear the scarf when in reality they choose to because they want to. It is in a sense a symbol of their freedom, the freedom to choose how to live their own lives and break through negative stereotypes of suppressed women that people seem to have of women that choose to wear the scarf. The girls also concluded by saying that the girls that were forced to wear the scarf actually took it off when their parents weren't around anyway.
Hiba, 19 years old, GENERATE researcher

Culture

Young people frequently make distinctions between themselves based on whether they were recently arrived or not and this is reflected in style. Being 'FOB' (fresh off the boat) is a disadvantage; it's seen as being out-of-fashion, 'not cool'. Cuong, now 21 years old but who came to Australia when he was 12, was often told by his younger sister how to dress: 'Don't wear that—it looks too fobby'. So, although a strong connection to a homeland and knowledge of traditions is seen by many as appealing, if a homeland association makes one appear 'backward' or 'newly arrived' and therefore 'out of touch', then attempts to appear more fashionable can be made.

While there were distinctive 'Asian' or 'Middle Eastern' fashion styles that were always changing and basically more related to global youth culture than any particular cultural background, there are ways in which young people expressed a sense of connection to their background through accessories such as jewellery or symbols on clothing. For example, young men wearing the Turkish national symbol or gold Buddha as a pendant, the Cedar of Lebanon or Thai script on items of clothing.

The idea of display seen in cars and amusement arcades, is also seen in dress and style: moving in groups, and carrying extremely ornamental, colourful mobile phones, hair is gelled and shiny, gold jewellery is frequently worn, and clothes often have reflective surfaces. The sheen of these young men and women is eye-catching.

For many young people hair has become their most individual expression: rainbow colours, blonde tips on black hair, oiled and carefully maintained dreadlocks, elaborate buns like colourful bird's nests, shaved sides with product above on longer coloured locks.

Straightening your hair is part of a wog girl's life.
18 year old Belinda, Lebanese background

For others, their fashion sense was associated with distinguishing themselves from their parents, and often from an underprivileged background.

Q: Where do you do most of your shopping?
Oxford. Esprit. Usually more Armani, that type class. Because when I was young my parents never bought me anything so I told myself like when I grow up and I have money I'm going to buy myself really nice clothes and so yeah I usually buy a lot of dress up clothes. (...) I like to look really high class.
21 year old Andrew, Vietnamese background

Dress also relates to the external display of values. A young Lebanese woman felt that Lebanese girls 'cover up' more (that is, wear longer sleeved shirts as opposed to boob tubes) for the sake of 'comfort'. Even so, the way young people dress is at times viewed as transgressive both by parents and wider society. Parents speak of wanting their daughters to wear looser and longer clothes and their sons to wear tighter trousers (to avoid the baggy look they associate with 'gangsters').

While some of these activities—shopping, fashion, even cars—have an air of history about them, that is, other young people in previous generations were also doing similar things, what Middle Eastern and Asian youth are doing with this raw material of popular culture is what is unique. The contemporary era provides a whole new set of influences that ensures new sets of meaning are given to these activities and their outcomes. There are now many more global popular cultural influences young people can access than in previous generations as well as more connection with homelands through travel, media and new technologies such as the Internet.

The introduction and use of new technology is entirely unique to this generation, and it is impacting on the way we communicate and on creative cultural production itself. In particular, young people are translating their sociability into new formats and new cyber-spaces.

DIGITAL CULTURES

The adoption of new technologies by young people was apparent in every group interviewed. Young people in this study were avid mobile phone users, and most were very comfortable with using computers, computer games and the Internet. The researcher Johnson-Eilola is 'among those who believe there is indeed a changed consciousness and way of being in the world for young people as a consequence of their immersion in digital culture and the new technologies' (cited in Beavis 2000: 115).

We are more spontaneous than, well you think before mobile phones came out it used to be, you know you plan something a week ahead or a few days ahead at minimum. You'd say it in person then you'd ring each other up, you know, then you'd have to be able to talk on the phone. But now it's just, you can call them up half an hour before and you'd be out you know. I think it's more spontaneous these days because of mobiles.
Haline, 20 years old, Cambodian, Chinese, Vietnamese and French background

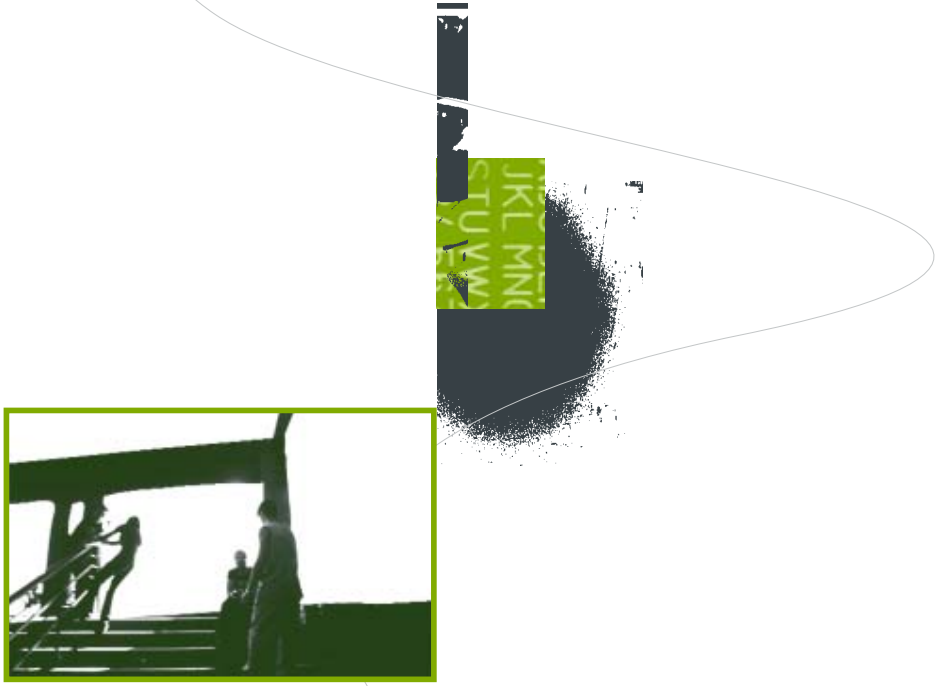
Youth give a primacy to the *social* aspects of technology use. So the Internet was used mostly for emailing and chatting, and games were not usually played alone. Some young people spent 30–50 hours a week on their mobiles. They also display a great deal of ingenuity—working out the best free time deals with each phone company, using more than one SIM card and so on. Mobile phones for many signalled a new form of freedom from parental control.

Usually everyone calls everyone else's mobiles—that way the parents don't get all controlling over the people that you are talking to.
20 year old Emine, female, Turkish background

The Internet is used mostly at home, at the houses of friends and relatives, but also at school, work, university and in Internet cafes. The interactive and social aspect of the computer were repeatedly mentioned. The Internet was often selected over television as the most popular media because of the choice of sites and its interactive nature.

I use the 'Net every night for email chatting.
Q: And what media do you prefer?
Probably Internet, I guess because you can go wherever you want I guess and look up whatever you want. On television they're the ones showing you what to watch, it's not really interactive. TV is good but Internet is better, yeah.
19 year old Marjay, a Fine Arts student, Filipino background

The adoption of new technologies by young people was apparent in every group interviewed



Chatting with friends online was a popular activity, including meeting friends on ethnic-specific chat lines, again at times related to the subversion of parental control.

I used to go onto *ninemsn*, now I'm going onto *#ozturks*. See what the rest of the people with the same common group are doing and meeting people of the same nationality.
24 year old Stephen, Turkish background

Q: Do you have any other hobbies?
Going on the 'Net to chat and check my email. There's a program called Mirc and I go onto that and I usually go into *turks* (channel) or *ozturks* (channel). Turks is just another channel we've got and it's where all the teeny boppers go probably from 14 to 18 (years old). O*zturks* is a more popular one that everybody goes onto and *turks* is just another one someone, friends on the 'Net, has organised and started. Every night we basically go on (the 'Net). Me, my brother and my fiance for at least a couple of hours from 7:30 and I'll go to sleep at 10:30 and my brother will still be on there till like 5:00 in the morning.
21 year old Refika, Turkish background

'Turkish' Chat Room
Over a period of one week, a GENERATE researcher chatted regularly with people in this chat room.
I have only met one person who is not Turkish that was also using this site. The majority of people that chat are aged between 15–21. However, there is a range of people on there that are outside this age bracket. I found that the most popular time people were chatting was from 7pm till 12pm. At these times there were always at least 100 people chatting at a time. On a good night, there were 200 people chatting. Also, the majority of Turkish people on this site were from Sydney, a small number from Melbourne and Turkey. Looking at the nicknames people were using on the site, there were many influences that could be identified in relation to:
- *Turkish jargon or slang words*
- *Turkish music artists*
- *Their real Turkish name*
- *American music artists*
- *Cartoon characters*
- *Locations, Sydney being the most used*
- *Cars*

I found that most of the group chatting did not want to be identified at all, even though they were willing to answer my questions. It seems that the creation of a fictional name allowed them to feel more comfortable with chatting to another Turkish person especially one of the opposite sex. I found that overall they used it as an opportunity to get to know a possible future partner without the disclosure of their true identity and the gossip that follows. Once the trust was built over a few nights of chatting, it was then that they may reveal their true identity to the other person. In a culture so critical of the actions made by the younger generation, many are attracted to the appeal of a hidden physical identity.
Another reason why this chat room was popular was that it was an opportunity to meet new people and make new friends. As the Australian cultural experience is very different to the Turkish experience, many find it easier to relate and interact with people whom they share the same traditions and experiences. Others would regularly chat to their existing friends on the channel instead of calling them. One person I chatted with said they wanted to make 'a real friend'. That is, someone that will be honest and they can trust. But most of all it seems to be a hobby that has created new friendships.
Ozdem, 20 years old, Turkish background, GENERATE researcher

Computer games are familiar to most young people, but more frequently played by young men. Networked games are also popular and are played in shops along George Street in the city as well as in the suburbs. This is a very social use of computer games, with groups of friends or other players forming teams. The computer arcades have been implicated in changing demographics of an area. In Parramatta, the opening of an Internet cafe with networked games has seen the return of more Asian youth to that particular area.

Q: Do you like computer games?
I love it. As you can see I've got a Playstation 2 there. I bought it on the first day it came out. Like I pre-ordered mine.
Q: How much time would you spend on it?
It depends, I mean I clocked (finished) all the games now so I don't spend a lot of time on it now. But when I buy a new game I'll probably spend like 4–5 hours a day for two weeks until I finish the game and that's it and the Playstation's just sitting there doing nothing.
21 year old Andrew, Vietnamese background

One computer-related activity that seems to be popular primarily with young Asian men, is computer case modification. This involves a similar process to doing up a car—adding extras, reshaping, repainting. Like 'zines (home produced magazines often personal or related to particular issues or topics), computer case modifying is part of a more underground, quiet form of youth culture.

SPORTING CULTURES

Sport on the other hand, is a very visible noisy part of youth culture. Sport has a particular importance as it is not only another leisure activity, but another way that young people can connect to their cultural background, again by surrounding themselves with the familiar, with people who shared similar values and expectations (including the importance of a particular team winning!). Sporting affiliations highlight some of the easier cross-cultural manoeuvres between migrant cultures (the popularity of the Asian martial art Tae Kwon Do in the Turkish community for example), and at times it also highlights community boundaries.

Q: Why did you decide to join a Turkish team?
Well, everyone's close. It's like a family, it seems like a family. We all know each other like the committee knows me from when I was a little kid so that's why it feels really close. It feels good playing for our Turkish community. As you can see we get good crowds in and they come because they like to watch us play. There are many women watching as you can see—sisters, wives, aunties—they're all here. It's like a family get-together.
Sertac, competes in the Turkish soccer team, the Auburn Stars

While some sports were seen to have an association with a cultural background, other sporting interests were very diverse bearing no relation to parental interests or experience. For example, 21 year old Andrew from a Vietnamese background, now living in Bonnyrigg, enjoys 'golf, golf, golf, golf. After class I'm heading off to the golf course. That's all I do now. That's twenty-four hours, even at night time, (...) I go practice at the driving range'. Other examples include:

I like roller-blading, basketball and snooker or pool, at least once or twice a week.
19 year old Marjay, male, a Fine Arts student, Filipino background

Q: Do you like to play any sports?
I'm considering kickboxing at the moment. I don't mind football. I really like American gridiron.
22 year old Enver, male, Turkish background

Rugby league clubs, such as the Parramatta Eels and the Canterbury Bulldogs, have also developed strong fan bases among particular communities, but it would seem more so because these teams represent a locality. 'We're Parra boys, through and through' (David, 18 year old Lebanese background, talking about his group of friends), who not only support the Eels, but will hang out at Westfields on a Thursday night and Our Lady of Lebanon church on a Sunday.

We began by asserting that there is no such thing as a typical 'youth'. Even in the broad differences between the social activities of young people from Middle Eastern and Asian backgrounds. There is enormous diversity. While the perception may be that Middle Eastern youth prefer cars and a particular style of clothing, some nights you may find a Lebanese party in a Karaoke bar, or a Turkish kid at a Tae Kwon Do gym. This reinforces the importance of other inputs such as parental influence, peer group, gender and socioeconomic environment in forming the various expressions of popular youth culture.

The categories of popular culture that we have looked at in this section are broad, and not exclusive by any means. But fashion, music, technology and pastimes such as cruising, sports or just hanging out are prime sites for both creating a sense of individual identity and also a sense of belonging, whether the group be defined ethnically or not. Looks and style are carefully crafted to be both distinct and to be accepted as part of a social group. All play a major role in the social lives of young people, involving significant resources, both social and financial. It's in this consumption that popular culture has been, and is being, reworked and created; and part of our migration heritage is shaped and given public display.

CONCLUSION

By exploring youth culture in the contemporary moment it is apparent that migration heritage is much more than the stories of settlement and the memories of homelands, or the cuisines, musics and rituals of 'other' cultures. Migration heritage is transformative and inventive. It is continually being reinvested with meaning from a range of sources including global fashions and music as well as the cultural productions of other societies; societies which may have been the origin of migrations and which are now themselves being influenced by rapidly changing cultural markets and social environments.

The young people that took part in this study most commonly define themselves as decidedly Australian but with generally quite strong connections to their parents' background. They can generally move between family and friendship networks with ease but sometimes also with conflict between parental expectations and the desire to be accepted by peers. Their social mobility and their skill at accommodating different cultural settings, from Lebanese weddings to Chinese New Year celebrations, at times makes them feel 'in-between'. This 'in-betweenness' is experienced not as a lack but as a rich and varied set of experiences which they can draw upon at different moments, but is also, at other times, a source of confusion.

Young people invest migration heritage with a new meaning, consciously or not, of 'hybridity', but even this has its complexities. Young people can be simultaneously hybrid in some areas and distinctly of a particular cultural background in others. Identity is something fluid, and rather than 'caught between two cultures' young people can both essentialise their identities or display strategic hybridity (Noble et al. 1999). It depends on the context or circumstance. This suggests that holding on to a strong public display of cultural identification is a highly conscious decision for the most part, and is most often related to how secure young people feel.

While some young people are very consciously claiming their ethnic identity, they also link a more 'tolerant' and 'open-minded' attitude with their association with diverse friendship networks. Culturally diverse groups in this way give young people the ability to associate less problematically with a wider range of other groups, make connections and affiliations and establish cross-cultural interests and activities. While many young people have a sense of exclusion and rejection from mainstream society, for the most part they are not cynical about a commitment to values of tolerance, equality and diversity.

This indicates that many young people from migrant backgrounds could have the socio-cultural resources with which to reinvigorate our cultural institutions. Youth culture is invested with continual references both to their everyday experiences and to other external influences upon them. The search for affinities and connections across different cultures is expressed through young people's appropriation and creation of symbols and markers that are relevant to their own cross-cultural experiences.

Young people from migrant backgrounds can feel a sense of marginality or liminality within the dominant culture, and this provides the catalyst for creating new modes of self-expression, which are not derived from the mainstream. Individual young people define themselves by the melding together of invention and convention, transgression and ordinariness. In every story told here, young people are playing within the boundaries of these two positions and in that backward and forward movement they bring forth heritage from many cultural sources.

This is the new, living migration heritage that these young people bring to Sydney and Australia. Even given the reality of financial and social constraints, young people still have access to a large array of cultural inputs, from their diverse friendship networks, their families, and mainstream local and global popular culture, all producing material out of which young people can fashion their identities. This youth cultural fusion generates meaning that is often lost on most 'outsiders'. But through increasing participation of young people in community, social and cultural institutions, it will begin to permeate our representations, our technologies and social structures, our language, and cultural production. These changes will mean that young people will go on to create new images of Australia.

The challenge is to ensure that our institutions create a positive environment for young people to develop a sense that they are Australian and have an identity that is valued and respected (Guerra and White 1995: 7). If the cultural agency of these young people is fostered and their contributions to urban life recognised, then a new space will be opened to reimagine migration heritage as being at the vanguard of cultural production, artistic expression and social change.

Conclusion

Points

Discussion Points

The following points are based on two key concepts. Firstly, the importance of youth participation in decision-making processes extending from local communities through local authorities, education and welfare bodies to state government and cultural institutions. The second acknowledges the importance of creating opportunities for cultural collaboration among young people themselves.

- Increased opportunities for collaboration between young people and local government in the design and management of public spaces;
- Increased involvement of young people in policy making areas of government concerning young people—in education and training, law, policing, welfare and the arts;
- Increased opportunities for young people from migrant backgrounds to create their own images of what it is to be Australian through their participation in the creation and retelling of stories in the media;
- Support for cultural programs which continue to document migration heritage in the making;
- The identification of future projects that may enhance our understanding of the processes of youth cultural production;
- Support for educational, artistic and leisure focused opportunities for young people from different backgrounds to work together.

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