

**Confluents: A study of children of interfaith and  
intercultural marriages between  
Christian Anglophones and Muslim immigrants  
in Australia in the 1990s**

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A thesis presented in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree  
of  
Doctor of Philosophy

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September 2014

## Abstract

While intermarriage has often been studied, there has been little research on the children of such marriages, who are too easily assumed to be 'confused' about their identity and, for lack of a respectful title, often labelled negatively as 'mixed' or 'half'. This thesis proposes a new term, 'Confluent', which means flowing together, uniting, as with two tributaries of a river.

Interviews were conducted initially with 69 Confluent children, aged between 16 and 28, of one Anglophone Australian Christian parent and one non-Anglophone immigrant Muslim parent in major cities around Australia. As a basis for comparison, interviews were also conducted with 163 young Muslims with two immigrant Muslim parents, termed here 'Unitaries', and with some parents from each group (50 in total). All interviews took place during the 1990s but some follow-up re-interviews were carried out more recently.

The study indicated that respondents from intercultural and interfaith marriages had a Confluent culture at home, created there from various possible combinations of their parents' dual cultures and religions. This enabled the Confluent children to create their own individual composite culture, based on what they experienced daily at home. They felt this gave them the ability to possess, and be confident in, 'multiple identities' and to present different selves as the context required.

This resulted in a positive experience for Confluents, who were able to relate to diverse people within a shared Australian identity. In this respect, they differed from the Unitary children of two Muslim immigrant parents because they had a wider and more open choice of identity options and were more comfortable in all of them. They shared the experience of some hostility towards Muslims, which was more evident in the re-interviews, but Confluents were more confident in resisting it.

Confluent respondents were enthusiastic about the suggested new term and expressed an interest in having a more public collective identity.

\*\*\*Special note: the terms 'Confluent/s' and 'Unitary/ies' are strictly copyrighted and trademarked to Karima Moraby. These terms and any content of this thesis may not be used without express written permission of the author, Karima Moraby.

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# Declaration

I certify that this thesis does not incorporate without acknowledgement any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any university; and that to the best of my knowledge and belief it does not contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text.

.....

**Signature**

.....

**Date**

# Acknowledgements

I thank the Almighty God first and foremost.

I thank my parents, who have been and will always be an inspiration to me, for their love, support and shaping the person that I am.

I thank Dr Constance Lever-Tracy for not only her supervision, guidance and help but her enduring patience, generosity, never ending support and encouragement. Over the years, Constance has become much more than a supervisor to me, but a mentor whom I consider as family. I could not have done this thesis without her.

I thank Associate Professor Debra King for being my second supervisor and for her support throughout my studies, not forgetting my previous second supervisors Emeritus Professor Riaz Hassan, Professor Robert Holton and Dr Dusko Sekulic.

I thank the numerous individuals who provided me assistance in finding interviewees including community and religious leaders around Australia, with a special mention to Mr Alumiddin in Sydney.

I thank all the youth and parent interviewees who shared their time and life experiences with me, trusting me and taking me into their confidence.

Thanks to Margaret Bowden, member of the SA Society of Editors and IPEd, for her dedication and professional editing in accordance with the Editing Standards for Theses.

I thank my large and extended multicultural family, especially my children, siblings and parents-in-law for their support and patience.

Last but not least, I am grateful to my husband for his love, support, patience and never failing belief in me.