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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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.

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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.

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Signature

……...

Date

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PART ONE: THESIS BACKGROUND

The first part of the thesis introduces the topic and explains the study's theoretical framework. It explores the literature about Muslim youth in Australia, and intermarriage and Confluence in Western countries. It outlines the community context of Muslims in Australia during the 1990s, and describes the methodology, hypotheses and key questions.

Chapter 1: Introduction

This chapter provides an explanation about why I have written this thesis. First, I give a brief outline of the topic and explain how my personal experience forms the starting point of this study. I then explain the problems I encountered finding a sympathetic supervisor and how the terms used in this study, 'Confluent' and 'Unitary', came about. I go on to explain the short story, poem and text about 'stigma' that were used in my interviews, and the reasons for their importance in this study. I then outline the different parts of this thesis.

The topic: intermarriage

Intermarriage implies the crossing of ethnic, linguistic, religious, racial or national boundaries by a couple in life's most intimate union. The increasing occurrence of intermarriage across national barriers is one aspect of globalisation that is frequently overlooked. Intermarriage in Australia is on the rise as a result of Australia being a multicultural society.

Demographer Charles Price (cited in Levey, 2012,84) estimated that in 1996 over 8 million Australians had three or more ancestries and over three million had at least four ancestries. Furthermore, he suggested that:

> Not only will this element [children from Intermarriages] soon become the largest ethnic element in the population but it will have more and more influence in determining Australia's identity and values (Price, 1994,11).

The research for my Honours thesis and this PhD thesis looks at the children from these marriages. The subject of this PhD thesis – children of what are generally called 'mixed-marriages' – can be seen as part of the wider, well-researched (especially in USA) area of second-generation studies. While there had been a number of studies of intermarriage in general in the nineties, little had been written about children from such marriages, especially from Muslim-Christian intermarriages. Thus, the purpose of my research was to investigate children from intercultural and interfaith marriages, looking specifically at children who have one Anglophone Australian Christian parent and one non-Anglophone migrant Muslim parent. The term I have used for these children is Confluents, which means flowing together, uniting, as with two tributaries of a river. I chose the term Confluents because it was a positive reference to these children compared to previous

references such as ‘half’ or ‘mixed’, which have negative connotations. One particularly negative example was the 1996 report of the then Mayor of Port Lincoln, Peter Davis, saying, “If you are a child of a mixed race, you are a mongrel and that’s what happens when you cross dogs or whatever” (Leech,1996,13). This kind of attitude reinforced my desire to study these children. I decided also to include children with two non-Anglophone migrant Muslim parents, whom I have termed ‘Unitaries’, to provide a base for comparison with the Confluents.

My experience

I am a Confluent – a child from an interfaith and intercultural marriage – hence the importance and significance of this topic to me. My mother, an Anglophone Australian Catholic and my father, a migrant Lebanese Muslim, have been married just under 50 years. They are still happily married with six children and eleven grandchildren. My parents are a clear example of intermarriage between two very different cultures and religions; an example of merging together successfully.

My father was born and raised in Lebanon, an ethnically and religiously diverse community where Muslims, Christians and Jews of many sects had lived, interacted and sometimes intermarried for centuries. My mother was born and raised in rural Australia at a time when the overwhelming majority were of British stock and followed the Christian faith, and the White Australia Policy reigned supreme.

I am the third child of the six. My parents raised me as a Muslim but taught me to be respectful of all religions. My father was raised in a place in Lebanon where Christians and Muslims lived side by side. My mother was raised a strong Catholic who wanted to be a Catholic nun like her aunt. She was surprised to discover that my father, a Muslim, believed in God. I was raised in a very open-minded way, so much so that I remember when I was only seven asking my mother what to say to people when they asked me where I was from. My mother replied that I should say to everybody that I belong to the world. From then on, as a child, I would say this, which helped me feel a sense of pride; that I was lucky to be ‘mixed’. Both of my parents would discuss our background as an advantage and something of which to be proud. My father used to say to me that even if I experienced prejudice because of it, I should still be proud and feel grateful for the prejudice because it would make me feel stronger and prouder of who I am in the long term.

My parents were always positive about both cultures and religions, and raised us with the best of both. Even though my mother had converted, after I was born, and

we were raised as Muslims, my parents would always tell us about the similarities of both religions as well as where they differed. We were raised to be informed Muslims and to understand what we believed in, not simply to follow a religion that we did not understand.

I am married to an Afghan Australian Muslim man whose immediate and extended family in Australia had intermarried both culturally and religiously. Even though a Unitary, my husband shared with me a common belief in the benefits of intermarriage. For him, it was a positive that I was a Confluent. My children have Confluent cousins on both sides of the extended family. They know how to say 'grandma' and 'granddad' in so many different languages, and already have an understanding of the different religions in their extended family.

Misinformation about intermarriage in Australia

I have thought about intermarriage from a young age and distinctly remember my sister asking me why I needed to discuss it all the time. One day, when studying at the State Library of South Australia, I decided to investigate the topic. I was shocked to find that not only was there limited information about intermarriage but it was most often negative, for example:

> The child who doesn't know who or what he [sic] is because his [sic] parents, however happy their mixed-marriage may be, are identified with different religions may become emotionally insecure, unhappy and even on occasion develop neuroses (Gordon 1964,3).

Gordon and others, such as Bhabha (1994), Stephan and Stephan (1980), Stonequist (1937) and Quandagno (1981), argued that the children of intermarriage, rather than their parents, were the victims because of their uncertainty concerning their identity. Gordon (1964) argued that even the most well intentioned intermarried parents would find it difficult to provide their children with the security that results from "knowing who I am and what I am" (Gordon, 1964,317). Gordon argued that a child's growth is associated with emotional factors as well as physical factors. Therefore, growth is inhibited when a child experiences insecurity concerning his/her identity (Gordon, 1964,318).

This argument does not stand up against my experience and that of other Confluents I know. Being raised as a Confluent has helped me in life. Rather than suffering from neuroses, I have always felt that having a mixed background is an

advantage. This conflict between Gordon's argument and my experience led me to wonder what was the case generally for children from interfaith and intercultural marriages. Upon further investigation, I came across research that became the catalyst for me to undertake my Honours thesis. Wallman (1983) noted that children from intermarriage have a more open choice of identity options and thus possess multiple identities. As she notes:

> ..it is not hard to imagine the same child[from an intermarriage] "claiming" all those identities, not because he lacks a single identity focus and is (therefore) "in crisis", but because multiple identity is itself a healthy choice (Wallman, in Fried, 1983,74).

In addition, Dinnerstein and Reimers (1975) argued for the importance of intermarriage and the children from these marriages to Australia's multiculturalism, which also encouraged my exploration of this topic:

> Racial prejudice still exists and will continue to until religious and racial intermarriage becomes more commonplace, and one's background is of no more importance than the state in which one is born (Dinnerstein & Reimers, 1975,155).

This was when my determination to study intermarriage and children of intermarriage in depth began. I decided then to write my Honours thesis about it. Having completed that thesis, I decided even broader and more in-depth investigation was needed. This PhD study, 'Confluents: A study of children of interfaith and intercultural marriages between Christian Anglophones and Muslim immigrants in Australia in the 1990s', is the result of that decision.

Initiating the PhD

It took some time to find the right discipline and the right supervisor to support me in writing this thesis. I first approached the Anthropology Department of my local university but when I was told that I would have to look at tribes in Melanesia, I realised immediately that was not what I wanted the study to be about. After discussing my desire to write about the topic with my father, he suggested we approach the then head of the Department of Sociology, whom he knew was involved in an intercultural and interreligious marriage, to ask if I could study such a topic in Sociology (which was also my major for my Bachelor of Arts). When my father took me to him and I explained what I wanted to explore, he was sympathetic

to my topic and agreed it needed exploration. He then suggested that there was only one supervisor who had looked into this area a little but in regard to Aboriginal people.

I approached the supervisor but felt she was not sympathetic. As soon as I mentioned the term ‘half’, she said it should not be used because of its negative connotations and she was not sure if it would be possible to study intermarriage and children of intermarriage in the way I wanted. I walked out of the room very disillusioned. I began to feel that the research I was so desperate to carry out was never going to happen.

My father told me to go back to the head of the department and ask if anybody else would be willing to supervise me. I did so, and the head of the department suggested another supervisor. When my father and I walked into her room and I told her about my topic, I saw in her eyes a reflection of my passion for it. Although intermarriage was not her area of research, she shared my excitement and immediately agreed to be my supervisor. I knew instantly that my study had begun.

As I have already stated, I was never satisfied with the terminology ‘half’, ‘mixed’, ‘mixed-blood’ or even ‘half caste’ used to describe children from intermarriage (a neutral term). I felt that these terms did not describe accurately how I or other children from such marriages felt. It was as if we, as a group, were not whole or complete. My supervisor and I had numerous discussions about the terminology, from which we devised a list of possible alternatives. I was attracted to the term Confluent, which I felt best described me. When I explained this term to other Confluents during the study’s interview process, they all approved and saw it as positive. My supervisor and I also agreed to refer, in contrast, to children of two non-Anglophone Muslim parents as Unitaries. These terms were established and used in all of the thesis interviews and other thesis work. I have since wondered whether the absence of a sufficiently respectful term had inhibited earlier research about such children.

Preparatory work

I started work on the thesis in 1993 and completed the fieldwork in 1999. This was followed by long intermissions for reasons of ill health and raising a family of six children. I conducted a survey of the literature on religion, identity and society, Muslims, Muslim youth in Western countries, intermarriages and their children (see chapters 3-5). This research enabled me to identify themes and generate questions

for the study (see Chapter 6, including the Appendixes).

I talked to many youth, community and religious leaders in cities around Australia, and attended and participated in a large number of social and community events. Unitaries were easy to find and approach at these events. Confluents were harder to identify, and were found mainly through word of mouth and snowball introductions. These activities helped me to develop an in-depth understanding of the social environment of young Muslims in Australia, and to establish the contacts and networks for finding respondents for the study. This process developed momentum over a number of years. Eventually, I had gathered 163 open-ended interviews with Unitaries, 69 with Confluents and 50 with a selection of their parents. I have written up the analysis and comparison of these interviews in chapters 7-19.

There is no claim about how far either group is fully representative and clearly, for example, social isolates who had cut themselves off from their religion are underrepresented.

Three triggers – Sophia's story, Gibran's poem and Goffman's stigma

Three items evoked strong reactions in me when I first encountered them. The first was a short story called 'Sophia's story' by a Unitary Muslim Friend. The second was a poem by Lebanese American Christian poet Khalil Gibran. The third was Goffman's (1963) concept of stigma. I decided to present these three items to all the study respondents in addition to a schedule of questions (see Appendix 3), and to analyse and compare their reactions.

Sophia's story

After I had completed my Honours thesis, a Unitary Muslim friend handed me a story she had written about me.

> *Sophia's story*
>
> *"Where's my foundation?" screamed Sophia from the bathroom, her voice echoed across the house in a deafening tone. She was going through her ritual of preparing herself as she always does prior to an engagement. This ritual drove the family into a frenzy, only the lucky few escaped. Sophia was incredibly self-conscious, unless she felt she looked perfect, her night would be ruined for not only her but her friends as well. Despite reassuring*

comments from her best friends, Sophia strongly felt the need to be accepted. She was not fully Lebanese nor fully Australian, Muslim but still felt a connection to Catholicism, neither cultural group accepted her as one of their own. Her only means to acceptance was her physical appearance and her mental ability to swap very quickly into her prescribed role/identity. Sophia was a Chameleon, who changed her appearance (and name) in relation to the environment she was in. She looked Lebanese at a Lebanese function, Australian at an Australian do, and Muslim in a religious function. Sophia would become Sophie.

Despite the appearance change and her three different characters she conducted herself in, she was Sophia in her own right, which only her parents accepted her as. Sophia's personality reflected her inner self's fight for acceptance. Not a day went by in Sophia's life where she did not argue - a reflection of her struggle. Her struggle for acceptance and belonging did not bring out a submissive nature in Sophia but rather a dominant nature determined to succeed.

When I read the story, I could not believe that was how she saw me. I immediately asked her whether this was what she felt all children from mixed-marriages were like, or just me. She answered that even though she did not know many children from mixed-marriages, she felt that this is how they would all be.

I was really surprised because I had discussed my Honours thesis so many times with her but she still felt this way. When I asked her whether this was what second-generation Muslim youth would be like, she said this would apply only to children from mixed-marriages. I immediately wondered whether she was alone in perceiving Confluents in this way. Did other Unitaries feel the same way? I decided to use this story as a way to determine whether there was a difference between how Confluents and Unitaries responded to it.

Around the same time, I was asked to give a talk about Lebanese youth at Lebanese National Day. After the talks, the town Mayor at the time read out a poem by Lebanese Christian poet Khalil Gibran about youth. Upon hearing this poem, I immediately thought of Unitaries and their struggles with their identities. I thought of the young people I had interviewed for my Honours thesis and how this poem seemed to explain the way they told me they felt.

Poem

And a woman who held a babe against her bosom said, Speak to us of Children:

Your children are not your children
They are the sons and daughters of life's longing for itself.
They come through you but not from you,
And though they are with you yet they belong not to you.

You may give them your Love but not your thoughts,
For they have their own thoughts.

You may house their bodies but not their souls,
For their souls dwell in the house of to-morrow,
Which you cannot visit, not even in your dreams.
You may strive to be like them, but seek not to make them like you.

For life goes not backward nor tarries with yesterday.
You are the bows from which your children as living arrows are sent forth.

The archer sees the mark upon the path of the infinite, and He bends you with His might that His arrows may go swift and far.
Let your bending in the Archer's hand be for gladness,
*For even as He loves the arrow that flies, so he loves also the bow that is stable (*Khalil Gibran from 'The Prophet', 1992,20-23*).*

I remember thinking that I wanted to use this poem and ask young people what they thought when they read it; whether it depicted their feelings. On the way home, discussing this poem with my father (who had all Khalil Gibran's poems and books at home and knew his work well), I realised he did not see the poem the same way I did. This made me think about how parents of Confluents and Unitaries needed to be given this poem and asked whether they felt it explained their situation.

Goffman's notion of stigma

Erving Goffman, in his book 'Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity' (1963,3), argues that stigma – a powerful negative social label that radically changes a person's social identity and social concept, and is intimately associated with stereotype – is related to the unconscious expectations and norms that act as

unseen arbitrators in all social encounters. He also argues that smooth interaction depends upon the participants having a socially accredited identity that is acceptable to others. Whether it is a blind man, the dwarf, or, as in my research, a member of a religious minority, all share some decisive characteristics; they are all socially 'abnormal' and, therefore, in danger of being considered less than human. Thus, stigma is a study of situations where normal and abnormal meet (Goffman, 1963,ch.1).

I decided to discuss stigma with Confluent and Unitary youth, and ask them if they felt a stigma was attached to Muslims and/or Arabs in Australia.

Thesis structure

In the five parts of my thesis, I attempt to demonstrate that every child from an intermarriage has multiple selves and they use those different selves to give the kind of image demanded by the social situation. Thus, the child from an intermarriage also has the ability to behave in different ways to different people, whether it be in the way they dress, speak or act.

In the first part (chapters 1-6), I outline the theoretical framework of the study, and look at the literature on intermarriage and Confluence in Australia and Muslims in Australia. I then describe the methodology of my thesis, how interviews were conducted and the problems I encountered along the way.

In the second part (chapters 7-9), I analyse and compare open-ended interviews with the 50 parents of Unitaries and Confluents from different states of Australia, exploring the similarities and differences in their understanding of, and attitudes to, their children.

In the third part (chapters 10-13), I look at Unitary Muslim youth in Australia, analysing 163 interviews from around the country to discover their experiences and attitudes regarding the perception of others, whether or not the youth feel Australian, the factors that affect this feeling, and issues regarding their culture and religion.

In Part Four (chapters 14-17), I look at Confluent youth in Australia, analysing 69 interviews from around the country. I focus on the perception of others, whether or not the youth feel Australian, the factors that affect this feeling, and what culture and religion they see themselves belonging to.

In Part Five (chapters 18-19), I focus on the similarities and differences between

Confluent and Unitary respondents. I also analyse the interviewees' responses to Sophia's story, Khalil Gibran's poem and Goffman's definition of stigma as clear indicators of some of the similarities and differences between the two groups.

Finally, I conclude the thesis in Chapter 20, in which I briefly discuss changes for Confluents and Unitaries since the nineties, and the need for positive new terminology such as Confluents and Unitaries to provide a collective identity for children of intermarriage.

Chapter 2: Theoretical Framework of the Study – Self and Identity

Introduction

Allen Chun (1994,7), in his paper 'Ethnic Consciousness, Cultural Discourse and National Identity, or Three Takes on Chineseness', argues that despite the fact that ethnicity and culture are often used as metaphorical constructs for identity, these three concepts are analytically quite distinct. I agree with Chun and look at all three concepts as separate but interrelated theoretical dimensions that can provide questions to structure my empirical comparative study of Muslim and Confluent youth in Australia. In this chapter, I discuss how all three components affect both the "Public Self" and the "Private Self", because "society must be studied in the individual and the individual must be studied in society; those who desire to treat politics and morals apart from one another will never understand either" (Rousseau, cited in Westen, 1985,xi).

In the first part of this chapter, I focus on the individual as a construction of 'self' by both internal and external forces. In the second part, I focus on culture, asking whether the individual can create their own culture or only one defined by society. I also focus on the notion of 'other'. In the third section, I look at ethnicity, exploring the importance of ethnicity for the individual and how it shapes the individual in the construction of self.

It is crucial to look at ethnicity, culture and identity in depth when discussing the individual's identity in society. It is essential when discussing any youth in order not only to understand what makes the individual behave the way he or she does, but also to explore the different roles or 'selves' that the individual can, or is forced to, perform.

Looking-glass self

Important here is the notion of a "private and a public" self, as discussed by Ang (1993,3). Ang (2001,23) argues that a "cultural act of self-reading" exists, having previously noted that there is a: "construction of a 'self' for public, not private purposes: the displayed self is a strategically fabricated performance, one which stages a useful identity, an identity which can be put to work"(1993,3).

According to Dewey (1938, cited in Dewey, 1956, 39), there are both objective

(external) and subjective (internal) conditions that are of equal importance to "interaction". Any "normal experience", therefore, is an interplay of both. Thus, the combination or the interaction is called a "situation". As a result, when looking at the situation of Confluents and Unitaries, one must look at both the external and internal conditions involved in their interaction with both the wider community and their local communities.

As Bun and Ngoh (1994,190) clearly point out, the idea that "individuals are subject to the influence and control of external, impersonal forces" is only half the story. The other half necessarily draws our attention to the human ability to form new meanings and new lines of action, to modify these influences and to change socially, often not alone but with others. Therefore, I will not look at these separately but rather show throughout this theoretical chapter the interaction between the two.

The chapter follows de Charms' (1968) distinction between an "origin", which is "a person who perceives his [sic] behaviour as determined by his own choosing" (de Charms,1968,273), and a "pawn", which is "a person who perceives his [sic] behaviour as determined by external forces beyond his [sic] control" (de Charms,1968,273-274). Thus, I will ask not only how much control the individual actually has over whether he or she is a "pawn" or "origin", but also how this perception is reached.

I look at how the question of the individual in society (which is a complex issue that needs examination before one can discuss Confluent children and second-generation ethnic Muslim youth. Even Rousseau (in Westen,1985,xi) stressed the importance of this question before the development of the social sciences.

According to most sociologists and psychologists, the core of the individual's personality lies within the self – the individual's conscious experience of a distinct, personal identity that is separate from all other people and things. Aboulafia (1986,78), in 'The Mediating Self: Sartre and Self Determination', argues that there are two opposing positions when discussing the notion of self: one from a sociological perspective, for example using Mead as a representative; the other using Jean-Paul Sartre for the psychological line of argument. I will, however, look at both the sociological and psychological views as complementary rather than opposing notions in so far as they look at the individual.

The concept of self, according to Robertson (1987,121), is perhaps rather vague,

but nevertheless we all experience it as real regardless of nationality or religion, and have some definite notion of who and what we are. He argues that the self is a social product, created and modified throughout life by interaction with other people. He points out that at birth the individual has no sense of self and thus no awareness of having a separate identity. The infant, therefore, shows no recognition of other people as distinct beings until around six months of age and does not begin to use words such as “I”, “Me” and “Mine” until at least the age of two. Only in the years that follow do young children gradually come to realise that other people also have distinct selves, with needs and outlooks that are different from their own. Not until then can the child begin to appreciate that his or her own self is an identity separate from all others.

There are, according to Robertson, two related theories that best explain how social interaction leads to the emergence of the self. The first is the notion of “the Looking-glass self”. Charles Horton Cooley, a social psychologist, suggested that society represents a looking glass in which we are able to imagine ourselves according to how others react to us. In ‘Human Nature and the Social Order’, Cooley (1964,184) states:

> Each to each a looking-glass
> Reflects the other that doth pass.

He continues:

> As we see our face, figure, and dress in the glass, and are interested in them because they are ours, and pleased or otherwise with them according as they do or do not answer to what we should like them to be; so in imagination we perceive in another’s mind some thought of our appearance, manners, aims, deeds, character, friends, and so on, and are variously affected by it.

Therefore, the “Looking-glass self” implies that a conception of the self is derived from the responses of others. In other words, others serve as a mirror in social interaction, allowing us to see ourselves as we imaginatively place ourselves in their role. Thus, our concept of ourselves is derived from this reflection, for we learn from other people’s responses to us. According to Cooley (1964,184), the process of developing the self involves three steps:

- First we imagine what appearance we present to others, particularly to

"significant others" whose opinions are important to us, like family members, close friends or teachers. Do we imagine ourselves as amusing, intellectual, slender, supportive?

- Second, we interpret others' reactions. We imagine how others judge the appearance that we think we present. Do they really see us the way we imagine we appear, or are they receiving a different impression?

- Third, we use our interpretation of others' judgements to develop our self-concept and feelings about ourselves. If the image we find in the social mirror is favourable, our self-concept is enhanced and our behaviour is likely to be repeated. If the image is unfavourable, our self-concept is diminished and the behaviour is more likely to change, for example through pride or shame. In practice, this process operates instantaneously without persons being aware of it. Thus, it is through this interpretation that we learn our identity. Therefore, Cooley notes that without society, there is no self; no "I" without a corresponding "they" to provide our self-image. At this time, there is what has been termed a "Being for others".

Ian Craib, in 'Existentialism and Sociology' (1976,21), speaks of "Being-for-others" as a type of being different from the "In-itself and the For-itself". This, he argues, is revealed through an "immediate intuition, that of shame" (1976,21), where "shame" is a way of being mindful of oneself in the world:

> It is pre-reflective but subject to reflection. I can be conscious of my consciousness (of) shame, and it is intentional, but the object to which it is directed is myself – a particular 'version' of myself – that appears to others as "the real me"; my "Being-for-others". Shame is inconceivable without the existence of other consciousnesses, yet the problem of their existence (as Sartre has argued) is usually approached as if our first apprehension of the other were the perception of his/her body; the "Other-as-object" (Craib 1976,21-22).

Thus, as Craib argues, when individuals make themselves:

> … "not be" a certain being and then become an object for me, and I lose my object-ness for them, the Other ceases to be the "Other me" (the subject who makes me be an object by refusing to be me). Alternatively, this being is indeed the Other and makes themself not be me, in which case I become an object for

them and they lose their own object-ness. Thus, originally, the other is “Not-me-not-object” (Sartre 1957,285 in Craib,1976,21-25).

George Mead

According to Franco Crespi (1992,76) in his book ‘Social Action and Power’, George Mead’s analysis of the relation between “I” and “Me” made the most important contribution to the sociological theory of action. Crespi stated that Mead criticised the reductionism of the behaviourist approach. Despite theorists such as Whundt, who considered the “subjective Self” to be prior to the communicative social processes, Mead thought that “Selves” had to be explained with reference to the social process and the primary phenomenon of communication (Mead, 1934,69). As part of this perspective, Mead stressed the essentiality of “gesture” as an elementary phenomenon of communication specific to not only the animal world but also the human world.

Furthermore, Mead argues that two distinctive dimensions make up the “Self”: “Me” and “I”. It has been remarked (see Lewis, 1979,261-287) that Mead’s conception of the “I” has some ambiguity and thus can be subject to different interpretations. Mead himself explicitly recognised this ambiguity when he observed that the “I” lies beyond the range of immediate experience (Mead, 1934,140). There cannot be a precise definition of the “I” as such. If “Me” is the organised unit of social codified attitudes, the “I” is the response to these attitudes; the typical individual reaction to the socially organised “Me”. In making a distinction between “I” and “Me”, Mead seems to recognise implicitly the dynamic between identity (“Me”) and non-identity (“I”) that Crespi (1992,8) defined as:

> … the negative capacity specific of consciousness. The “I”, as an active and relatively autonomous response to the codified attitudes of “Me” as a social product, has a creative character. Reducing to a minimum the conventional form of “Me”, the “I” can actively introduce changes in society itself (see Mead, 1934,218).

George Mead also stressed the fact that the individual builds up their own identity only when they learn to consider themself through the image others give back to them, or rather through the “generalised other” that summarises socially shared expectations; in other words, when the individual manages to consider themself as “Me” (Mead, 1972,154-156). At the same time, Mead shows that the individual only develops completely when they go beyond the social construct of “Me”. Thus, the

Individual progresses to a point of transcending “Me”, which is specific to “I” and which is always something different from what the situation requires. Therefore, the “I” is the active and imaginative reaction to the codified attitudes of “Me” (Mead 1934,218,326; see also Crespi, 1992,78).

Anthony Giddens (1991), in ‘Modernity and Self-identity’, goes further than Mead, discussing how, in many modern settings, individuals are caught up in a variety of differing “encounters and milieux”, each of which may call for different forms of “appropriate” behaviour. According to Giddens, Goffman is “the theorist par excellence” of this phenomenon. Giddens notes that as the individual leaves one encounter and enters another, he/she sensitively adjusts the “presentation of self” in relation to whatever is demanded of a particular situation (Giddens, 1991,190).

Erving Goffman

At the heart of Erving Goffman’s analysis is the process he calls “The presentation of self”, which means the ways in which individuals, in various settings, attempt to create specific impressions in the minds of others. This process is also called “impression management” and contains a number of common elements (Goffman, 1959,167)

The first is “performances”, which, according to Goffman (1959,167), is when individuals either consciously or unconsciously present themselves to others and convey information about how they wish to be understood. For example, dress, gestures and the objects people carry with them are all part of the performance. An extremely important feature of performance is physical settings. Since cultural norms vary from setting to setting, individuals perform according to the social context. This leads us to ask whether Confluent children and second-generation Muslim youth perform differently depending on which cultural setting they are in.

The second is “non-verbal communication”, which Goffman (1959,168) explains as communication using the body or cultural symbols other than spoken words. He argues that non-verbal communication is based mainly on the use of the body to convey information to others. An example relevant to this study would be that strict Muslim men and women do not have any physical contact with the opposite sex unless they are a couple, even to the extreme that the men are supposed to lower their gaze when speaking to a woman.

The third is “idealisation”. Goffman (1959,169) argues that many performances

attempt to “idealise” a person’s social image. He notes that regardless of their motives and intentions, people usually want to convince others that they are abiding by ideal cultural standards. Thus, idealisation is “woven into the fabric of our daily lives” in numerous ways (Goffman, 1959,169). An example is how Muslim youth in Australia change their names or how Confluent children enhance the side or culture of which they are more proud.

The final element of impression management is “embarrassment and tact”, which Goffman (1959,170) suggests is equivalent to the experience of losing face. He goes on to argue that embarrassment is an ever-present danger in social interaction. This is due to idealised performances that normally contain a component of deception. Also, Goffman (1959,170) notes that any conflicting piece of information can make an entire performance inauthentic in the eyes of an audience due to performances being extremely complex. Goffman points out that as a result, tact is used to overlook flaws in the performance to support another person.

Goffman’s research shows that although individuals interact with a considerable degree of individuality and spontaneity, everyone’s social interactions are constructed out of similar patterned elements. Goffman (1959,72) quotes Shakespeare, who wrote 400 years ago that:

> All the worlds a stage
> And all the men and women merely players,
> They have their exits and their entrances,
> And one man in his time plays many parts.

Despite the fact that human behaviour is not as rigidly scripted as a stage performance, each individual in a lifetime does play many parts in ways that combine social structure with expressions of a unique personality. As Goffman (1959,72) concludes, “even if human behaviour is not exactly a matter of stage and script, there is still a good bit of truth in Shakespeare’s observation”. This leads to the research question: Do Confluent children play different parts depending on who they are with and do they have to eventually choose one definite role?

Goffman further distinguishes between personal and social identity, and contrasts them with what Erik Erikson (whom I discuss later in this chapter in the sub-section ‘Stigma and deviance’, and also sub-section ‘Leaps and stages’) has called “ego” and “felt” identity. Ego identity for Goffman (1959,129) is the “Subjective sense of his

[sic] own continuity and character that an individual comes to obtain as a result of his [sic] various social experiences". Thus, ego identity, according to Goffman, is a combination of personal identity (uniqueness) and social identity (relatedness), constructed by "psychological mechanisms" that aid in the construction of a coherent representation of the connection between the self and the external world (Goffman ,1959,129). Furthermore, Goffman (1959,129) believes that if an individual's personal and social identities are stigmatised (as discussed in more depth in the sub-section 'Stigma and deviance'), "the internalisation of these expectations, combined with the individual's need for a continuity of the sense of self, may result in the person's accepting a 'felt' identity which is itself stigmatised or spoiled".

Personal choice

Dewey (1938, in Dewey, 1956) goes beyond the notion that an individual plays certain roles. He notes that the actor considers certain elements before playing his or her role or part. Each alternative standing as a choice, has, as Dewey argues, to be rehearsed in imagination in order to make choice and decisions possible. If this thought is to be strictly a rational one, then the actor must have a clear and distinct knowledge of the following elements of each projected course-of-action standing as a choice.

The first element is the specific state of affairs within which his or her projected action has to begin, which involves a "sufficiently precise definition of his [sic] biographical situation in the physical and socio cultural environment" (Dewey, 1938, cited in Dewey, 1956). The second is the state of affairs to be brought about by his or her projected action; that is, its end.

According to Dewey (1938, in Dewey, 1956), there are no isolated projects or ends because all the individual's projects are present in their mind at a given time, being integrated into their life plan. These are, however, interconnected in a hierarchical order and attaining one may have repercussions for the others. Thus, the individual must have a clear and distinct knowledge of the place of their project within the hierarchical order of their plans (or the inter-relationship of the end to be achieved with other ends), the compatibility of one with the others, and the possible repercussions of the secondary results for the individual's future action (Dewey 1938, in Dewey, 1956,).The individual must also have knowledge of the various means necessary for attaining the established end; of the possibility of bringing the

means within the individual's reach; of the expediency of their application; of the possible employment of these same means for the attainment of other potential ends; and of the compatibility of the selected means with other means needed for the materialisation of other projects. This leads to the question of whether the individual, as a result of this "Presentation of the self" (Goffman, 1959), will cease to be themselves.

According to Eric Fromm in 'The Fear of Freedom' (1960,160), the "individual ceases to be himself [sic]. He [sic] adopts entirely the kind of personality offered to him [sic] by cultural patterns and he therefore becomes exactly as all others are and as they expect him [sic] to be". Fromm's theory seems relevant to me in one sense when looking at whether or not Confluent and Unitary youth adapt to the particular situation by playing a prescribed role or part. However, I disagree with his notion that "the individual ceases to be himself". What evidence is there to say that, for example, Confluent youth are not being themselves in playing multiple roles? Do not these Confluent youth possess this ability and is this ability not a positive one?

I agree with Giddens (1991,190), who clearly makes the point that "a person may make use of diversity in order to create a distinctive self-identity which positively incorporates elements from different settings into an integrated narrative". This brings me to Alfred Schutz's (1967) notion of "stepping out"; an ability to be able to "step out" of one situation into another. This is an area that must be explored in relation to Confluents and, to a certain extent, Unitaries; it is a core area of this research.

Stigma and deviance

Giddens, in his chapter "Group alignment and ego identity" ('Social Theory and Modern Society', 1991,190), argues that the "stigmatised" individual exhibits a tendency to stratify their "own", according to the degree to which their stigma is apparent and obtrusive. The Individual can then take up in regards to those who are more stigmatised than himself the attitudes the "normals" take to them. Giddens goes on to argue that it is in affiliation with, or separating from the individuals that are more evidently stigmatised is where the individual's "oscillation" of identification is marked most sharply. Furthermore, Giddens(1990) points out that linked to this self-betrayal kind of situation is the issue of social alliances, namely whether the individual's choice of friends, dates or spouses will be held in their own group or "across the line". Presumably, the more the individual is with "normals", the more

that individual will see themselves in non-stigmatic terms. However, Giddens further notes that there will be contexts in which the opposite will be true. This approach leads to the question of whether this is the case for Unitaries if they choose to abandon their Muslim or Arab identity to be seen as the same and therefore "normal"?

Alfred Schutz, in his article 'Concepts, Constructs, and Theory Formation' (in Natanson, 1963,318), argues that in defying the role of the "Other", "I am assuming a role myself. In typifying the Other's behaviour, I am typifying my own, which is interrelated with his [sic]…". And Eric Erikson (1963,262) makes the valuable point that:

> … young people can also be remarkably clannish and cruel in their exclusion of all those who are "different" in skin colour or cultural background, in tastes and gifts, and often in such petty aspects of dress and gesture as have been temporarily selected as the signs of an "in-grouper" or "out-grouper". It is important to understand (which does not mean condone or participate in) such intolerance as a defence against a sense of identity confusion. Adolescents not only help one another through much discomfort temporarily by forming cliques and stereotyping themselves, their ideals and their enemies, but they also adversely test each other's capacity to pledge fidelity.

Thus, this "identity crisis" is not exclusive to those who are stigmatised; it also extends to those who stigmatise! Erikson is arguing that it is not only those youth who are different who are confused but also the youth who stigmatise those who are different. These in-groupers are confused in the sense that they do not know how to behave towards the out-groupers, so they stereotype the out-groupers. This argument can be used in the context of non-Muslim children teasing Muslim children as a direct result of a lack of understanding in the wider community. A non-Muslim Australian child may be confused when they see a little girl wearing a hijab (headscarf), for example. They may respond negatively to deal with the confusion.

According to Goffman (1976,172), social deviants "are thus anybody that flaunts their refusal to accept their place and are temporarily tolerated in this gestural rebellion, within the restricted ecological boundaries of their community". When Goffman gives examples of ethnic and racial ghettos, he points out that these communities constitute a haven of self-defence and a place where the individual deviant can openly take the line that he or she is at least as good as anybody else.

Goffman argues that in addition, social deviants often feel that they are "not merely equal to but better than normals", and that the life they lead is better than that lived by the persons they would otherwise be. He (1976,16) goes on to argue that there is a distinction between realising a norm and merely supporting it. The issue of stigma only arises when there is some expectation on all sides that those in a given category should not only support a particular norm but also realise it.

Thus, Goffman notes that it is possible for an individual to fail to live up to what society effectively demands of them, and not be bothered by this failure. Furthermore, the individual would be immune by their alienation, as they are protected by their own identity beliefs. The individual in this case feels they are a normal human being and that the individuals in society who are stigmatising them are the ones who are not normal human beings. Thus, they might be stigmatised but it does not seem to bother them. Goffman gives the example of Orthodox Jews to emphasise this point. I would tend to argue that this applies also to practising Muslims in Australia, whether Confluents or Unitaries, who are proud of being Muslim, which, for some women, means wearing visible dress codes that are quite different from the "norm" or the "normal" dress code.

This brings us to the question of whether or not Sartre's (1957,36) notion that "man's destiny is within himself and the only hope is in his acting and that action is the only thing that enables a man to live" is true. If this is the case, to what extent is it more relevant to Confluents and Unitaries than to non-Muslim Australian youth?

Leaps and stages – Schutz and Erikson

Schutz argues that the "human actor" experiences what he calls a "project", whereby the individual "steps out" from "one frame of action to reach out to another frame of action" (1967,12). Thus, the individual prepares to achieve a "plan-project" and:

> … makes himself an actor on the social scene, and is liable to think differently of the same and to choose which way of thinking to adhere to and which to disregard.

This raises the question, Do Confluents and Unitaries adhere to a "plan-project" in order to decide which role to perform in a given situation?

Furthermore, Schutz argues that in "stepping out" of one structure or situation into another, there is a series of "leaps", experienced as shocks of transition, that the

actor needs to deal with by gearing him/herself to the world through the highest tension of their consciousness – wide-awake, paying attention to life. The actor thus relies on their "progressively sedimented stock of experiences" – their stock of knowledge at hand and in hand, or everything they have learned – to perform the new tasks they must perform (Schutz, 1967).

This raises the question, Do Confluents and Unitaries experience such leaps? If so, what is the effect of these "shocks" on these youths? Do they learn from the "shocks"?

According to Erikson (Giddens, 1991,31), separation from the adult's sphere is only one manifestation of what adolescents are really trying to achieve. Their major goal is to discover who and what they really are as they go through what he calls an "identity crisis". Erikson argues that his notion of "basic trust" (Giddens, 1991,38) "forms the original nexus from which a combined emotive cognitive orientation towards others, the object world, and self-identity emerges". Giddens, in 'Modernity and Self-identity (1991,31), argues that "Basic Trust links self-identity in a fateful way to the appraisals of others". An important issue here in relation to both Unitaries and Confluents is: Do they experience an "identity crisis" for life or only at a certain time? Which group faces it more?

Erikson (1963,262) argues that there are many social roles in our complex culture, and that adolescence is a time to "try them on to see which one fits best; which vocation, which ideology, which group membership". Thus, the adolescent's primary question is, "Who am I"? In order to answer this question, the adolescent strikes a sequence of postures, which is partly for the benefit of others, who will then serve as a mirror in which the individual can see themselves. Each role and each world view is first temporarily adopted on an all-or-none basis, with no room for compromise. Each is at first a costume. When the adolescent finds that a costume fits, it becomes the clothing of their adult identity. Most adolescents eventually succeed but the process of identity seeking has its difficulties:

> The danger of this stage is role confusion ...To keep themselves together they temporarily over identify, to the point of apparent loss of identity, with the heroes of cliques and crowds (Erikson, 1963,262).

Erikson (1975,199-200) also argues that:

> A childhood pre-identity synthesis gives way to a period of identity

confusion". In some cultures and classes, overlapping and following this stage may be a period of "physiological moratorium" in which the individual is free to dramatise and experiment with various values, roles and patrons.

Thus, "identity confusion and moratorium" are followed by identity formation, which marks the transition to adulthood. Identity formation, for Erikson, entails the integration of old identifications into a cohesive whole. Asserting that identity formation begins where the usefulness of identification ends, Erikson (1968,159) argues that identity arises from the selective repudiation and mutual assimilation of childhood identifications and their absorption in a new configuration.

In his book 'Childhood and Society' (1950), Erikson explains that all human beings pass through a series of major crises as they go through the life cycle. He believes that we work on our past constantly, rethinking and revising our old commitments and judgements. Sometimes we can even recognise our own mistakes and change our ways late in life. Erikson argues that there are eight developmental stages extending from infancy through to old age, which represent the crises or turning points that put us into a position to approach the next stage in a somewhat different way. Each crisis forces us to turn in one of two opposite directions. The stages are as follows.

First is trust versus mistrust (Erikson,1950,219-222). This is the earliest phase and during this phase the individual is completely dependent on others. The individual decides at that time whether or not they are in a basically supportive world. They decide whether to trust people or not. Naturally, this decision will come up for review again throughout life and may change eventually, but the general outlook an individual develops initially is the first thrust along a particular life course. If it is resolved in a positive way, the individual acquires hope which is a trait that is of great positive value to the Individual.

Second is autonomy versus shame and doubt (Erikson,1963,222-224). Erikson argues that this crisis, occurring in early childhood, is the central issue revealed in the play activities of children between the ages of one and three. A child's aim in this time frame is to learn to do things for themselves. Erikson argues that if the child fails to achieve these aims or goals they feel shame, leaving the child doubtful of their ability to cope. Thus, the extent to which this period is resolved positively enables the personality system to obtain a will which an imperative new companion for the child.

Third is initiative versus guilt (Erikson,1950,224-226). By the age of four or five, the child is in a position to search out new activities and set up new projects, which is initiative. Erikson notes that it is no longer just an issue of establishing that one is in control. It becomes a question of how that control is going to be used. In this period, a child inquires continuously and creates fantasies, preparing for the opportunity to arrange and handle projects. If this recent stage of behaviour is acknowledged and supported, then the child is "off to a good start; if not, a sense of guilt or worthlessness is the outcome". Thus, purpose becomes the positive virtue that is acquired when the issue is successfully solved (1950,224-226).

Fourth is industry versus inferiority (Erikson, 1950,226-227) during ages six through to twelve years. At this time, it appears on the surface, that children seem to have no interest in the opposite sex, for example girls play with girls, boys with boys. Furthermore, at this age formal schooling begins. During this period, children learn the basic skills and values of their culture. In the school setting, they tend to focus on how they compare with their peers in the classroom and in the playground. According to Erikson, if the child feels they measure up, they take great pride in their newly acquired skills and accomplishments. However, if problems occur at this stage, feelings of inferiority can arise.

Fifth is identity versus identity confusion (Erikson,1963,227-229). A period of particular stress in contemporary Western society is the period of adolescence, from about the age of twelve to eighteen years. A lot of the responsibilities youth used to have in earlier days, for example supporting themselves and contributing to helping their families, are delayed nowadays. Thus, this is a period between childhood and adulthood where the individual is free to choose self-exploration, study or "not-very-serious" work (Erikson,1950,227). It is expected that in this "carefree" time, young people will find out who they are and what they want to do with themselves and their lives. Obviously, this does not necessarily happen, nor is the "carefree" period necessarily one that is enjoyed. A normal development task, then, is to sort out one's ideals. Another task is to choose which among the various alternative roles one will concentrate on developing. This period is the time when young people take over, more or less independently, managing their own decisions and discovering the seriousness of the commitments they will make from then on. Thus, this is the search for personal identity. Fidelity is the positive value achieved by the successful resolution of this phase.

Sixth is intimacy versus isolation (Erikson, 1963,229-230), which occurs in young

adulthood, the period when one forms crucial intimate relationships. This is related particularly in courtship and marriage, and establishing a family, but it can also include close friendships. What is important here is whether the individual has the ability to share themselves intensely with another person without losing their individual identity. A feeling of isolation will result if the individual cannot take the risk and experience the excitement of intimacy. However, how well the previous stage was mastered will affect the individual's willingness to engage in intimacy and ultimately the attainment of a sense of one's own identity. According to Erikson (1950,230), to experience love is the desirable quality that one acquires from solving these issues.

Seventh is generativity versus self-absorption (Erikson, 1963,231). When middle age is reached, the individual is at a point in their lives to be able to look beyond their immediate family and personal relationships to the future generations and the world. Erikson labelled this feeling of concern for a broader group and for the future "generativity". However, he argues that not everyone attains such an outlook. He notes that a number of people stay involved in making and spending money, or in providing for their own comfort. Such a lifestyle, according to Erikson (1950,231), can only be regarded as stagnation and not growth. Thus, the positive outcome of this phase of life is to care.

Finally comes ego; integrity versus despair and disgust (Erikson, 1963,231-234). When the individual reaches old age, there is the realisation that life is reaching its completion. This results in looking back on life to sense what it has been. When one can feel satisfied with it, an outlook of integrity emerges; when there is little satisfaction, nothing is left but despair. The positive virtue emerging at this stage is wisdom.

I would not see all of these stages being of a positive nature. At each stage, there is a critical confrontation between the self the individual has achieved so far and the various demands imposed by his or her social and personal setting. Thus, three areas need to be explored in this study:

1. Do Confluent children go through these stages for their identity to be formed?

2. Because they are from two different religions and cultures, does identity formation take longer?

3. Is there a set time period or age when this identity formation exists?

Status passages

The individual's need for a sense of continuity and integration will have far-reaching implications for when they face a change of status. Time is needed for such critical transitions. The concept "status passage" directs attention to this time factor. The individual's sense of self somehow has to shift to include that which is new in their situation – their new status. Thus, identity and status are complementary concepts. Glaser and Strauss (1971) have identified numerous properties of status passages. Some of the key aspects are as follows:

SCHEDULING – Is the passage expected at a particular time? An important area of concern would be whether or not Confluent teenagers experience more of a "who am I?" period than other children, for example Unitaries.

REGULARISATION – Are there clear rules and demarcations to indicate progress through the critical transition?

PRESCRIPTION – To what extent are the steps prescribed beforehand so that everybody will know when changes are effected?

LENGTH OF TIME – Identity changes require time for their accomplishment. What effect does the duration of the status passage have on particular adjustments?

INVIOLABILITY – Is the passage inevitable, for example an elected status passage as in marriage or eventual death?

This leads one to wonder whether Confluent youth go through this "identity crisis" or accept "multiple identity".

REVERSIBILITY – Can the status change proceed in either direction as in a change from good health to illness and back again, for example, or is it an irreversible change, such as from youth to old age?

An Important question here would be: Can a Confluent youth go from a period of complete acceptance of dual identity to identity confusion and then acceptance? Is it a cycle?

DESIRABILITY – Is the change in status commonly desired or resisted? In relation

to Confluent youth, are they aware of their dual identity and is acceptance of this identity desired?

INDIVIDUAL OR COLLECTIVE – Is the passage such that an individual must experience it alone or can it be a shared experience? This leads one to wonder about the extent or importance of other people's roles in these children's lives and whether parents of Confluent children guide them to acceptance of their dual heritage.

THE CENTRALITY OF THE PASSAGE TO THE PERSON – How fundamental is the change in status to the individual?

PREPARATION – To what extent has their previous situation prepared the individual for the change in status?

An area of concern here is: Do Confluent youth experience such status passages? Is this unique to Confluent youth or do second-generation migrant Muslim youth face the same problem? Strauss (1969,109), in 'Mirrors and Masks', developed the notion of "coach" to describe someone who assists people through a difficult status passage. Those who play the role of coach are "those who have gone through the recognised steps and stand ready to guide and advise their successors" (Strauss,1969,109). An important aspect of coaching according to Strauss is timing (1969,112). He points out that the coach must relate different things to the person at the time when the person is able to use that knowledge to successfully cope with the task. Poor timing will hinder the person's efforts to learn the skills and make the adjustments required by the transition (Strauss,1969,113). This leads to the following crucial questions for my research:

Do Confluent adults seek to help Confluent children?

Do Confluent children take the role of "coach" in terms of career aspiration and do they seek to be a "coach" for non-Confluent children?

Is a Confluent adult in Erikson's eighth stage more likely to help youth that are in the beginning stages?

The different aspects of status represent situational forces that will impinge on the person making the passage. Thus, the nature of these forces will be particularly crucial in terms of the person's identity. The person's security expectations and

sense of continuity will be affected in some way depending on the nature of the status passage. As a result of this, Crespi (1992,87) argues that the search for identity and consequent mutual recognition can be considered as collective action.

Peak-experiences and the "real self"

Does the individual, in this case the Confluent youth, learn from his or her stages? Do they reach a period or stage that Abraham Maslow calls "peak-experiences"? The question arises: Will a situation ever exist when the individual is their real self? Maslow (1968,103), in his book 'Toward a Psychology of Being', argues that people in peak experiences are closest to their identities, closest to their "real selves" and most idiosyncratic. He goes on to argue that only at this point does the true meaning of identity exist. It is important here to discuss what Maslow means by "peak-experiences":

> The person in the peak-experiences feels more integrated (unified, whole, all-of- a-piece) than at other times and looks (to the observer) more integrated in various ways. For example the person appears less split or dissociated, less fighting against him/herself, more at peace with him/herself, less split between an experiencing-self and an observing-self, more one-pointed, more harmoniously organised, more efficiently organised with all of his/her parts functioning very nicely with each other, and more synergic, with less internal friction (Maslow, 1968,109).

Rogers (1961,145), in his book 'On becoming a person', states that in such a situation the individual feels "fully- functioning"; "more intelligent, more perceptive, wittier, stronger, or more graceful than at other times". Thus, the individual can be seen to be at their best, "at concert pitch, at the top of his [sic] form. This is not only felt subjectively but can be seen by the observer" (Maslow, 1968,105).

Maslow (1968,108-109) argues that peak-experiences is a situation where the individual is most "here-now", and is mainly free of their past. He further notes that in regards to the Individual's future in various senses, the individual is most "all there" in their experiences. An example of this is the fact that the individual can now listen better than at other times and without contamination. Maslow(1968, 102) notes that given that the individual is "least habitual and least expectant", they do not have to worry about being contaminated by "dragging in expectations" which are based on past situations(which cannot be identical to the present one) or hopes or apprehensions resulting from planning for the future. Thus, Maslow notes that this

would signify that the individual takes the present as the only means to the future rather than as an end in itself. Furthermore, since the individual is beyond desire, they do not need to "rubricize in terms of fear, hate or wish" (Maslow,1968,102). Therefore, Maslow argues that the individual, does not need to make a comparison to what is here with what is not here in order to evaluate it (1968,102).

Thus, the person in peak experiences feels, more than at other times, that they are responsible and actively creating the centre of their activities and perceptions. As a result, the person experiences the feeling of control and thus:

> … feels more like a prime mover, more self-determined (rather than caused, determined, helpless, dependent, passive, weak, bossed); his/her own boss, fully responsible, fully volitional, with more "free will" than at other times, master of his/her fate, an agent (Maslow, 1968,104).

Maslow continues to argue this point by stating that the person is now largely liberated from blocks, inhibitions, cautions, fears, doubts, controls, reservations, self-criticisms and brakes. Examples of these may be negative aspects of the feeling of self-worth, of self-acceptance, of self-love and respect. This is both a subjective and an objective phenomenon, and can be described further in both ways (Maslow, 1968,107). Furthermore, Maslow points out that in the peak experiences:

> … despite the fact that men [sic] are interchangeable (well at least their roles), roles drop away and men become interchangeable. Whatever they are at bottom, whatever the word "unique self" means, they are more than that in the peak-experiences (1968,108).

David Levy (in Maslow, 1968,111) argues that all "peak-experiences" may be understood as "Completions-of the-act". The question arises whether it is really a "completion of the acts" or just an understanding of the certain acts or roles that one must play, and thus an appreciation and increased control. Maslow (1968,111-112) goes on to explore the effect of this on a person's identity and concludes:

> Probably the authentic person is himself [sic] complete or final in some sense; he [sic] certainly experiences subjective finality, completion or perfection at times; and he [sic] certainly perceives it in the world. It may turn out that only peakers can achieve full identity; that non-peakers must always remain incomplete, deficient, striving, lacking something, living among means rather than ends; or if the correlation turns out not to be perfect, I am

certain that it is positive, between authenticity and peak-experiencing.

I would like to explore further whether Confluents reach or experience these peak-experiences. Is this unique just to Confluents or do Unitaries experience this also? If this is the case and these youth do experience these peak-experiences, can they go back to a period before this? Or is it really the final stage?

Sartre, in his book 'Existentialism and Human Emotion' (1994,3), argues that:

> Things will be as man will have decided as they are to be. Nothing ventured, nothing gained. There is no reality except in action. Man is nothing else than his plan; he exists only to the extent that he fulfils himself; he is therefore nothing else than the ensemble of his acts, nothing else than his life. He is the sum, the organisation, the ensemble of the relationships which make up these undertakings (Sartre, 1957,31-33).

According to Sartre, not only is man what he conceives himself to be, but he is also "only what he wills himself to be after this thrust toward existence. ...Man is nothing but what he makes of himself" (Sartre, 1957,15). Sartre, in his article 'The Humanism of Existentialism', goes on to argue that the individual has a possibility of choices:

> When we say that "man chooses his own self" we mean that "every one of us does likewise; but we also mean that in making this choice, each individual chooses all individuals". In fact, in creating the person that we want to be, there is not a single one of our acts that does not at the same time create an image of "man" as we think he [sic] ought to be. To choose to be this or that is to affirm at the same time the value of what we choose (Satre, 1957,15).

Finally, Peter Berger, in his book 'Sociology Reinterpreted' (1981,7), also discusses this concept and calls this the "makeability of the world". Thus, "Man keeps himself busy with the Human enterprise of constructing reality" (Berger, 1966,208).

Chapter 3: Confluent Youth in Australia – A Literature Review

Introduction

This thesis is a study of Confluents in Australia, focusing on this under-researched but growing sub-group who have one immigrant Muslim parent and one Anglophone Christian Australian parent. In this study, the Confluent youth in Australia will, for the first time, be systematically compared with Australian Muslim Unitaries; those who have two non-Anglophone immigrant Muslim parents.

While there is much literature on Islam and the West, and on Muslim immigrants in Western countries, most of this can only be touched on selectively in these introductory chapters. Much is tangential to the main theme of the thesis. In addition, although analysis of the study data and writing of this thesis were not completed until 2013, the interviews were all planned and conducted between 1993 and 1999. This is a crucial point because the data reflects a time before the bombing of the World Trade Centre in New York in 2001 ('9/11')further distorted Western attitudes to Muslims and damaged the experience of Muslim youth growing up in Western countries.

This chapter thus restricts itself to studies of Muslim youth made before '9/11' and mostly Australian material. Insofar as the writers did not distinguish between what I call Unitaries and Confluents, the literature can interpreted as referring to Muslim youth as a whole.

Edward Said and Orientalism

It is well known that a certain level of hostility has always characterised the relationship between Islam and Christianity. Edward Said (1979), in his book 'Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient', famously argued that there has been a "gross misunderstanding" of Arabs and Muslims in the West. Much of this has been due to the fact that the West has always divided the world into two imaginary sections; the "Orient" and the "Occident. This misconception, which Said calls, "Orientalism":

> … existed as a kind of daydream that could often justify Western colonial adventures or military conquests. [Orientalism] is based on Western fear, desire, dreams of power, and of course, a very partial knowledge [which led

> to] more myths, detailed ignorance and more ambitions than other perception of difference (Said, 1979,52-53).

The situation, he argued, was perpetuated by Western media, which, "instead of holding a mirror to reality in an attempt to bridge the gaps, … presented … a greatly distorted and biased version of Islam and Muslims" (Said ,cited in Halin, 1990,5). Said also argued that the fact that the West is seen as superior to the East results in the East, or anybody from the East, developing an internalised self-hatred. When the West constitutes the dominating view that the East is inferior, Easterners come to see themselves as inferior, and thus come to hate themselves (Said 1979).

The dilemmas of Muslim youth

This feeling of inferiority pressures Muslim Youth to abandon or conceal their Muslim identity although, as we shall see later, it can also lead to a strong reactive self-assertion and sometimes the search for a third way, such as Sufi mysticism. This identity dilemma can be seen to apply to Muslim youth in Australia, according to Australian Muslim writer Raheem and others. Raheem (1990,27) notes that many Muslim youth, as a direct result of this negative stereotyping, feel that they will not be accepted unless they hide their Muslim identity:

> Many [Muslim youth in Australia] think that to be "equal" to them [Australians] means to be "like" them, i.e. to be Westernized in their behavior and practices. These Muslim youth try to be "Western" or "Australian" but cannot really achieve it, because they are torn between two cultures. They don't seem to belong to either of them.

The reason for this is the fact that Muslim youth, like most youth, have a desire to be accepted in society, sometimes even at the expense of their values and their religion. Raheem sees this as disheartening because if people cannot accept Muslim youth the way they are, to what extent are they accepting them at all (Raheem, 1990,27)?

"Front door" syndrome

Cahill and Ewen (1987), in 'Ethnic youth: their assets and aspirations', argue that these second-generation migrant youths face what is called the "front door" syndrome in the sense that they live in two situations. They quote a T.A.F.E. (Technical and Further Education) facilitator who reported how:

> The impression (of living in two worlds) was articulated by one student who saw the world's beginning and ending at the "front door". The outside world and its attitudes and values should not be allowed to infringe in their parents' worlds (1987,23).

Ashraf (1986,13), who also writes about Muslim youth in Australia, confirms that "in most cases the child has a dual life – one at home and the other at school". One thing that is common amongst most second-generational literature, and specifically literature about Muslim youth in Australia, is that it describes a conflict between home life and life outside the home. Many of these youth feel that at home they are expected to follow certain rules and values, and when outside the home they experience different values and rules, which can be in conflict with the former (Ashraf, 1986,13). Azmi (1990,16) states that "our children are sandwiched between two cultures. They are being torn apart".

Hanifa Deen, in her book 'Caravanserai', similarly looks at this situation that Muslim youth face in Australia:

> Muslim youth walk on tiptoe down a path of temptation. Their lives are a course of continuous negotiation, bargaining, and attempts to reach compromises with their parents. They want to please Mum and Dad, keep their friends 'on side' and be true to themselves. Parents, on the other side, circle the wagons. Terrible mistakes are made and some of them make headline news. People who think they have lost everything are not going to give up their children, the core of their identity, just like that! (Deen, 1995,192)

Deen gives an example of Musa Ilhan, a well-known weightlifter from Melbourne, who had represented Australia at the Olympics in Barcelona. Ilhan had come to Australia from Turkey with his family as a small child. He discusses with Deen how he sought ways to deal with the position and conflict he experienced growing up as Muslim and Turkish in Australia:

> You think, "If I live strictly according to Islam, I'm going to be unacceptable to my friends and my mates and miss out on a lot. So you turn on your religion, run away, change your name to Tom and assimilate, and one day, you wake up crying and wondering why. Or you try to please your parents, because you love them and because of the sacrifices they've made for you, but you

> remain very unhappy. Or you can try to work out a new position (Ilhan, cited in Deen, 1995,192).

Wafa Chafic (1989) discusses how Muslim youth experienced an identity crisis as a result of growing up in Australia as Muslim and from an immigrant background. Chafic (1989) illustrates this by showing three interconnected circles representing Western culture, being a child from an immigrant family and being Muslim. Chafic (1989) argues that the only way to resolve this "identity crisis" is by finding common, overlapping ground in each of the three "cultural identities". Chafic (1989) also notes many specific problems for Muslim youth in Australia. She discusses family, identity, discrimination, poor public image, myths and the role of media, practising as a Muslim, peer pressure, employment, permissiveness, drugs and alcohol, health education and participation. However, Chafic (1989,2) notes that some of these problems may also be relevant to youth from other ethnic backgrounds and religions. Despite this, she argues, that for Muslim youth it is necessary to assess each problem specifically in terms of how it affects the individual as a Muslim.

Young Muslim women in particular stand out because they are often those most easily identifiable in public as Muslims and persecuted for practising their religion. Mary Jones, in her book 'An Australian Pilgrimage', writes that:

> Despite the constant portrayal by the media of Muslim women shrouded from head to toe, the wearing of the hijab (in all its various forms) is not uniform throughout the Muslim world.
>
> In contemporary society we are witnessing a unique phenomenon: younger Muslim women are readily adopting the hijab, in a trend which puzzles their mothers, grandmothers, who in the past protested and fought for the right to enter the public domain freely (Jones, 1993,120).

This self-assertion is often misunderstood and portrayed in a negative light. Gary Bouma, in his 1994 book 'Mosques and Muslim Settlement in Australia', noted that the number of Muslim women wearing the hijab had increased in the previous ten years. Furthermore, Bouma (1994).added that wearing the hijab for some of these women was a sign of their religion but it left them open to abuse:

> The appearance of women wearing the hijab has become a mark of the presence of Islam. Those groups which have adopted signifying dress have often been the target of abuse in Australia (1994,84).

> While Muslim men may become invisible in a crowd, the wearing of the *hijab* clearly sets a woman aside as different and as a serious Muslim (1994,101).

Deen (1995) also commented on this, giving the example of Dorothy Hoddinot, the principal of a high school with a large percentage of female Muslim students, who noted that she is worried for 'her girls' who have decided to wear the headscarf. She stated that "Muslim girls who cover are oppressed but not by their own community. They have problems getting jobs no matter how well qualified they are. The real prejudice comes from the community at large" (Hoddinot, in Deen,1995,193).

Rejuvenation

Some Muslim writers see hope for cultural rejuvenation and even for a rapprochement of East and West in some of the efforts to overcome disorientation by Muslim youth in Western countries today. Jones (1993,120) writes that there are "many Australian Muslim women, whether they wear hijab or not, who find that the teachings of Islam do not interfere with their ability to function in this society". This goes against a lot of literature and therefore misperceptions of the Islamic religion in regard to women. Rana Kabbini (cited in Jones, 1993,124) claims that:

> Nothing in Islam would make us second-class citizens, but a great deal in Islamic societies distorts the religion's spirit. Patriarchy, misinterpretation, ignorance, must be fought – that is the jihad that calls out to us.

Many writers note that the future of Islam around the world is in the Muslim youth, who, as Ahmed Akbar argues, are "often cutting across sectarian boundaries" (1993,209). An increasingly large section of the Muslim population is young.

According to Gary Bouma (1994,29), in Australia the majority of Muslims are under the age of 25 and Breward (1993, cited in Bouma 1994,91) notes that they have grown up in a Christian world: Australia is a Christian country. This claim surprises many, especially those public servants and academics who prefer to think of Australia as secular. Australia is not secular. Each Census reveals that the vast majority of Australians identify with some Christian group. Moreover, the majority of those who say they have no religion come from Christian backgrounds. In terms of numbers, general cultural ethos and history since European settlement, Australia is a Christian country. This essential starting point is avoided only at the cost of a quite unrealistic image of the context dominated by already established religious groups within which newcomers compete to gain acceptance and recognition. Australia is

not a secular country; it is not a level playing field for religious groups. More recently arrived groups are disadvantaged. There is nothing new about this situation in Australia (Breward 1993, in Bouma, 1994,91).

This is counter to Akbar's (1993) supposition that many Muslim youth have grown to adulthood in a largely secular world. Bouma (1994,91) notes further that Muslims in Australia should not be seen as a threat to the wider Christian Community:

> In this Christian context, non-Christian religious groups are very small in contrast to the dominant Christian groups. They can hardly be seen to pose a threat to so highly entrenched and well represented a dominant cultural majority, although these groups sometimes react as though they are threatened.

Thus, it is important for Muslim youth in Australia not to feel the wider community dislikes them for being a different religion. Such a stance could be difficult to achieve if, as Akbar (1993) notes, social problems, such as unemployment, breakdown of civic facilities, or collapse of law and order have pushed Muslim youth towards looking for alternative ways of ordering their lives. Akbar (1993,209) states that a large number of youth have turned to Islam because "Islam is ready and at hand for them. It is a fresh, energetic and promising method of approaching life". Thus, the young Muslims are approaching Islam directly, "not through learned tomes (passed down by culture) or established scholars but returning to the Quran and the life of the Prophet (PBUH)" (1993,209). Akbar (1993,210) also notes that this is the one great difference between the past and the present, arguing in 'Living Islam' that:

> More than the scholars, more than the political leaders, more than the religious figures, it is the ordinary young Muslims who provide the force in the Islamic Revival; they provide the hope for the future. In a crucial sense they are starting from the beginning; they are rejecting what their fathers stood for and what their elders spoke of. They have the confidence and commitment to reject. But their anger and passion must not allow them to lose sight of Islamic balance and compassion. Each generation must now rediscover Islam for itself.

Many writers suggest that it is up to Muslim youth in the West to dissolve the negative stereotypes of Muslims and ultimately "attempt to rid the division of the East and West". This is due to the fact that Muslim youth in Western countries are

"Western Muslims" with an understanding of both worlds.

Double disadvantage

Muhammad Anwar (1986,11), in 'Young Muslims in a Multi-cultural Society', notes that we need to take into account certain difficulties arising in relation to practice of their beliefs; their self-identity as Muslims in a society where they are likely to experience feelings of rejection and hostility associated with belonging to a minority group in an unsympathetic environment.

According to Riaz Hassan (1991,296) in 'The Future of the Muslim Community in Australia', the Muslims' relationships with the majority of the community are likely to be mediated by their respective group's structural position in society as well as its perception by the majority. Their ethnic diversity disadvantages them. Unfortunately, Muslims hold what Hassan calls "a situation of double minority status" (1991,295). Hassan argues that besides belonging to a minority ethnic group, Australian Muslims are also affected by their membership of an Islamic community that is a minority within that group. Bouma (1994,81) notes that "this double minority status makes Muslims particularly vulnerable to prejudice and harassment".

Riaz Hassan (1991,291) points out that as a religious group, Muslims are perceived as a distinct group within Australian society, and this perception is associated with certain stereotypes and attitudes held by the majority community. He describes the results of a survey conducted by the Office of Multicultural Affairs that shows that the majority of Australians regard Muslims negatively. He also shows that Muslims' social scores were high at 54 (the higher the score, the greater the distance from the general community). Distance scores for other religious groups were Buddhists 49 and Jews 38 (Hassan, 1991,290). This knowledge led me to explore the question of whether Unitaries hold a double disadvantage.

A turn to Sufism

Reynold Nicholson (1966,371), in 'The Mysticism of Islam', argues that Sufi mysticism can offer common ground with that of Judaism and Christianity:

> If Judaism, Christianity and Islam have no little in common in spite of their deep dogmatic differences, the spiritual content of that common element can best be appreciated in Jewish, Christian and Islamic mysticism, which bears equal testimony to that ever-deepening experience of the soul when the

> spiritual worshipper, whether a follower of Moses, Jesus or Muhammad, turns whole-heartedly to God.

A Sufi, according to Deen (1995,220), is "one who practices the mystical tradition of Islam". Akbar (1993,162) notes that numerous Europeans and Americans are particularly attracted to the Sufi strand of Islam. In 'Postmodernism and Islam' (1992,118), he states that "not surprisingly, Sufist Islam has made significant inroads in the west, especially among European converts". He also notes that Sufism is "Islam's tolerant, mystical and universal philosophy. Its message of *sulh-i-kul,* peace with all, has endeared it to Muslims and non-Muslims alike. It appeals to all Muslim sects and social classes" (Akbar, 1993,55).

However, Akbar (1993,56) questions the attraction of Sufism to younger people, saying:

> For me personally, Sufism's message of compassion, humility and universal love is attractive and aspiring. But what is a youngster, soaked in the materialist urban milieu in which television provides the greatest input, to make of Sufism? How would he or she understand the stories?

Is this the case for Muslim youth, both Confluents and Unitaries, in Australia.?

While some Muslim youth seek to resolve their dilemmas by moving away from the religion of their parents and others by asserting their loyalty to it with greater commitment than their parents, there are also attempts to find new ways to overcome their identity crisis. I will explore briefly in this thesis whether some Muslim youth, for example, have shown an interest in Sufism, using it as a way of finding themselves no matter how far away from themselves they seemed before. The question to be explored is: Will some young Muslims feel that Sufism is the Islamic or indeed the true Muslim way of constructing their "self"?

Sufism is Islamic mysticism that began to develop in the 7th century (the first century of Islam). It was inspired by a desire to escape the hardships of the social and political upheavals of the time, and developed a tendency toward quietism in reaction to worldliness and extravagance. By the 9th century AD, the Sufis claimed to have methods of finding mystic knowledge of God (Chishti, 1985). The term 'Sufi' was developed in the early 9th century as a name for the mystics whose ascetic practices included wearing coarse woollen garments, or 'Sufu'. The term was soon used to refer to all mystics, whether or not they followed ascetic practices. Sufism

arose out of various influences, among them a mystical overtone in some of the teachings of Muhammad (PBUH), the last Prophet for the Muslims. The Sufi mystic is described as a pilgrim following a path of seven stages on a journey. The stages are repentance, abstinence, renunciation, poverty, patience, trust in God and acquiescence to the will of God. Then, with the grace of God, a higher level of consciousness is attained in which knowledge, the knower and the known are realised as one (Chishti, 1985).

Thus, I feel that understanding Sufism and what it means to be a Sufi according to Deen's definition (1995,220) – "one who practices the mystical tradition of Islam" – is useful when dealing with youth of an Islamic background. Sufism informs the research question: Does the solution to problems Muslim youth are experiencing lie deep in the Sufi traditions? As happens in the earlier stages of Sufism, will Muslim youth develop a "desire to escape the hardships due to the social and political upheavals of the time; and a tendency toward quietism" in reaction to the worldliness of their parents' cultural and religious background, and the Western "secular" society they live in? This thesis will explore whether Sufism can be attributed to the "Islamic resurgence" as a way for Muslim youth to cope with their "in-between identities".

Another question arises here. Is it only Unitarities who can use Sufism as a way to deal with their "identity crisis" or can Confluent youth also use it as a way to feel that their dual religious backgrounds can finally come together?

Conclusion

The writers and the research presented in this chapter do not identify or distinguish between what I have called Unitary and Confluent Muslim youth. The next chapter will turn to the literature on intermarriages and their children, a small part of which deals with Muslims. The research in this thesis will bring together the two themes (intermarriage and Muslims). It seeks to study the Muslim Confluents in depth and compare them with Unitaries. It will explore similarities and differences in how they experience identity pressures and front door syndrome, and deal with the dilemmas described in this chapter, which has laid the foundation for the questions asked in Chapter 6 The thesis will explore further the question of whether a new rejuvenation and a new meeting of East and West can come out of the distinctive experience of Confluent Muslim youth in Australia.

Chapter 4: Intermarriage and Confluence in Western Countries – A Literature Review

Introduction

There is a substantial and growing literature on intermarriage, which is increasingly presented in a positive light (see for example Owen 2001, 2002). Intermarriage between Muslims and Christians is still, however, often presented in a negative light (see for example Abe Ata 2000, 2003, 2005). My focus is not on the couples but on their children – Confluents, as I have termed them. There have been far fewer studies of Confluents but much of the information available has presented a negative picture, often with limited evidence.

The main works I have used for this study are Sandra Wallman's article 'Identity Options' and Augustin Barbara's book 'Marriage across frontiers', which both have a predominantly positive approach to Confluent children. After I had conducted my interviews (mainly in 1993 and 1999), I also read more recent literature by Ali, Ata, Owen, Stephan and Stephan, Sohail and others. These too, with the exception of Ali, mainly look at Confluent children only through the parents' eyes.

Even though Wallman, Barbara, Ali and Sohail discuss the questions more from the children's perspective than do other writers, there remain many unaddressed questions. There is still a need for much more research about the children of intermarriage and about their experiences and attitudes, especially in Australia.

Confluent identity problems

Most earlier literature has been negative about children from mixed-marriages, as illustrated in Chapter 1 in Gordon's (1964,3) assertion that such children "may become emotionally insecure, unhappy and even on occasion develop neuroses", and thus become victims due to their uncertainty concerning their identity. Associating a child's growth with emotional as well as physical factors, Gordon (1964,318) also claimed that insecurity concerning one's identity would inhibit overall growth.

Wallman (1983) countered this negative view, stating the following:

> It is not difficult to imagine that a child, e.g., born in England of one (white) Scottish and one (black) Jamaican parent living in south London could, when

> asked “What are you?”, define himself as English, Black English, West Indian, Scots, a Londoner, or a South Londoner in turn, depending on who asked him the question, why they ask it, and what else was happening at the time. Equally, it is not hard to imagine the same child “claiming” all those identities, not because he lacks a single identity focus and is therefore “in crisis”, but because multiple identity is itself a healthy choice (Wallman, in Fried, 1983,74).

Wallman (1983) further notes that the position of a child from a mixed-marriage is different from second-generation immigrants only in that they have a wider and more open choice of identity options, and can feel more completely at home in several of these at the same time. Therefore, Wallman (1983) is arguing that a Confluent has multiple identities and is comfortable in these different identities. This argument will be the main area I will explore in this thesis.

Barbara (1989,131) also countered Gordon’s negative view, claiming that Confluents:

> … will not in reality live between two worlds, between two countries and between two cultures. They will actually live in one country or the other, within an intimate family context, and will be governed by various social codes which will have a considerable formative influence on them and of which they will be the products. They will be more or less socially integrated in a society or social group at a given point in time.

However, Barbara’s next point suggests some of the problems Confluents may encounter:

> If this setting changes, for whatever reason, they will need to work hard over a certain period of time in order to adapt. But this adaptation does not so much have to do with such specific areas of difference as the difference of culture, language, religion or nationality. The experience of belonging to a group is also defined by everyday practices and customs which children have in common with their classmates and friends, as well as by activities engaged in at informal or organised clubs and associations. The children have to integrate a whole series of values in an unavoidable situation which is backed up by the whole force of society. They are therefore also caught between two societies (Barbara, 1989,131).

Wallman and Barbarra make a crucial point about how there are often factors that may affect how a Confluent child may feel. One of these factors is physical appearance. Wallman (in Fried, 1983) notes that physical appearance does not always depict the way an individual may feel about themselves or which culture they belong to. As she notes:

> Individuals do not necessarily identify themselves by the way they look, or the way they behave, or the people with whom they associate; nor do they necessarily identify with everyone or anyone they resemble in phenotype or culture (Wallman,1983,77).

Barbara also notes that physical appearance may affect a Confluent youth:

> The adolescent child of a mixed-marriage becomes aware of all these nuances in people's attitudes and he [sic] must be constantly 'negotiating' with an environment which may reject, tolerate or single him out. Being physically different is seen straight away as a deviation from the norm (Barbara, 1989,160).

Therefore, I ask: Does physical appearance as well as other factors affect Confluents' integration into Australian society. Is it possible for a Confluent to be entrapped by their looks?

Barbara's notion of choice

The notion of choice discussed in Chapter 2 can be extended to the personal situation, for example in certain choices made by parents. An example is Barbara's notion in his book 'Marriage across Frontiers' that not only are there distinctions between certain choices made on certain issues that parents make or do not make, but also between the different ages of the child when such choices are made, and how far the parent has the main say in these choices and why. Barbara argues that this is crucial in order to understand Confluent youth.

Depending on where they live and their age, children from mixed-marriages go through a number of situations with "varying degrees of tension" (Barbara, 1989,161). The choices that affect them, according to Barbara (1989,161), or "groups of choices", are of a sociological nature because they are more or less imposed by real-life situations. The first choices (or the absence of choices) more often than not relate to nationality and religious affiliation – Christian baptism or circumcision in the case of Muslims. The second choices involve preference for a

particular language at a given point in childhood, this being a key to which culture they will feel a stronger sense of belonging. This, however, will depend partly on where they live. Is language a key to acceptance? If language is a key to social acceptance, then this choice made for Confluent youth by parents can be detrimental. The third choices relate to the education system and the school the children will attend. For example, decisions will need to be made with regard to whether to send their children to a private or public, religious or non-religious, or predominantly Anglo or predominantly "ethnic" school, and whether the children should attend cultural or religious lessons at school or after hours. Will the children attend Lebanese school or Islamic/Christian classes on the weekend to learn about culture and religion?

Barbara (1989,161) points out that the children from a mixed-marriage will be put in situations where they are confronted with the major choices of life. Taking part in such choices will involve varying degrees of tension. The parents of these Confluent youth will have already made some choices, perhaps without much thought. Thus, for example, the child may find themselves fully integrated into the "Australian way" of life as a result of having received all their education in Australia, despite having always been told that they also have another nationality. The choice of the parents to live in Australia will definitely mean the child will be more Australian than if the parents had chosen to live in Lebanon, for example.

However, sometimes parents will have refrained from making certain choices so as to "leave them [children] greater freedom later on" (Barbara, 1989,162). Barbara notes that parents usually have responded two ways and usually to the extreme. This involves either making the choice for the children when they are young, or leaving all the choices to the child when they are old enough to make them. Barbara quotes one father expressing the latter:

> I will always give my children their freedom; after all, I took this freedom for myself at a certain point in life. And it was very costly. But they must learn that freedom always involves risks and taking responsibility for one's own actions (Laila's father in Barbara, 1989,150).

Barbara (1989,161) found that when he asked the parents about these choices, many respond in the following way:

> "When he is older, he can decide for himself", many parents say. This is

> often just a smoke-screen to hide a certain embarrassment and a desire to evade responsibility as mixed parents. Society will instead impose its own choices.
>
> When choices are deferred until the child is able to decide for themselves, this often leaves the child in an impossible situation, unable to exercise this new freedom. Earlier choices made by the parents would have been a basis for discussion of other choices. It might happen that the child questions the whole of his or her past, but at least they will be able to do so consciously (Barbara,1989,161).

Barbara quotes one boy, half Jewish, half Catholic (1989,159), who affirmed that it was easier to make decisions on the basis of choices already taken in the past than to make a "random choice in a void":

> I certainly feel it is better for parents to make some sort of choice than to leave the child in a complete vacuum...saying that the child can choose for himself when he is older.

Barbara looked at many children from Judeo-Christian families and pointed out that they had later chosen the religion they felt more at home in, thus rejecting or confirming the original choice made by their parents. He cites the example of a child of a Franco-Muslim couple who, after a long period of heart searching, became a priest (1989,151). Whatever the parents decide, the child from a mixed-marriage most certainly has a personal journey to make, but it is often similar to the journey that has to be made by the child of parents of the same nationality. However, the child from a mixed marriage often has to make choices other children do not encounter (Barbara, 1989,150). While there are some extraordinary journeys that are often the privilege of children from mixed families, Barbara argues that there are many examples of children from Judeo-Christian couples who "experience gripping, though often very painful, lives" (1989,151).

Even though Barbara acknowledges that this is just temporary, the question that is raised is whether it is just a stage and how long it can last. He looks at Robert, a child from Judeo-Christian parents, as an example of such a painful life, who had to confront unusual situations in what was otherwise a fairly normal environment. Barbara (1989,158) states that these situations may affect a child like Robert in the deepest part of his personality in issues such as circumcision for half Jewish/Muslim

boys. Robert, for instance, “had to find a position between the circumcised and the uncircumcised, [but] he now realises that this is of no importance to him. But it troubled him for many years”.

Was this stress just a stage for Robert?

Barbara also argues that the desire to form certain contacts often came up against social pressures or deep-rooted prejudices. These reactions teach Confluents to find their own place in a world where anyone who is not quite like other people is quickly made to feel different. The question that needs to be asked here is: How does this affect them and does this mean that they have. or will, become stronger as a result?

Barbara argues that only when Confluents become adults are they able to take a more objective view of events. For some youth such as Robert, this “had loomed larger than life in his childhood and adolescence” (1989,158). Does this mean that this was just one of Erik Erikson’s “stages” (as discussed in Chapter 2) that would be followed by a more positive stage? Barbara does not make this clear.

Another area of importance is the situation of the child’s parents’ relationship. Not all children from mixed-marriages, or any marriages for that matter, live in the kind of favourable family environment which Barbara argues would help them grow up with a “sense of balance “(1989,158). He is arguing, therefore, that the family situation would determine how the youth would feel. The question then is: Does this affect how they would cope with problem stages or with any identity crisis?

In the next phase, Barbara (1989) describes how the individual organises not only their particular individual attitudes but also the social attitudes of the “generalised other” (the social group considered as a whole).The individual’s self-image is thus the product of their social experience and the symbolic forms mediating that experience. As Mead (1934) has stressed (see Chapter 2), mutual recognition is at the basis of the relationship the individual establishes with his/her own self. We experience ourselves as worthy of recognition only if others have loved us and treated us as deserving of such recognition. Self-contempt prevents one from establishing a positive relation with oneself and influences the relation of the individual to others, just as an original experience of a negative attitude by others leads to low self-esteem. Thus, Mead argues that the way other people think of us can determine how we think of ourselves. If mixed-marriages, and thus Confluent children, are seen as positive in society, then Confluent children will feel more

secure and have a high self-esteem. Similarly, a second-generation Muslim youth experiencing the negative stigma attached to Muslims in the media and the general misunderstanding within the wider community develops a self-internalised hatred.

Differences between children of intermarriage and children of monocultural marriage

Stephan and Stephan (1991,241) identified four ways in which children of mixed-marriages may differ from children growing up in monocultural marriages. First, their socialisation is bicultural. They are exposed to two sets of values, role models and expectations. Therefore, their socialisation practices may not be consistent. Second, they might have a wider range of role models upon which to establish their identities than do children of monocultural marriages. Third, they might experience some degree of rejection by their extended families. Fourth, mixed-marriage children may also experience rejection from both communities in their larger society.

Stephan and Stephan (1991,241) note that where parents have major problems in their relationship, have immature personalities and experience unresolved conflicts with their families of origin, the children suffer negative effects. These children, alongside being insecure and having poor self-esteem, might also experience "anxiety, insecurity, guilt, anger, depression and identity conflicts". Children's adjustment difficulties may also stem from the psychological problems of parents and increased conflict in marriage (Johnson & Nagoshi, 1986).

Sohail (2001) notes here that it is a general observation that in "mixed-heritage families, children can handle differences, but what they can't handle is conflict" (Berman, 1971,98. He cites literature that suggests that children of mixed-marriages might find themselves in the minority and might have to face rejection not only from the majority culture but also from the minority culture. This in itself might lead to identity problems. Sohail (2001) also notes that the number of children born in mixed-marriages has increased significantly in the 20th century because of the increasing rates of mixed-marriages in the Western world. He writes of a number of social scientists who have focused on the effects of mixed-marriages on the relationship of parents and their children. Those studies confirm that parents from different ethnic backgrounds often use child-rearing practices derived from their own unique set of cultural values and role-expectations (Friedman, 1992). However, when children are exposed to two different sets of values, the effects can be seen on a spectrum (Barbara, 1989). At one extreme are children with negative effects, at

the other extreme are children with positive effects, and in the middle are children with a mixture of both positive and negative effects. Barbara (1989) attributes this to what choices the parent makes or does not make when the child is small.

Hartley (1995) discusses intermixture in Australia from the viewpoint that the rise in intermarriages will increase different child-rearing practices and parenting, resulting in conflict. However, studies on intermixing tell us little about the adaptation and adjustments couples and their children are required to make, and the processes that occur when values are in conflict.

Abe Ata (2005, 2003, 2000), in all three of his books, is not convinced that intermarriage between Muslims and non-Muslims can be successful. He does not delve deeply into how the children feel. Rather, he looks at how the parents are in conflict raising their children with different religions and cultures:

> Mixed-marriages in Australian society have brought with them mixed outcomes. At one level, couples in such marriages are far from being fully integrated into mainstream society. There is little indication at present as to whether their children will make headway as time goes on and changes seep deeper into the layers of society. Clearly, without major adjustment by the community at large to this newly emerged paradigm of partnership, Christian-Muslim marriages appear doomed to failure. (Ata, 2003,129).

Ata (2003,129) further notes that:

> Participants in this project may inadvertently be standing as symbols of a counter culture in the face of the fear and mistrust that dominates Australian national policy towards the alien. The premise underlying this is that the two religions may overlap in many extraordinary ways, but many of their principles are not compatible.

Ata (2003,106) notes several factors that will determine the intensity of the influence on the children of the two religions. First is what degree of allegiance each of the parents has to what the community believes. Ata gives the example of how tolerant each parent is to having the child or children speak the language of one or the other. Second is to what extent the culture of the parents is sensitive to the independence of the children. Third is what type of interaction there is between the parents and the community (Barbara, 1989; Penny and Khoo, 1996)

Suki Ali, in her book 'Mixed Race, Post-Race: Gender, New Ethnicities and Cultural Practices' (2003) includes interviews with parents and children from mixed-marriages. As she states:

> With a marked rise in the number of children of mixed parentage, there is an urgent need to challenge simplistic understandings of 'race', nation and culture, and interrogate what it means to grow up in Britain and claim a 'mixed' identity (Ali, 2003,212).

Ali (2003) focuses on "mixed-race" and "inter-ethnic" families, and explores the current understandings of race. Ali also looks at how we come to read race and how the media (photographs, television) influences children's notions of race. She looks at parental concerns about the social acceptability of inter-ethnic children and notes that empirical work from around the world supports a much more positive engagement with the possibilities of "mixedness" as an identity (Ali, 2003,4). As well as the British and American literatures, Ali notes that the European viewpoint about multiethnic positions and their developing theories on racial and cultural identities is again different (see Allund & Granquist, 1995; Opitz et al., 1992). She also notes that there is a growing body of work by indigenous and migrant peoples in New Zealand and Australia, which points to the crucial need for a more global perspective on "racial mixing" (see Hartley, 1995; Ihihimaera, 1998).

In all of these accounts, "mixedness" is seen as potentially positive and counters the psychosocial censuring that is still in evidence in common sense discourses of preferred 'mono-raciality'. Ali notes that it is evident from the above accounts that despite the numerous existing and historical concerns with race-mixing, there are rising numbers of people involved in mixed relationships (also see Owen, 2001). Even more crucial here is the significant and "fast-increasing 'mixed-race' population" of which more than fifty percent are under the age of fifteen (Ali, 2003,4-5; see also Phoenix & Owen, 2000). While Ali (2003,5) thinks there are difficulties in "studying and theorising 'mixedness'", she argues the need for "'mixed-race' as a viable social category'" and that in fact, 'mixed-race' can be held as an identity.

Unresolved questions arising from the literature

The following questions have arisen from the preceding literature reviews. While they have been discussed, they have not been resolved, and have had a significant influence on this PhD research study.

1. Do Confluents lack a clear identity or might they rather possess two complete identities; what Mead (1972,170-171) and Wallman (1983,74-75) have described as “multiple identities” or selves as part of their dual heritage?

2. When Confluents’ settings change or when they confront crises, might their multiple selves help them to adapt and attain a new positive stage?

3. How do Confluents navigate their relations with the families of their two different parents?

4. Rather than confusion, might Confluents develop additional strength and resources through having multiple selves, thus developing the ability to relate in various ways to different people?

5. If the Confluent child is raised with both cultures and an understanding of both religions and feels comfortable, will they then still face identity problems?

6. Is the availability of choice a resource or a handicap? Are Confluents always able to exercise their choice freely?

7. Is it better for the Confluent child when parents make early choices for them or when it is left to them to make later?

8. How well integrated into Australian society do both parents and Confluent children feel?

9. What differences are there between the upbringing choices of parents of Unitaries and of Confluents, for example language used at home, and what effect do these have on the children?

10. What similarities and differences are there between Unitaries and Confluents in Australia? Do they differ in how integrated they feel into Australian society? How might they be affected by different parental choices on such matters as language spoken, selection of school etc?

11. How does the nature of the relationship between the parents affect Confluents? Does parental divorce, for example, affect Confluents any differently from other children?

Chapter 5: Muslims in Australia in the 1990s – Community Context

Introduction

This chapter presents the basic data on the Muslim community in terms of numbers, residence in the various states of Australia, countries of birth, ancestry, languages spoken, age and gender, education and occupation, and the number of mosques. It also looks briefly at the effect of the first Gulf War, and perceived media and public prejudice on the community, and certainly on young Muslims growing up at that time. All information discussed in this chapter covers the period 1991–2001. It gives a picture of the community at the time I conducted my interviewing.

Australian Muslims

Number of Australian Muslims

During the decade of 1991–2001 when I conducted my interviewing, there was a significant increase in the number of Australian Muslims. Their population nearly doubled. According to the 2001 Census, there were 281,578 Muslims in Australia, which represented approximately 1.5 percent of the total Australian population. This number had grown by 80,000 since the 1996 Census and 133,482 since 1991. Sixty percent of the growth from 1996–2001 resulted from migration and 40 percent from local births (ABS, 2001, in Kabir, 2004,256).

Table 5.1: Rise of the Muslim Population in Australia, 1991–2001

Year	*National Total*	*Muslim*	*Percent*	*Christian*	*Percent*
1991	16,852,264	148,096	0.9	12,466,836	74
1996	17,892,434	200,902	1.1	12,582,771	70
2001	18,972,350	281,578	1.5	12,764,342	67

Source: ABS (2001). 'Census of Population and Housing', in Kabir (2004,256)

Place of residence in Australia in the 1990s

Kabir (2004) identified from the Australian Bureau of Statistics' 2001 Census that Australian Muslims live in all parts of Australia, with the majority residing in New South Wales. In 1991, a little more than half (52.92%) lived in New South Wales and just over a third (33.74%) lived in Victoria. The 1996 figures show 50.91 percent

living in New South Wales and 33.3 percent living in Victoria. The other states of Australia have significantly smaller proportions, with 5.46 percent and 7 percent in 1991 and 1996 respectively in Western Australia, 3.74 percent and 5 percent in 1991 and 1996 respectively in Queensland, only 2.06 percent and 3 percent in 1991 and 1996 respectively in South Australia, and in 1991 1.25 percent and 1 percent in 1991 and 1996 respectively in the Australian Capital Territory (ACT). Tasmania and the Northern Territory had the smallest Muslim populations, with only 0.40 percent and 0.47 percent in 1991 and 1996 respectively in Tasmania, and 0.40 percent and 0.38 percent in 1991 and 1996 respectively in the Northern Territory. By 2001, 50 percent of all Muslims lived in New South Wales, 33 percent lived in Victoria, 7 percent lived in Western Australia, 5 percent lived in Queensland, 3 percent lived in South Australia, 1 percent lived in the ACT, 0.3 percent lived in the Northern Territory and 0.3percent lived in Tasmania (ABS,1991, in Bouma, 1994,28-29; ABS, 2001, in *The Australian*, 2001,1).

Most of the Muslim population is concentrated in the capital cities of each of these states, mainly in Sydney and Melbourne. In 1991, 49.87 percent lived in Sydney, while the number in 1996 was 48 percent. In Melbourne, the number in 1991 was 32.03 percent and in 1996 it was 31 percent. Only 4.41 percent and 6 percent lived in Perth in 1991 and in 1996 respectively, while 2.68 percent and 4 percent lived in Brisbane in 1991 and 1996 respectively. A meagre 1.8 percent lived in Adelaide in 1991, rising to 2 percent in1996 (ABS, 1991, in Bouma, 1994,29; ABS, 1996, in *The Australian*, 2001,1).

Some Muslim leaders I spoke to thought this number might be an underestimate because fear of prejudice may have prevented some from admitting their religion on the Census forms. This was confirmed by Johns and Saeed (2002,195-196).

Countries of birth of Australian Muslims

The 1991 Census showed that 35 percent of all Australian Muslims were born in Australia. This was the largest group of Muslims from a single country of birth. Bouma (1994,23) noted “this percentage will continue to increase as future Muslim growth will be more due to births than immigration”. According to Bouma (1994,23) Muslim Australians nominated more than 67 different countries as birthplaces, “making them one of the most ethnically diverse religious groups in Australia”. The two largest groups, comprising nearly one-third of the total, were born in Lebanon at (17.4%) and Turkey (15.5%).Other national origins, which comprised a total of 24.1

percent of Muslims in Australia, were, in descending order: Yugoslavia (3.5%), Indonesia (3.3%), Other Southern Asia (2.8%), Cyprus(2.5%), Iran(2.4%), Pakistan (2.3%), Fiji(2.2%), Egypt (1.6%), Malaysia (1.4%), Other North Africa and the Middle East (1.1%) and Syria (1.0%). The remaining 8 percent were divided among more than 53 countries (Bouma, 1994,23).

As Bouma (1994,23) had predicted in 1994, by 1996 36 percent of all Australian Muslims were born in Australia (Kabir, 2004,6). A further 28 percent were born in the Middle East or North Africa. Other birth places included Asia (16%), Europe (9%), Africa, excluding North Africa (4%) and Oceania, excluding Australia (3%) (Kabir,2004,6).

Ancestry

In 2001, of the 102,566 Australian-born Muslims, 30 percent claimed Lebanese ancestry, 18 percent claimed Turkish ancestry and around 3 percent claimed a broadly defined Arab ancestry (ABS, 2001, in Kabir, 2004). It is not possible to identify how many might have been Confluents with mixed parentage.

Age and gender of Australian Muslims

Bouma (1994,29) noted that according to the 1991 Australian Census, the majority of Muslims in Australia were under the age of 25, and slightly more than half (53%) were males, with males outnumbering females in each age group. In fact, as Bouma (1994,29) noted, the ABS data showed that the male/female ratio was 1.12, whereas for the Australian population it was 0.985

In 2001, Muslims were still a young population compared to other Australians. Approximately 50 percent were aged 24 and under whereas only 35 percent of other Australians were in this age category. Regarding gender, there were only slightly more Muslim males than females (53% and 47% respectively), which was similar to the gender ratio of the Australian population as a whole, at 49 percent male and 51 percent female (ABS, 2001, in Kabir, 2004,214).

Languages spoken at home

Bouma (1994,26) noted that Australian Muslims speak languages alongside English, which is a natural occurrence in such a diverse group. According to the 1991 Australian Census, 7.72 percent spoke English only, with Arabic (38.42%) and Turkish (25.34%) the main languages spoken. The majority of Australian Muslims

(87%) spoke English alongside another language. These other languages included Arabic, Turkish, Persian (Farsi), Bosnian, Indonesian, Bengali, Malay, Dari, Albanian, Hindi, Kurdish and Pashto.

Education and occupation of Australian Muslims

Bouma (1994,30) noted that contrary to any misperception that Muslims are not educated, approximately 22 percent of Australian Muslims who were employed held a bachelor degree or higher. Perhaps surprisingly, given some stereotypes, many Muslim immigrants were also well educated. Of the Muslim women born overseas, 13 percent held a bachelor degree or higher, and similarly, 18 percent of Muslim men held equivalent levels of education. Bouma (1994,30) pointed out that:

> This is not surprising given the high value placed on learning and knowledge by Islam and given the fact that applicants for immigration with qualifications are favoured in the selection process.

Table 5.2 demonstrates the percentage of qualified Muslims compared to the national total (Kabir, 2004,273). The combined total for skilled occupational categories for Muslims (46%) was very similar to the national total of 48 percent. What is probably more significant is that the table displays how Muslims are better represented in higher and bachelor degree education than the overall population. The tertiary-educated Muslims (including higher degrees, postgraduate diplomas and bachelor degrees) comprised 23 percent compared with the national figure of 16 percent (ABS, 1996, in Kabir, 2004,273).

Australian Muslims still had a slightly lower percentage than the average Australian standard in relation to employment in certain areas. Compared to all Australians, Australian Muslims were less likely to be employed as administrators, managers or professionals. The 2001 Census (Kabir, 2004,273-276) showed that only 20 percent of Australian Muslims were employed in these areas whereas the percentage of all Australians employed in these areas was 27 percent. Muslims were commonly employed as transport and production workers (19%) or laborers (14%). On the other hand, 13 percent of other Australian men were production or transport workers, and 10 percent were laborers.

One area that needs to be mentioned when discussing Muslims in Australia is the level of unemployment. The 1991 ABS Census showed that 22 percent of Muslim males and 14 percent of Muslim females were unemployed, both percentages that

were significantly above the national rates (Bouma, 1994,32). By 1996, the ABS Census data revealed that the unemployment rate among Muslims was 25 percent compared to 9 percent for the national total. This was in spite of the fact that Muslims' skill levels were almost equivalent to Australian-born levels and the national average (Kabir, 2004,272).

Table 5.2: Muslims and total population by qualification, persons aged 15 and over only, 1996 (% of Labour Force)

Qualifications	*Muslim*	*National Total*
Higher degree	6	2
Post graduate Diploma	1	2
Bachelor Degree	16	12
Undergraduate Diploma	5	6
Associate Diploma	4	4
Skilled Vocational	11	17
Basic Vocational	3	5
Inadequately Described	2	1
Not Stated	22	18
No qualification	30	33
Total	**100**	**100**
Total Labour Force in Numbers	69,845	8,740,757

Source: ABS (1996). Census of Population and Housing

Kabir cites a perception of discrimination to explain this discrepancy. He claims that nomenclature and dress codes are immediate identifiers that have caused discrimination against some Muslims. Many unsuccessful skilled applicants believed they were rejected because of their cultural identity, which was revealed by their Islamic names or dress code. The popular Muslim names for males are Muhammad, Mohammed, Mohamet, Mehmet, Mollah, Abdullah, Ahmed, Hussein and Rahman, and for females Amina, Ayesha, Fatima, Khadija, Rahima, Salma and Nasreen.

Wearing the Muslim women's traditional attire, such as the abaya, burqa, chadar or hijab, also makes people conspicuous. This attire would immediately reveal that the job applicant was not a 'native' and belonged to a different ethnic background. As a consequence, they would be unable to merge easily into the employing company's culture (Kabir, 2004,277). It is also possible that the high unemployment rate among Muslims may have been affected by the fact that many were recent migrants and not native English speakers, or that their qualifications and skills were not recognised in Australia.

Mosques in Australia

Apart from economic problems, Muslims also faced social disadvantage, especially in mosque establishment, in the course of settlement in Australia (Kabir 2004,284). Table 5.3 shows the number of mosques in Australia in 2001 (ABS, 2001, in Kabir, 2004,285).

Table 5.3: Number of mosques in different states of Australia, 2001

States	Muslim Population in 1996	Number of Mosques in 2001	Muslim Population per Mosque
New South Wales	102,288	27	3,788
Victoria	67,047	26	2,579
Western Australia	12,583	12	1,049
Queensland	9,420	11	856
South Australia	4,798	2	2,399
Australian Capital Territory	2,467	1	2,467
Tasmania	807	1	807
Northern Territory	767	1	767
Other Territories	725	0	725
Total	200,902	81	2,480

Source: ABS (1996). Census of Population and Housing and AFIC.

This table illustrates the increase in the number of mosques from the early nineties, when Bouma (1994,56) noted there were only 57 mosques around Australia, to 2001 when there were 81 mosques (ABS, 2001, in Kabir, 2004). Numerous Islamic leaders around Australia commonly mentioned public opposition to the construction of mosques. However, this was not always the case. In addition to mosques, some

of the major universities, schools and workplaces provide rooms for prayers, known as ‘Masalas’. Many of the interviews in this study were gathered in Masalas.

Media and the representation of Muslims in the 1990s

Articles in ‘The Australian Islamic Review’ (a national newspaper) suggested that Muslims, in general, believed that the West feared Islam and people of Islamic faith, and branded them all as fundamentalists, militants and terrorists. Mahmood (1998,18) commented on how the print and electronic media’s highlighting of Islamic fundamentalist political violence was instrumental in developing a perception in the West, in this case in Australia, that “Islam is a movement which is intrinsically hostile and achieves its objectives through violence and terror”. Brasted (in Saeed & Akbarzadeh, 2001,222), in ‘Contested Representations in Historical Perspective’, was critical of the Australian media, which he felt represented all Muslims in the 1990s as Arabs, terrorists, mullahs, veiled women and “passive and proselytizing communities of believers”.

Kevin Dunn (2001,296), in ‘Representation of Islam in the Politics of Mosque Development in Sydney’, noted that from 1992 to 1996 a count was carried out of negative and positive words used to describe Islam in the Australian media. Negative words included “fanatic”, “intolerant”, “militant”, “fundamentalist”, “misogynist” and “alien”. Positive descriptions used by the media included “moderate”, “tolerant”, “peaceful”, “devout”, “feminist” and “familiar”. Dunn counted 655 uses of the negatives, while positives were mentioned only 215 times.

According to Kabir (2004,259), a 1998 survey found that the majority of Australians perceived Muslims to be conservatives and fundamentalists (see Table 5.4). Kabir noted that even though this was a small sample (responses from 51 structured questionnaires completed in Chapel Hill, Brisbane, predominantly a suburb of professional classes), it gave an idea of how Muslims were perceived in 1998.

Table 5.4: Australians’ views of Muslims (percentage), October 1998

Perception	Percentage
Friendly	8
Unfriendly	8
Conservative	37
Terrorist	2

Fundamentalist	24
Arrogant	2
Wide Ranging: Friendly to terrorists	6
Unknown	13

Source: Kabir (2004,260)

The Gulf War and its effects on Muslims in Australia

Something that was still fresh in people's minds at the time of my interviews was the first Gulf War. According to Kabir (2004,11), Muslims in Australia during the Gulf War crisis suffered discrimination. Numerous books and reports pointed out that some Muslim and Arab Australians encountered a backlash during the 1990s, especially during 1990–1991. Fraser, Melham and Yacoub, in 'Violence against Arab Australians', (Cunneen, Fraser &Tomsen, 1997,77), stated that:

> The Arab Australian Muslim woman who wears the 'hijab' (headscarf) and is assaulted in the street, is assaulted both because of her ethnicity and because of her religion (as well as her gender). Whether the motivation of the perpetrator can be subsequently classified as racial or religious in no way affects the fact that the crime was committed because the victim was seen as the dangerous Other.

Ghassan Hage (1998,45), in his book 'White Nation', speaks of a "Gulf backlash" when talkback radio and the 'letters to the editor' pages of newspapers around Australia were full of calls for the "Arabs" and "Muslims" (almost always seen as the same) to prove their loyalty to Australia – their nation – or "go home". He cites the following examples from the radio:

> There were pronouncements ranging from, "If you don't like it, rack off", to the more flowery, "our economic survival is in the hands of a lunatic [Saddam Hussein]. If you want that, you, too, are lunatics and you should go back and be there with the other lunatics" (1998,45).

Hage said these calls were often "supplemented, sometimes fuelled, by journalists, politicians and other media personalities" (1998,45). He further observed that "it was clear that this imagined 'Arab' object that the nationalists felt empowered to manage spatially and even to remove totally from space was 'little'". Kabir (2004,12) commented further on this point that "Arabs were in fact perceived to be so 'tiny'

that, as one radio commentator [Alan Jones on radio station 2UE] remarked, one could easily 'wrap them up in newspaper and send them home'".

The following two reports were written about the effect of the Gulf War on Australian Muslims. Prepared by the Committee on Discrimination against Arab Australians, they were titled 'Documentations of Incidents of Harassment of, and Racism Towards, Australian Descent and Australian Muslims, August-October, 1990, volume 1' and 'The Gulf in Australia: Racism, Arab Australians and the War Against Iraq, November 1990-July 1991, volume 2'. They provided a detailed account of the trauma faced by some Muslims during the 1991 Gulf War. The Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission also wrote a report in 1991 titled 'Racist Violence: Report of National Inquiry into Racist Violence in Australia'. This report also gave an account of racial harassment encountered by some Muslims during the 1991 Gulf crisis.

Conclusion

The decade of the 1990s involved a lot of growth and change within the Muslim community in Australia as a whole. There was certainly a perception of hostility and discrimination that must have had an impact on young Muslims growing up in Australia during that time. Since 2001, even more rapid changes have occurred, which I briefly discuss in the conclusion to this thesis. However, changes after and including September 11th 2001 are not included in this thesis because I had conducted the majority of the research (literature reviews and interviewing) prior to this date.

Chapter 6: Methodology of the Study and Key Questions

Introduction

This chapter will describe the methodology of my thesis. It will look at the purpose of this study, hypotheses and research questions that were developed, and how background research was conducted. There is also discussion about how interviews, which are the essence of my research, were conducted and the problems I encountered along the way.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of my thesis was to conduct an analysis of Confluents; children from interfaith and intercultural marriages. This study will specifically look at children that have one parent of Anglophone Australian Christian background and one parent who is a Muslim of non-Anglophone migrant background. In most cases, the non-Anglophone parent had initially come from the Middle East or Turkey. There were also some from Afghanistan, Albania, Bosnia, India and Iran. The second group I looked at was Unitaries: second-generation children from a non-Anglophone migrant background. This study specifically looked at children of marriages between two Muslim non-Anglophone parents. In order to be consistent, I sought to interview youth whose parents had migrated from the same countries as the migrant parent of the Confluents.

A smaller group of parents, some of Confluents and some of Unitaries, was also interviewed about how they thought their children felt. I interviewed youth and parents in South Australia, Victoria, Western Australia, New South Wales and Queensland in order to determine the influence of state of residence. There were considerably more youth and parents interviewed in Sydney and Melbourne due mainly to the larger numbers of Muslims in those cities.

Hypotheses

I sought to explore the following hypotheses in this thesis:

1. That Confluents would possess multiple identities whereas Unitaries would possess either two separate identities or were in-between two identities.

2. That Confluents would be more integrated into Australian society than

Unitaries.

3. That factors that would influence the extent of such integration might include:

   a) Name

   b) Physical appearance

   c) Language

   d) Relationship with parents

   e) Place of residence

   f) Gender.

4. That Confluents might feel the need to act as a coach to fellow younger Confluents.

5. That Confluents had a right to choice in regard to their culture and religion.

6. That Confluents might be more open-minded than Unitaries as a result of being children from an intercultural and interreligious marriage.

7. That Confluents might create their own culture, unique to them as Confluents.

8. That Unitaries and Confluents in Australia might react differently to certain stigmas that might be attached to Muslims in Australia.

Research questions

In conjunction with proving/disproving the above hypotheses, I formulated the following questions from the findings of my literature reviews:

Are female Unitaries opposed to their ethnic culture because it reinforces a role of women that they feel, as Australian Unitaries, they are not? Does this encourage them to take on an Australian Muslim identity?

Do Muslim youth feel like the 'other' in Australia? Does the media play a part in whether Unitaries feel integrated into Australian society?

Is it always the case that Muslim youth have an identity crisis? By belonging to

Muslim youth groups, can Unitaries feel like they belong and can the groups aid them in feeling comfortable with their Muslim identity?

Does the solution to the problems Muslim youth experience lie deep in the Sufi traditions and, once again, like in the earlier stages of Sufism, will these youth develop a “desire to escape the hardships due to the social and political upheavals of the time; and a tendency toward quietism” in reaction to the worldliness of their parents’ cultural and religious background, and the Western secular society in which they live?

Is it only Unitaries who can use Sufism as a way to deal with their identity crisis or can Confluent youth also use Sufism as a way to feel that their dual religious backgrounds can finally come together?

Do Muslim women feel that wearing the hijab is a way of expressing themselves as Australian Muslim women as opposed to Lebanese or Turkish Muslim women growing up in Australia?

What does putting on the hijab mean to these youth? How do they explain putting it on in a time when they might be discriminated against because they will be easily identifiable as Muslim?

Method

My research was based primarily on my in-depth interviews with Confluents, Unitaries and some of their parents. In order to find people to be interviewed and to understand the situation of these youth, background research was needed. This background research influenced the research process.

Exploring the context

How background research was conducted and data were gathered

Research was conducted at various levels in order to formulate questions and find people to interview. This gathering of background research included the following:

1. **Observation of Muslim youth functions and gatherings, and different cultural gatherings**

   Informal observational research was conducted by attending a range of Muslim and other cultural functions and meeting places around Australia, such as

dinners, dances, barbeques, private functions, and university clubs and associations. I was involved with four groups as one of the key organisers. These were AMY (Adelaide Muslim Youth), Arab Youth group of SA, YMA (Young Muslims of Australia, of which I was the Adelaide Representative) and The Muslim Women of South Australia (of which. I am a founding member). Being part of all these groups enabled me to gain both informal and formal data, which I used in formulating my interview questions, understanding how to respond to the answers and analysing the results. My involvement was especially important in finding respondents for the study.

2. **Consultations with religious and community leaders (local and interstate)**

Consultations were made with religious or cultural leaders from around Australia. This was important for understanding not only the leaders' views on the situation of youth in their state but also for finding youth. In one case, a Lebanese leader in Sydney (who had grown up with my father) organised a club room full of youth who agreed to be interviewed.

3. **Attendance at events**

I attended a series of youth forums (Muslim) and ethnic forums throughout Australia, and participated in national and local conferences and cross-cultural training sessions. I also had consultation with student counselors from schools and with welfare workers (mainstream and ethnic, for example Families and Community Services – FACS).

4. **University prayer rooms and cultural groups around Australia**

Most major universities around Australia had prayer rooms that were usually run by a student body at that particular university. I would go to the prayer rooms and talk to youth generally to obtain interviews. I would also contact the cultural associations of that particular university, which I thought might know of Confluents or Unitaries I could interview (see Appendix 2 for a detailed list).

How the interviews were conducted

I conducted in-depth interviews with Confluents, Unitaries and some of their parents. Individual face-to-face interviews were conducted, guided by an open-ended questionnaire. There was no time limit.

When selecting youth to interview, I tried to take class, education and gender into account, and have an even balance between the different levels amongst both Confluents and Unitaries. This proved possible with Unitaries but harder to achieve with Confluents because I had a smaller number from which to choose.

Interviews were conducted by sitting down with the respondent. Every question was discussed, although the respondent had the right to refuse any of the questions they did not feel comfortable answering. All interviews were tape-recorded.

Before any interviewing began, respondents were reassured that the information was completely confidential; I would be the only person who would listen to the tapes and the tapes would be discarded after I had heard and analysed them. I explained to all the people being interviewed that their real names would not be used in my thesis or anywhere else. Many youth were very self-conscious because they would often be discussing matters they did not want anybody to know about. This was definitely the case amongst smaller communities, for example in Adelaide or Brisbane. Often, before an interview commenced, it would take fifteen minutes to an hour or more to gain the respondents' trust and make them feel comfortable to talk freely. Even then, each interview varied in length because it was difficult for some of these respondents to open up and elaborate.

At the end of the interview, I would turn the tape-recorder off and we would discuss other families involved with mixed-marriages. This proved to be a very successful way of finding more Confluents whom I could interview.

Table 6.1: Youth interviews

PLACE	***CONFLUENTS***	***UNITARIES***
Adelaide	22	40
Melbourne	12	49
Sydney	26	50
Brisbane	5	8
Perth	4	9
Canberra	0	7
Overall Total	**69**	**163**

Table 6.2: Parent interviews

PLACE	*CONFLUENTS*	*UNITARIES*	*TOTAL*
Adelaide	9	8	17
Melbourne	4	6	10
Sydney	12	11	23
Overall Total	**25**	**25**	**50**

Main problems encountered while conducting the research

Difference between the number of Confluents and Unitaries, and between states

The main difference between the number of Confluents and the number of Unitaries interviewed arose because it was much harder to find Confluent youth to interview. I relied very heavily on snowball introductions by word of mouth and asking everybody I met if they knew of anyone involved in a Confluent marriage, and whether or not they had children. Once I had this information, I purposefully sought out Confluent youth to interview.

I found Unitaries by attending various functions and speaking to different cultural and religious elders and leaders. I also found Unitaries at various universities around Australia. I found parents to interview through introductions from respondent youth.

The difference in numbers between the states was also a problem. It was much easier to find more people in Sydney and Melbourne than in Brisbane or Adelaide due to the relative size of the communities, and accordingly, the number of organisations and events.

Confluents hard to find

The most common problem I faced was difficulty finding Confluents. In addition to the methods just described for recruiting respondents, at the end of each interview I would ask again if they knew anybody who was a Confluent and if they would be willing to be contacted. Despite all of these efforts, I still had difficulty finding as many Confluents as Unitaries, even though they were the main focus of the research. As a result, it was hard to have a mixture of respondents from different

groups with regard to age, class, education and gender.

Many Confluents not the right age

One factor that proved to be a problem was the age of many of the Confluents. At the time when I did my interviewing, more cultural and religious intermarriage was occurring but the children from these marriages were still very young and I had decided to interview only those aged 16 years or over. I had numerous parents of Confluents approach me to tell me that they wished their children were older so they could be interviewed, because they felt the study was of crucial importance.

Gaining the confidence of the person being interviewed

The next problem was trying to encourage young people (usually Unitaries but also some Confluents) to be interviewed and to speak to me with confidence in the knowledge that no one (especially not their parents) would hear the tape and the tape would be destroyed after analysis. The majority of youth and parents did not want to be identifiable in the thesis. Therefore, I promised them that all names would be changed so that they could not be identified. It took a while to gain the respondents' trust, so I would often have to talk to them for some time about what I was doing, why I was doing the study and the importance of the study to make them feel comfortable and to convince them to be interviewed (see Appendix 1, Information letters). Gaining the confidence of the person being interviewed proved crucial to the extent of information provided and the overall ease of the interview.

Keeping parents and children separate during the interview process

On numerous occasions, I found that I had to convince the parents of the need for the interview. Even more common was the need to convince the parents to allow me to interview the youth without the parent being present. Often, parents were hesitant about their children being interviewed without them.

What was interesting was that Unitaries' parents, who often had issues with their children, such as involvement with crime, gangs or rebellion in general, really wanted me to interview the children. I had expected the contrary due to the strong shame factor in these cultural communities. It was also interesting that after the interview was finished and the young person was no longer present, the parents would ask me to tell them what had been said. I had to repeat my earlier promises about confidentiality. Parents in such cases were sometimes very distressed and in

several cases the mother started crying. They would explain to me how they did not know what to do any more. I had to spend considerable time consoling parents (mainly mothers) after interviewing their children, being very careful not to disclose any information from the interview.

Despite this situation, parents being excluded from the interview and children being assured that their parents would not hear any of the information I had recorded proved to be successful. This method was considerably useful because often the respondent's attitude changed quite dramatically when their parents left. In some cases, it was like a different child was in front of me. I walked away from the interview surprised at how a person could lead such separate lives. I was left wondering why they felt they needed to do so.

I found that not allowing the children in the room when interviewing the parents also helped the interview process because the parents were then much more prepared to talk honestly with me about how they were feeling and the problems they faced

A sense of pride and shame hindering the parent-child relationship

As many community and religious leaders had led me to expect, many parents spoke of the sense of pride they felt they had been raised with. They often felt this got in the way of their relationship with their children and how they behaved with them. It was something they found hard to control. For example, they felt shame that they could not talk to their children about their failures in parenting or things that made them feel scared about raising their children in Australia. Thus, the parent interviews without the children proved to be successful.

"Front door" syndrome taking place

The element of shame and pride also occurred to a certain extent amongst the children, mainly among the Unitaries. However, I found it to manifest in the form of what Cahill and Ewen (1987) termed the "front door" syndrome (see Chapter 3). Often, the children would act completely differently in front of their parents than when their parents were absent. The children noted on numerous occasions that it was not *right* to talk about certain things in front of their parents out of *respect* for them. This extended even to the way they sat. For example, it was considered rude in some cultures to have their feet pointing towards their parents.

Time and cost involved travelling around Australia for interviews

Whenever I heard of a Confluent somewhere, I would travel there (from Adelaide) for an interview. I also felt the need, in relation to both Confluents and Unitaries, to see the differences between states, which involved considerable travel. In addition, I needed to travel to various states in order to attend various functions and camps, and to interview religious and cultural leaders as part of my background research. All of this involved considerable cost and time, which eventually became one factor (among many) in extending the time taken to compile the research essential for this thesis.

Major advantages

I was certainly at an advantage, as I am my subject matter. My background helped me with the interviewing process in many ways, including being a Confluent, being a practising Muslim and my age while interviewing.

Being a Confluent

Being a Confluent enabled me to relate to Confluent respondents, which usually helped them to open up to me. I started every interview explaining my personal experience as a Confluent. However, I was careful not to disclose too much information to avoid influencing their answers. Thus, I gave general information about my cultural and religious background.

Being a Confluent also helped me find interviewees because my parents tended to know most people in our community (in Adelaide and a few interstate). My parents would always invite people to our home if they knew they were involved in a mixed-marriage so they did not feel alone and thus could meet other people in a similar situation to themselves. This enabled me to have a head start, so to speak, with who was out there, mostly in Adelaide, and who I would be able to interview.

Being a practising Muslim

My parents had been involved in the Muslim community locally and nationally. This helped me gain access to people and functions within the community. Being a practising Muslim enabled me to be part of youth functions and camps. It also enabled me to relate to Unitaries because I was familiar with some of the difficulties they faced. It made it easier to gain their trust and enabled them to open up to me in the interview. If I had not been known in the community, the respondents might not

have felt so comfortable with me or trusted me. This is where the background work played an essential role, not only in obtaining information but also in ensuring that many young people had seen me at functions, which helped them feel at ease with me when I was interviewing them. At the time when I did the majority of the interviewing, I was not wearing the hijab, which I think also helped me because both practising and non-practising Muslims felt comfortable in my presence.

My age at the time of interviewing

When I interviewed my youth respondents, I was in my twenties, which helped me to relate to respondents. Numerous comments were made by both Confuents and Unitaries (in their twenties) at the time of interviewing that indicated they thought I would understand because we were around the same age.

Interview questions

I had prepared a set of questions for each group (see Appendix 3 for full set of questions used in the interview process). However, other questions were often needed to further develop the broad areas of questioning. This was entirely dependent on how the interviewing process progressed. In-depth interviews took at least one hour but often were considerably longer, depending on the respondent.

Triggers – the short story, the poem and the concept of stigma

As part of their questions, all Confluents, Unitaries and both sets of parents were given Sophia's story and Khalil Gibran's short poem to read, as explained in Chapter 1. In addition, Goffman's (1976) description of stigma was read to respondents.

Conclusion

The search for Confluents and Unitaries, the background research needed for these interviews and conducting the interviews were a major component of this thesis. These interviews of Confluents, Unitaries and their parents are the heart of this thesis.

Now that I have described the purpose of the thesis, the hypotheses, research questions and methods for collecting the data through interviews, in the next part (chapters 7-9) I present the thoughts of the parents of Unitary youth and Confluent youth, then compare the two.

PART TWO: FAMILY CONTEXT

The chapters in this part present the thoughts of some of the parents of the Unitary and Confluent respondents who were interviewed for the main body of the thesis, followed by a discussion of their similarities and differences. This is a small but important part of the thesis because it explores how parents of both Confluents and Unitaries saw their children and the situation they faced.

Chapter 7: Parents of Unitary Muslim Youth

Introduction

Information in this chapter is based on in-depth interviews with 25 parents of Unitaries from different states in Australia. Eleven were from Sydney, 8 from Adelaide and 6 from Melbourne. Twelve respondents were fathers and 13 were mothers. One mother was divorced and one was a widow. The interview results are organised into three sections: parents' experiences of marriage; parents' perspectives of their children; and parents' perceptions of control versus choice.

Parents' experiences of marriage

Seventeen of the 25 parents felt their marriage had been a positive experience. Five felt that it had been difficult but would not say it was negative, whereas three parents felt that their marriage had been negative. All parents, even those who felt their marriage was positive, said that there were difficulties.

When asked whether raising children in their non-Anglophone ethnicity (Lebanese, Turkish etc.) and being Muslim in Australia contributed to these difficulties, almost all agreed. Parents elaborated that it had been hard because they often had not understood (until it was too late) how Australian society was different from the country in which they had been raised. Another difficulty was the small number of Islamic schools at the time they were raising their children, so they had felt they were left with the sole responsibility for teaching their children about Islam, which was difficult considering work and household commitments. The parents felt their children were often torn between what mainstream society expected from them and what they expected as parents. A few parents noted that they had often encouraged their children to feel different from others, not realising how it would affect them.

Another reason parents identified as creating difficulties in their marriages was not having their extended families around them. Many parents noted that in their country of origin, the extended family gave practical and emotional support in raising children, while in Australia they had to rely on themselves for everything, leading to strain on their marriages. However, some parents felt that this reliance on each other led to strengthening their marriage.

Parents were asked how they had met their spouses. Contrary to stereotypes, less than a quarter had had an arranged marriage. By 'arranged marriage', this minority

meant organised rather than being forced into the marriage, which would have been against their religion, but that their parents or families had suggested someone and they had then agreed. The other three quarters had chosen their spouses independently but from the same cultural and religious background. Only a minority said their parents' expectations were the main reason for them choosing a spouse from the same background. Most respondents felt that they had seen the benefits of marrying within their own culture and religion because both were important for the marriage to be successful. They often viewed marriage as a *marriage of families* rather than just individuals. As one father stated, *when you get married you marry a family*. The parents felt that the family played a major role in selecting a spouse and was also an indicator of whether a marriage would be successful. The majority of parents noted that the *name* of a family (meaning reputation) had a major impact on the selection of a spouse. As one mother explained:

> *When I married, I was not expected to have an arranged marriage but I was expected to marry somebody from a good family that my family did not have to know but did need to know that that family had a good name. I wanted this for my children but they did not understand the importance of marrying into a 'good' family. (Mother)*

Parents' perspectives on their children

Identity

When the terms 'in-between identities' or 'dual identities' were suggested to parents, they said that they had not previously conceptualised their children's identities as such. However, most agreed that one or both of these terms fitted what they felt their children were going through. For example, one father stated:

> *I had never thought of using the term you use 'in-between identities' - I do feel that this is what they experience. My children are often complaining that we put pressure on them to adhere to our culture and they feel pressure from their friends to adhere to the wider "Australian" culture and they are lost somewhere in-between. (Father)*

When they were asked whether being in-between identities or having dual identities was something that was positive or negative for their child, the parents differed in their answers. Ten parents felt that this was negative for their child and resulted in their child feeling alienated or confused about their identity. Nine parents said this

was something that was positive, and six parents stated they were unsure and that only their children could answer. When those who had answered “negative” were asked why they thought so, they said that it was because it led to their child feeling lost or alienated from their own ethnic/cultural groups as well as the wider Australian community. As one mother said:

> *When my daughter went back to Turkey she thought she would finally belong as she always felt that she did not belong in Australia. But, the opposite occurred; she felt more alienated in Turkey. Even though she spoke Turkish, people would make fun of her Turkish. She was wearing the headscarf here in Australia and was working, but in Turkey she felt she needed to take it off in order to find a job. It was after this that she really felt she belonged nowhere...I suppose you could say she was ‘in-between identities’ as you put it. (Mother)*

Unitary parents expressed the extent of their worries about their children’s identity, as illustrated in the following father’s explanation:

> *My son is clearly ‘in-between identities’. He does not fully belong to his own ethic group nor does he feel fully Australian. He is scared to say he is Muslim to his work mates in fear that he will not fit in. This worries me as I feel that him being ‘in-between identities’, like you said, has a very bad effect on his life. I just wish he could feel happy with who he is. (Father)*

Parents were asked if they felt this negativity was just a stage or something that would always be a negative experience for their children. The responses were mixed. Just over half feared that the experience would continue throughout their children’s lives. The other parents felt that this experience was probably just a stage and hoped that when their children were older they would be clearer about who they were.

Religion

The majority of parents said religion was important because it was part of their cultural identity and they felt that their religion was also a vital part of their child’s identity. They believed that their children were practising Muslims, the same as they were:

> *Our religion is very important for us, everything in our lives revolves around*

our religion. Even our culture is second to religion but part of our culture. (Father)

Religion is of course important, as it is part of our culture; it is who we are. (Mother)

The majority of parents noted that they had had a say in their children's religious upbringing when the children were young. However, as the children got older, the parents explained that their influence lessened due to numerous outside influences they could no longer control. Parents also explained that their children were discovering their religion for themselves as they were getting older. Several had daughters who chose to wear the hijab when no one in their family had previously done so:

I don't wear the 'hijab' and I was shocked when my daughter wanted to wear it but we don't encourage. But I had no say. Nowadays children don't listen to parents. (Mother)

Such comments contradict a common assumption that Muslim girls are forced to wear the hijab. Not one parent said that they forced their child to wear it. Some noted that they encouraged them to wear it but would never force them to do so.

Attitudes to education about religion differed in the parents' responses. Half felt that it was up to them, as parents, to teach their children about Islam but that this was not always easy. The other half felt that they could give them a general knowledge of the religion but it was up to their children when they were older to research the religion further. What is interesting is that a quarter of these parents found that their children had gained a different and wider understanding of religion than theirs. As mentioned above, many of their children decided to comply with the Islamic dress code. This created problems for some of the parents because they had not expected it. Numerous parents stated that their perception of Islam was from their ethnic/cultural background, and for them culture and religion were intertwined.

One of the most striking differences the parents noted between their children and themselves was how they viewed religion, interpreted it and practised it. This affected their personal choices. An example of this was that many of the parents noted that their daughters wore the hijab while they did not:

When my daughter put the hijab on, I was shocked as she was the first one

to do so. And then, when she put on the niqab (face covering), I became angry. I was angry because I was worried about her and what would happen to her in Australia. Also, I was worried what would my family say...what would other people in our community say...who is going to marry her? (Mother)

When parents were asked whether they felt their children were Muslim by chance or choice, most believed that it was their children's choice, while the remainder were unsure. Parents were asked if they had made their children wear Islamic clothing like the hijab, for example. All denied this and asserted that despite their own doubts, the children had chosen to do this themselves. When asked whether they had been made to wear Islamic clothing when young, they also denied it. However, some did say that if, for example, they had wanted to wear the hijab and their own parents had not wanted this, they would not have felt free to do so while they were still at home. Alternatively, if they wanted to wear clothing that their parents considered unacceptable, religiously or culturally, they would not have had the choice to do it. This, they felt, was different for their children.

Culture

Almost all the parents felt that their culture was a crucial part of their child's identity and that it made them who they were. When they were asked which culture they were referring to – their 'Australian culture' or their 'ethnic/country of birth' culture – they replied that they were referring to both because their child had been raised in Australia.

Over half of the parents interviewed said that what 'people' (their ethnic/cultural community) would think was extremely important to them. When asked whether the opinion of the wider Australian Muslim community or their ethnic community mattered more, most responded that their ethnic community's opinion mattered more to them.

Parents felt that their children's wider sense of belonging was affected by whether they lived in states with larger ethic and religious communities. This was due to the increased opportunities for involvement with cultural or religious youth groups:

If I brought my children up in say Sydney or Melbourne, I think that they would feel differently towards their communities [religious and cultural]. Over there they have lots of youth groups they can feel part of. Here [in Adelaide]

they feel a bit isolated. (Father)

Some parents said that the reason for choosing to live in Sydney and Melbourne was their desire for their children not to lose their cultural and religious identity.

Marriage

When the issue of choice came up with regard to marriage partners for their children, the parents' responses differed. Most parents felt they would want a say in who their child married and that, although ultimately it was their child's choice, they would have an influence over it. Only a minority said that it was entirely their child's choice. More than three quarters felt that culture and religion would be important factors in whom their children chose to marry. When asked why culture would matter, parents emphasised the importance of language, which was a very important part of their culture and they feared it would be lost if their children intermarried. They even felt they could thus *lose their grandchildren*. Some felt this had already happened. In such cases, the parents stated that they found it hard to communicate with their child because their child had changed since their marriage:

My eldest daughter married a Lebanese man from Australia. At the time, I did not want to have anything to do with her. I felt at the time I had lost my daughter. I always wanted my girls to marry Turkish men. I have accepted the marriage now but I still want my other two girls to marry Turkish men. Then their children will speak Turkish and they will understand our culture; we will not have to explain it to them. (Mother)

When the parents were asked which was more important – ethnicity/culture or religion – a substantial majority placed religion above ethnicity/culture. However, if they had a choice, they stated that they would prefer their child to marry someone of the same ethnicity/culture.

The majority also had a negative perception of intermarriage (Anglophone with non-Anglophone) and children (Confluents) from such mixed-marriages. A large majority believed that intermarriage was bound to fail because religious and cultural differences would make it too difficult. Many stated that the children from an intermarriage always ended up confused about what culture or religion they belonged to:

These marriages [intermarriages] often do not work as there are too many

cultural and religious differences. Marriage is hard enough without these differences but with these differences it makes the chance of these marriages working almost impossible. (Mother)

Education

Parents wanted their children to succeed in Australian society and to obtain the education necessary for this. Three quarters felt that higher education was important for them to succeed in today's society. They also felt that they had come to this country to give their children more opportunities than they had had in their own countries. Furthermore, they had often worked more than one job while in Australia when their children were young in order to give them the opportunity to study.

Place/integration in Australian society

When asked what nationality they felt their children were, the parents gave mixed answers. The majority felt that their children were Lebanese Australians, Turkish Australians, Bosnian Australians and so on. Only one parent felt their child was just Australian:

My child is an Australian as they do not identify with our culture. Their name might be different but I have raised them to be Australian. (Father)

There were also mixed responses to the question of whether or not their children were integrated into Australian society. Over half of all parents interviewed felt that their child did not feel integrated. When asked for the reason, they all said that they were made not to feel part of Australian society, mainly through the media. They all denied that it was their culture or religion that affected their children's integration into Australian society. In fact, they said their religion had helped. When they formed youth groups with other Muslims from different cultures, they were focused on their *Australianness* because they were *Australian Muslims*, which they felt helped their children form a stronger identity. However, a quarter of the parents said this worried them because they feared that by identifying themselves with the wider Australian Muslim community, they would forget about their particular ethnic/cultural heritage. Some parents were worried that this would make their children feel less connected to them.

No parents showed any concern about their child feeling Australian as long as they did not disown or forget their ethnic/cultural and religious backgrounds. However,

they were concerned that there were many ways in which the wider Australian society presented obstacles to their children's integration. These included media and literature, physical appearance and dress.

Media and literature

All the parents felt that media and literature affected their children. A large majority stated that the media had a negative effect on their children being accepted into Australian society. On the other hand, some parents noted that these negative stereotypes or stigmas had, in fact, made their child come to terms with their identity.

The majority thought that the media's negative portrayal of Muslims in general and Arabs in particular had a negative effect on their children, making them feel as if they did not belong. Many quoted examples of movies such as 'Not without my daughter' (Mahmoody, 1991)[1], 'True lies' (Cameron, 1994) and others that portrayed *Muslims and Arabs as terrorists and suicide bombers with a hatred for the West*. They agreed that these made their child feel like *the other*. Many parents stated this point without being asked a question about it. Many felt that this negative portrayal by the media made their children feel less integrated into Australian life. When asked if it affected their identity, the majority confirmed that it did. One mother, who was clearly disturbed by what had happened to her son, could not contain her tears as she said:

> *Ever since the [first] Gulf War my children have suffered as a result of the media. After all the negative images of us [portrayal of Arabs and Muslims] on the television and in the paper, my son caught the train and was badly beaten because he looked 'Arab'. He was in hospital for weeks. He was a victim of one of many racial attacks against Arabs and Muslims after the Gulf War. After this, my son completely changed. He went from being a proud Muslim Arab Australian to completely denying his religion and [ethnic/cultural] background. My son changed his name and refused to identify with his 'Arab' background. He even stopped going to the mosque. I blame the media for this. It makes me feel very upset talking about it. I try to forget it but I can't. (Mother)*

[1] 'Not without my daughter' was republished in 2004 with a picture of a lady wearing a niqab on the back cover (not how they dressed in Iran in that time).

The majority of parents said that that they also felt alienated at times as a result of media portrayals.

Physical appearance and dress

Parents felt that their child's physical appearance was a factor in their integration into Australian society. Many parents felt that if their child looked more *Australian [Anglo Celtic] or fair/white European*, they had more of a chance of fitting in. Parents of darker children felt that their skin colour made them feel less integrated into Australian society due to the stereotype of what an Australian should look like.

Another factor that parents felt affected their children's integration into Australian society was if they adhered to the Islamic dress code. If their daughter wore the hijab or their sons wore traditional ethnic clothing, this in turn affected their level of integration within the Australian community, producing a rejection that made them feel they were not Australians:

> *My daughter was the first one in the family to wear the hijab and chose by herself that this was something she wanted to do. After she put the hijab on she was asked where was she from and how long had she been in Australia for?. What upset me was that before she put on the hijab, she thought that she was 'Australian' and did not feel Lebanese. These questions made her feel like she did not belong. She went overseas trying to find a place where she belonged. She returned feeling like only Australia was home but so many Australians did not accept her. She has [reached the point] that she has to accept [the situation she is in] but I'm not sure if she's comfortable or happy there [in that situation]. (Mother)*

When parents were asked whether their child had considered this possibility and still chose to wear 'Islamic clothing', they responded that their child had considered this but had still chosen to wear it.

Control versus choice

One of the most striking impressions from these interviews was the extent to which these parents felt the circumstances of their own upbringing had been quite different from that of their children, and that they felt unprepared for their role as parents in this society. In particular, their children had been faced with, and made, a range of choices about which the parents were unsure. When asked whether children being

able to make such choices was positive or negative, the majority of parents accepted that it was positive for their children but almost all felt that it was perhaps not positive for themselves as parents because they felt they were losing control of their children. They did not necessarily see control, such as they felt their own parents had had over them, as negative:

> *Control is not always something negative. Trying to control your child's actions to steer them in the right direction is something that most people would argue is positive. (Father)*

Most parents seemed to share this view. However, they differed in the amount of control they actually had over their children. Some felt they had enough control, some felt they had little control while others felt they had lost control completely.

Conclusion

The interview responses indicate that parents of Unitaries felt that they differed from their children in relation to identity, religion, culture and marriage. The difference between the parents and their children was that parents had had limited choice in these matters whereas their children had had a lot more choice at a comparable age. This was something the parents did not have control over but was a direct result of raising their children in a different environment and at a different time from when they were raised. Education was an area that parents felt had given their children more opportunities than they had been given when they were young. They felt this was a result of migrating to Australia.

Areas where parents and their children seemed to be similar were the effect of the media and physical appearance, which were seen as factors that affected the integration of both parents and children into Australian society. Both parents and children suffered from similar problems with regard to the stigma these generated. However, parents perceived that their children suffered to a lesser degree than they did. Despite these obstacles to integration, the choices the children had in relation to education, marriage, identity, religion and culture as a direct result of growing up in Australia gave them a greater opportunity than their parents to feel integrated into Australian society.

The next chapter presents the interview responses of the parents of Confluents.

Chapter 8: Parents of Confluents

Introduction

Information in this chapter is based on in-depth interviews with 25 parents of Confluents from different states in Australia. Twelve parents were from Sydney, nine were from Adelaide and four were from Melbourne. Twelve fathers and 13 mothers were interviewed. One was a widow, one parent had divorced their partner, and another was separated from their partner and was in the process of reconciliation. All the fathers except one, who had converted, were born Muslim. All the mothers were raised as Christians and seven had converted to Islam[2].

Parents' experiences of marriage

The majority of parents interviewed had a positive view of intermarriage despite problems with their families that some were still experiencing. Over half the couples interviewed said that their parents could not accept their marriage. Half of the respondents said they also lost relationships with their siblings and friends when they chose to intermarry. However, only two regretted marrying their partners. All but two saw their own experience of marriage as positive overall, despite difficulties along the way.

In contrast with parents of Unitaries, described in the previous chapter, these parents of Confluents felt that having their extended families away from them actually made their marriages more successful than if they had been close. For example:

> *I feel that if my wife's and my family were not interstate and we saw them more regularly our marriage would not have worked. Every time we spend a considerable time with either side we (my wife and I) end up in an argument. We have both realised that for our marriage to continue to be a success we need distance from our families. (Father)*

More than half of the Confluent parents expressed similar views.

[2] Gender was a factor here because in Islam a Muslim man can marry a Christian or Jewish girl and they do not have to convert, but a non-Muslim man must convert first.

Parents' perspectives of their children

Identity

The majority of these parents saw their children as having the *best of both/ two worlds*, with only one unsure of this. Ten parents quite independently of each other stated that they felt their children *belonged to the world* rather than to one nationality. As one mother stated:

> *I always taught my children that if they were asked where they came from or what nationality, they were to say they 'Belonged to the world'. I remember my children telling me when they were older that often people felt that they were strange but this in fact helped them see their mixed heritage in a positive light. (Mother)*

When they were asked what they meant by the phrase *belonged to the world*, many parents explained that their children had the chance to be exposed to, and be part of, two often very different cultures and religions. Their children had the opportunity to decide on which, or what parts of their dual cultures and religions they would adhere to. Two parents doubted if their children could ever entirely belong to both worlds but the majority stated that belonging to both was an advantage they had never had. Some acknowledged that their children might have had some difficulties, but these had been temporary:

> *My children belong to both worlds, which is a wonderful thing, something I wish I had when I was growing up. They pick and choose what they like from both cultures and use this to their advantage. They might have gone through a period where they did not realise the advantage they had over other children not from a mixed-marriage. But it did not take long for them to take full advantage of being part of two worlds. (Mother)*

The majority of the parents felt *an idealistic optimism* about their children. They believed that they were *lucky* to be exposed to different cultures and religions, giving their children advantages over other children that only a Confluent could obtain, including insights into two different cultures and religions. However, a few parents feared their children would never fully belong to either culture and that this was something they would always feel:

> *I would like to think that my children belonging to 'both worlds', as my wife*

always puts it, is a positive thing, however I do not think it is. My children will never completely belong to both worlds as I watch them struggling to identify fully with both of them. (Father)

These parents felt their children would face obstacles along the way and would never fully belong to any one culture. Yet even this minority did not entirely reject the benefits of being from a mixed-marriage. Even the couple of respondents who themselves regretted marrying *out* because of the hardships and complications they had experienced did not regret it for their children, and still saw them as having the *ideal* background for the world today:

Intermarriage for me was not successful – as a couple we could never overcome the cultural and religious differences which were a lot more evident in those days. I definitely regret my marriage for myself. However, for my children I have no regrets. Our children are so fortunate as they have choices that we simply did not have. (Mother)

This can be narrowed down even further because 23 out of the 25 parents of Confluents stated that being a Confluent was particularly beneficial for Australian society.

Multiple identities

All the parents felt that their children had multiple identities, which they thought was unique to Confluents and definitely positive. However, until the concept was explained to them, many were not sure what was meant by the term 'Confluent':

I had never thought of it as 'multiple identities' but now that you have explained it like that, yes that is exactly what my children have. (Mother)

When asked whether this should be seen as a positive or a negative, the majority saw their children's multiple identities in a positive light:

I would definitely say that my children have multiple identities. I have watched them being able to swap from one identity to another. When with Lebanese, my children know exactly what to say and how to behave, and when with my side [Anglo-Australian], they behave accordingly. They also know how to behave according to both religious groups. I feel my children are gifted this way. After being married to a Lebanese for thirty years I still feel I am unable to do this. (Mother)

However, three parents stated that this could also be seen as negative in some circumstances, resulting in the children not being fully comfortable in any one culture. All the others agreed that it was exactly the ability to be completely comfortable in their multiple identities that ultimately led their children to form their own identity. Many parents felt positively towards their children's *unique* identity.

Stages towards identity

Nearly half of these parents saw their children go through stages of self-doubt but interpreted it mainly as just *part of growing up*:

> *Of course our children went through stages but don't all children? I do not think they went through any more or less than they would have if they were not from a mixed-marriage. (Mother)*

However, others wondered if the stages were due to being a Confluent. Thirteen out of the 25 parents noted that they felt their children's identity stages were a direct result of being a Confluent. However, they felt that their children needed to go through these stages in order to find themselves. Eleven out of 13 parents felt this was in fact a positive experience for their child because it helped their child find out who they were in terms of culture and religion. When parents were asked why they felt their children went through these stages, the majority stated that it was as a result of being a Confluent in Australia.

Marriage

Most parents said that at the time of marriage, they had not considered the issues that their future children may face. They had thought that their children would be lucky to have both cultures and religions. However, half of them mentioned that later on in their marriage they worried that their children would have *to find their feet* in relation to *who they were* and *where they fitted in*. The parents felt that it was up to them to make their children comfortable with both cultures and religions.

Almost all the parents with as-yet unmarried children stated that culture would not be important when their child married. Their child was Australian, with an understanding of dual cultures, so therefore would be used to adjusting to such differences. They also felt that intermarriage was beneficial for Australian society as a whole:

> *Intermarriage was and still is what Australia needs in this age of*

multiculturalism, as our children are a product of this multiculturalism. (Mother)

However, the answers differed quite considerably in relation to religion. Most of those whose children were practising Muslims thought religion was important. Those whose children were agnostic or not practising thought it was not that important. All noted that their children had been raised with the understanding of two religions and cultures, enabling them to marry into a different culture and religion, and be more understanding than if both parents were of the same culture and religion.

The parents of sons did not mind if their son married a non-Muslim, whereas parents of daughters, while they did not mind if their daughter married a non-Muslim, expected their sons-in-law to convert if their daughter was a practising Muslim.

Open-mindedness

Twenty-three out of the 25 parents of Confluents felt that their children were enabled to be open-minded as a direct result of having an insight into two very different cultures and religions. In fact, they felt their children were often more open-minded than themselves:

Being part of two religions and cultures has enabled my children to be more open-minded than children from parents of the same culture and religion, including parents themselves involved in a mixed-marriage. (Mother)

When parents of Confluents were asked whether their children being 'open-minded' was a direct result of being a child from an inter-religious and intercultural marriage, or a result of living in a multicultural society, all parents answered that it was definitely without a doubt a result of being a child from such a marriage. The following response is representative of all responses:

When I was raised I only knew Christianity and thought Islam was a pagan religion and the only thing I knew about Arabs was from the television, which rarely portrayed a positive image. It was not until I married my Arab Muslim husband that I realised how wrong I was. But this took a long time. I always tell my children how fortunate they are to have an insight into two cultures and two religions, as regardless of what they choose to follow they will have a greater understanding than I will ever have as they are truly part of both. I see the way my children treat people. They do not judge a person by their

race or religion, which I feel is a direct result of being a child of an inter-religious and intercultural marriage. (Mother)

All parents of Confluents agreed that this attribute of their children could only be positive and they were grateful for their children to have it.

Choice – religion and culture

Choice was very important for all these parents, so they made a conscious decision with regard to their children's culture and religion. They decided either to make the choices for their children before they were born, which would apply until they were old enough to make final decisions for themselves, or else leave the choices completely up to the children to be made later:

We gave our children 'choice', which represents almost in a way freedom, a freedom we were never given as children. Our children are very lucky for this. (Father)

Religion

Even when the parents felt that they had been able to make a choice about religion when they were young, this choice was not one they said they could force upon their child. For example:

My wife and I decided to raise our children as Muslims, however we have not raised our children to be 'blind- followers'. We encourage them to read and increase their religious knowledge and ask questions. Ultimately, their faith is between them and God. So it will end up being my children's choice. (Father)

However, a few parents had some doubts about this decision:

We left our children to choose what religion they wanted to follow when they were older. I am not sure if this was the right decision now but at the time it seemed like the right thing to do. One of my children blames us for this as she said we never explained either religion to her to help her in her choice and as a result she is agnostic. (Mother)

The majority of respondents expressed an open mind to the two religions, even when the non-Muslim spouse had converted to Islam. The parents of Confluents all felt that it was essential for their children to be respectful to both religions, even if they had decided that their children would follow one particular religion. This was

something that all parents interviewed felt was essential:

> *As a couple we decided to raise our children as Muslims but have taught them to have a deep respect and understanding of Christianity. We have taught them to focus on the similarities rather than the differences of both religions. (Father)*

Culture

Most parents felt that cultural differences were not important but all mentioned that they felt they had taken the *best of both cultures* and left out the worst aspects in a deliberate attempt to enable the children to be *good* Australians, who were proud of their cultural heritage:

> *We decided before the children were born that we were going to give our children the best of both cultures and disregard all the parts of both cultures that we did not like. This worked well for our children as they are not only proud 'Aussies' but are proud of their Arab heritage as well. (Father)*

The majority of immigrant parents stated that although they were proud of their particular culture and wanted their children to feel part of that culture, they understood that their children would feel more part of the wider Australian culture. The Anglo-Australian parents stressed that their children being *Australian* was extremely important to them:

> *It was and still is very important to me that my children feel Australian, as this is their 'home'. (Mother)*

All parents said they tried hard to make their children feel *Australian* but not at the expense of disregarding their other cultural heritage. Many had found this hard at times but most felt that they had been successful.

Place in multicultural Australia

High achievers

All parents seemed to have had high expectations for their children, believing they had something to offer the world. The majority thought that their children were high achievers as a result of being Confluents. However, some thought this applied to Unitaries as well. Numerous parents noticed that this insight into two cultures and religions actually gave their children confidence, even if this confidence took a while

to attain. Just under half stated that they saw their children as simply *Australian*. The remainder stated that they saw their children as *Australian Muslims* or as *Australian-Arab Muslims*. Australia was the place they called *home*.

When asked what term they applied to their child (for example 'half', 'mixed-blood'), a number stated that they were not fond of such terms because they felt these had negative connotations:

> *My daughter often would say to people she was 'half' when asked where she was from. I was never comfortable with this… why half and not full? Now that you have mentioned this term 'Confluent' and have explained the meaning, this is a much more positive phrase that I wish my daughter had when she was growing up. (Mother)*

This child's use of such negative terms had only occurred when the child was asked, after stating they were Australian, "Yes…but where do you come from?" A few parents noted that being a Confluent was in fact a way that the child could identify with being Australian because they had one Anglo-Australian parent.

Hostile media and literature

The majority of Confluent parents noted that media and literature played a significant role in people's perception of mixed-marriages, religion and ethnicity. Their children were sensitive to the portrayal of movies about mixed-marriages and children from these marriages, and especially in how they were portrayed. Advertisements pushing *the blonde blue eyed image* of what an Australian looked like had had an effect on their children when they were growing up. They felt this made their children go through a period of not feeling Australian. This was especially the case when their children did not have these physical attributes. However, they felt this ended as their child became more confident in themselves as a Confluent:

> *My daughter used to get distressed after seeing the ad "I am Australian as Ampol" [which showed a typical Australian as having blonde hair and blue eyes] because she felt very Australian and had only identified with my side (Anglo-Australian), however she was, and still has, very dark brown hair and an olive complexion. (Mother)*

A few parents mentioned this advertisement[3] as having a very negative impact on

[3] In the 1980s and early 1990s, there was an advertising campaign on the television and print media

their children, creating a stereotype from which they were excluded. The parents felt the media played a key role in the portrayal of Arabs, and Muslims even more so (often as suicide bombers). The majority of parents felt that the negative portrayals had a bad effect on their children, which led to a period (or stage mentioned above) where their children would deny or simply never mention they were Muslims for fear they would be persecuted. However, despite this negative portrayal in the media having a negative effect on Confluent youth at one stage, in a few cases it had led them to rediscover their Arab side and find out the truth about their religion. Some eventually became stronger Muslims as a direct result.

Educating against stereotypes

All parents stated that education of all children to see past the stereotypes is essential for society. This was the virtue of mixed-marriages; teaching the child not to be limited by cultural and religious boundaries, and to see past them. Almost all the parents said their children had a tendency to have a good understanding of both their parents' religious and cultural backgrounds, and often felt the need to extend this knowledge to others, thus acting as a coach (see Chapter 4):

> *One thing that I am very happy about is my children's need to educate the wider community about their religion. They feel it is their role as Australian Muslims. (Mother)*

Confluents, according to their parents, tended to seek a higher education. This can be directly linked to the section above on being a high achiever. For example:

> *When my husband and I got married, our families were not happy. They are still not thrilled after all these years. My children have often mentioned their negativity that they experience, especially from my side. My children all wanted to achieve at university, which we encouraged. I sometimes wonder whether this has anything to do with them trying to prove to their extended families that our marriage was a success. (Mother)*

This mother was not alone in her views. A few parents felt that their children, often subconsciously, wanted to achieve in order to prove a point.

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for Ampol (an oil company).These were termed "I am Australian as Ampol", showing either a man or woman with Blonde hair and blue eyes with an akubra hat and dryzabone jacket. Numerous respondents commented on how these advertisements bothered them because they depicted what an Australian should look like.

Conclusion

The most striking difference that parents of Confluents saw between their own experiences and those of their children concerned choice. They felt that marrying outside their culture and religion was their own choice; a choice that caused a lot of hardship at the beginning for their families, but a choice they had made. Often this choice was made without family approval. The parents felt that their children were very fortunate here in being given a lot more choices, from a young age, than they had had.

Numerous parents felt that what their children possessed as Confluents was an advantage, not only to themselves but also to Australian society as a whole, and represented almost a new beginning for Australia's social cohesion. The majority felt that their children would contribute to a decline of separate cultural identities and create more of a focus on being Australian. Furthermore, Confluents, as Australians, would undermine the narrow stereotypes of blonde hair and blue eyes, and the notion that all Australians are Christians. Being part of at least two different cultures and religions, Confluents could lead Australians to no longer look at where a person is from but what they are like and who they are as an individual. This, they felt, would ultimately lead to Australia becoming a society where everybody would get along and social cohesion would be achieved.

The next chapter compares the responses of parents of Unitaries and parents of Confluents.

Chapter 9: Comparison of Parents of Confluents and Unitaries

Introduction

There were many commonalities between the two groups of parents. They lived in the same places at the same time, often were members of the same communities and organisations, and had similar social backgrounds. A large number of fathers were practising Muslims but often at different levels of religiosity. Some of the mothers who had converted after their marriage were not practicing Muslims; they were Muslims in name only. All, like their children, could be subjected to the same stereotypes by mainstream Australian society, and all could share in degrees of willingness to respect and adapt to their new multicultural Australian homeland.

The contrasts in the ways they related to, and understood their children, were more interesting for the purpose of this thesis. A broad summary would be that the Confluent parents were far more likely than the parents of Unitaries to value their children's freedom of choice, and to perceive them as, and encourage them to become, what de Charms (1968) terms an "origin" rather than a "pawn" (see de Charms, 1968, in Chapter 1 of this thesis).

Similarities

Growing up in a hostile environment

One common similarity between parents of both groups concerned the negative impact of the media on their children, a comment they often volunteered before being asked. Both groups of parents thought that the media stereotypes of what is an Australian harmed their children's sense of identity. Even Confluent children, many parents thought, would have felt their Australian identity called into question at some stage of their lives, making it difficult to identify themselves as such.

Contributing an additional element to this was the continuous negative media portrayal of Arabs and Muslims; a negative portrayal that had existed prior to the Gulf War but had worsened since, and which led their children to be ashamed to identify as either Arab or Muslim, fearing a backlash. This often led Unitaries to change their names, some Confluents to prefer to use their non-Arab names and both to avoid open displays of their religious beliefs.

Many parents, especially those of Confluents, thought this was only a stage but nevertheless one that had caused damage.

Reactive self-assertion

Some parents, mainly of Confluents and some of Unitaries, stated that thie negative portrayal from the media made their children feel the need to unify with other people from the Muslim and Arab groups, and to involve themselves in activities such as cross-cultural training and writing articles to dispel the myths and false stereotypes. The parents approved of the concept of a coach (see Chapter 1) to explain the role their children had taken.

Both groups of parents had noticed that if their daughters had chosen to wear the hijab, they were constantly made to feel *less Australian*. The parents felt this was upsetting because it was something their daughters had chosen to do themselves (and often were the first ones in their families) but were asked constantly if they had been forced to do it by the males in the family. Some parents noted that once their daughters had chosen to put the hijab on, they felt the need to dispel the myths that surrounded it.

Although the desirability of personal choice was often a contrasting theme, parents of both Unitaries and Confluents felt that their children had a lot more choice than they had had. A parent of a Confluent said:

> *We were simply not given these choices that my children take for granted. A similar statement was made by a Unitary parent: My children can't complain as they have a lot more choices than what I had when I was their age.*

Differences

Experiences and expectations of marriage

Parents of Confluents viewed intermarriage as something that was positive. They did not feel that culture, and religion to a lesser extent, was a crucial element in choosing a marriage partner, whereas parents of Unitaries felt that culture and religion were crucial in selecting a spouse. Three quarters of the parents of Unitaries said that culture and religion were both important in a marriage if the marriage were to be successful. They often viewed marriage as a union of families rather than of individuals. For example:

I have always told my children that when you marry, you are not marrying just that person, you are marrying that whole family. They need to understand then that they need to be the same culture and religion, as if they are different cultures and their mother or father in law don't speak English, how will they communicate? (Father of Unitary)

Similarly, one mother of of a Unitary stated:

I say to my daughters, "My English is broken, how can I talk and he understand me good? This is also no good for your husband. This the problem if you [her daughters] don't marry a Turkish man". That is why they must marry a Turkish man. (Mother of Unitary)

This was different for the parents of Confluents, who saw marriage as a union between two individuals of any race or religion. It is important to note here that in most cases, the men who intermarried in Australia had already distanced themselves from family and culture to travel to Australia. Many felt cultural differences, such as language, were not so important. Some Confluent mothers stated that not knowing their husband's language could be an advantage, for example:

When my daughter asked me whether I found it difficult not being able to communicate with my husband's family, as they mostly speak Arabic, I told her: "I am actually glad as when they talk in Arabic, I don't have to worry about what to say or not to say that might offend them culturally. This way, I just sit there and smile and they have always found me to be polite". (Mother of Confluent)

In relation to culture in general, another mother of a Confluent said:

I always felt not being Bosnian has helped me, as I was not expected to do all those cultural things, whereas my sister-in-law was expected to fulfil all those cultural expectations and always felt that she just couldn't keep up with them. So I tell my children that there are a lot of benefits marrying somebody from a different culture.

Numerous parents stated that intermarriage alleviates certain problems or expectations that might often occur when marrying someone from the same cultural background. When parents of Confluents were asked why they rejected the idea of

a *marriage of families*, most denied that they saw family as unimportant but rather that ultimately it is the two individuals involved who need to make the marriage work. Most parents of Confluents had not had their families' blessing when they married, and wished it had not happened like that. One reason why they did not want to impose the restriction of finding a partner with the same culture on their children was to save their children from such an experience. They did not believe culture played a significant role in marriage.

Most parents of Confluents had learnt that although family was important, a successful marriage also needed to keep family at a distance. In contrast, most parents of Unitaries stressed the importance of having their family around for a successful marriage. Some attributed problems in their own marriage to the absence of their families.

Thus, while parents of Unitaries thought shared religion and culture would be important when their child chose a marriage partner, the parents of Confluents denied this, based on their own experiences.

Religion, culture and being Australian

Parents of Confluents tended to have a more open-minded view of religion, an approach not directly derived from their own religious upbringing. Parents of Unitaries had a narrower view of religion, which they admitted was often linked to their personal experience in a single culture or religion.

The two groups also differed on how they saw the relationship between culture and religion. Parents of Confluents felt that there was a distinct difference between culture and religion, and they stressed this difference to their children. Many parents of Unitaries stated that their understanding of Islam came from their cultural background and, for them, culture and religion were intertwined. In some cases, they saw culture and religion as the same.

Most parents of Confluents felt that adhering to prior cultural norms was not very important, although the immigrant fathers were more ambiguous about this than the Anglophone mothers. In complete contrast were the parents of Unitaries. All but one felt that their culture was a crucial part of their child's identity and it made them who they were, although these parents too wished their children to become good Australians.

All parents of Confluents stated that Australia was the best place to raise a Confluent child. Some pointed out that Australia had a history of intermarriage by Muslims. My own father used to tell me that these marriages had been first entered into by the Afghan cameleers in Australia. My parents used to both mention how kind they were to them and would share their experience of their intermarriages with them. What was interesting here was how parents of Confluents used the example of Afghan cameleers and their intermarriage as an example of how intermarriage not only works but is important in the history of Australian Muslims. On the other hand, parents of Unitaries often gave the example to make the contrary argument that intermarriage does not work because the Afghan cameleers had lost their faith and culture as a result. Thus, the same history was interpreted completely differently.

The response to the question of whether or not their children were integrated into Australian society was quite different between the two groups. Over half of all the parents of Unitaries felt that their child did not feel Australian and referred to the hostile portrayal of Arabs and Muslims in the media. In contrast, the parents of Confluents generally thought their child felt Australian because Australia was the country they lived in and the country they called *home*. All parents of Confluents noted that they tried hard to make their children feel *Australian* but not at the expense of their other cultural heritage. Many parents said they found this hard at times but most felt they were successful.

A clear contrast can be seen between parents of Unitaries and Confluents in their response to daughters who had chosen to wear the hijab. In most cases, the daughters had done so of their own accord. The parents of Confluents tended to be more open-minded and supportive about the decision, and considered that their daughters should still feel *Australian* because they had the right to practise their religion, and if this meant a piece of cloth on their heads then so be it:

> *When my daughter approached me to tell me she wanted to wear the scarf but was worried that her 'Australianness' might be questioned, I said to her that part of being a true Australian was to be proud of who you are. And that no-one could take who she was away from her. She has been wearing it now for the last five years. (Mother of Confluent)*

Parents of Unitaries took an opposite position. Only four out of the 11 parents of daughters who had chosen to wear the scarf said that they supported their daughters' decision:

I told my daughter she will no longer feel Australian…

I said to my daughter: "You will experience more racism. Is that what you want?"

We said to our daughter: "I thought you wanted to be an Australian…You can't be Australian and wear the scarf".

My husband and I said to our daughter: "If you put on the scarf no one will want to marry you. Is that what you want?"

In one case, when a daughter of Lebanese Muslim parents, who had been born and raised in Australia, decided to wear the niqab (which meant she covered her face with only her eyes showing), her parents disowned her. When these parents were interviewed, they stated that their daughter had embarrassed them and now all their Australian neighbours and friends would think they did not belong in Australia. Furthermore, they stated that their Lebanese friends would think badly of them and that no one would now marry their beautiful daughter:

I said to my daughter: "If you put on the niqab you are no longer considered my daughter and you will bring shame to the family name". When my daughter said that she felt too strongly about wearing it and that it was her right [as an Australian Muslim she had every right to wear it], I told her to leave the house. We have not spoken to her in three years. (Mother of Confluent)

Parental choices in the study and in the literature

All parents of Confluents claimed to have taken the *best of both cultures* and left out the worst aspects of both. This resembles what Owen (2002) describes in her book about ethnic intermarriage in Australia:

> Difficult decisions have to be reached with regard to children, education, faith and various behaviours within the family. Sometimes the stresses are so great that the marriage breaks down, but most mixed-culture couples continually adjust their expectations, changing their way of life to suit their partner, until a unique culture, unique to that family, evolves. As Japanese-born Sami says, "Interracial marriage is great fun! It gives you a chance to create your own rules…Decide what you want to keep, and discard those you don't" (Owen, 2002,168).

All parents of Confluents in my study endorsed such selectivity as a deliberate attempt to enable their children to be good people and proud of their dual cultural heritage. Many couples in Owen's book (2002,79) spoke of their pre-marital concern for any children they might have, and this was also an oft-mentioned worry of the couples' parents. After the children were born, however, most parents of mixed-race children felt comfortable that in Australia the children probably suffered less than if they were raised elsewhere. Owen quotes a Japanese mother who said of her Japanese/Spanish Australian son: "Australia is a much better place (than Japan) for a boy like him to grow up" (2002,79).

An area that not only differed considerably between parents of Unitaries and parents of Confluents in my study but could also be linked directly to the literature is the area of choice regarding what religion and culture parents wanted their children to follow. Parents of Unitaries made the choices for their children, a decision they said was not difficult and one that did not need to be thought about. This was quite a common situation for children with parents of the same religion and culture. However, parents of Confluents discussed the issue of their children's religion and culture, thinking long and hard, even before the children were born. They considered whether they should make the choice for their children or whether to leave the choice for their children to make when they were older:

> *We decided as a couple before the children were born that we would expose them to an understanding of both religions and cultures but it would be up to our children when they were older to choose what they wanted to follow. (Mother of Confluent)*

> *Before children came along my wife and I chose not to raise our children a certain religion or culture as we thought it best to leave it up to them when they were older. I chose to marry someone of a different culture and religion so I wanted them to have a choice also. However, we are now not so sure that this was the best thing for our children. (Father of Confluent)*

Such a postponement was the decision of a quarter of all parents of Confluents. This finding is in agreement with Barbara's claim (1989,162) that sometimes the parents of children from mixed-marriages will have refrained from making the choice so as to "leave them greater freedom later on". However, it is in contrast to Barbara's (1989,161) claim that parents would have made such decisions without much thought as a way of evading the responsibility of mixed parents (see Chapter

3). Barbara (1989,161) said that all the parents in his study whom he had asked about postponing the choice had decided to leave the choice for when the child was older, which he felt expressed embarrassment. This was far from the case in my study, where parents of Confluents thought they were making carefully considered choices for their children that would benefit them later in life.

Barbara (1989) also argued that "society" would impose its own choices as a direct result of parents not making cultural and religious choices for their children. As a reaction to certain stigmas, as discussed by Goffman (1959) and Said (1979), children may fully integrate into the Australian way of life, neglecting any other way of life to which they have been exposed. In the case of Confluent children, as a result of receiving all of their education in Australia and being influenced by the stigmas attached to Muslims and Arabs, these children may attach only to their Anglo-Australian side and reject their non-Anglophone Muslim side. This could be the case despite having always been told that they have another nationality, culture or religion to be proud of. The parents' choice to live in Australia would mean, naturally, that their children would be more Australian than if they had chosen to live in Lebanon, for example.

Barbara has also argued (1989,161) that the deferral of choices until the child is older results in an impossible situation where the child is unable to decide (see Chapter 4), which can often lead to the child questioning their past. However, Barbara's argument is that this is still better because "at least they are able to do so consciously". In my research, in most cases the children were Muslims because their Confluent mothers had converted to Islam and their parents had made the clear-cut choice to bring them up as Muslims. When no choice was made, or in some cases when a choice was made but in name only (they were told they were Muslim but were not taught about any religion), the parents noted that their children tended to call themselves *agnostic*. In such cases, it could be argued that Barbara (1989,161) might have been correct in saying the child was "unable to execute the so called freedom".

One could also question Barbara here and argue that even if a child decided to take the agnostic route, perhaps the reason was not that they were unable to execute this freedom but rather that they did not want to for fear they would be seen as choosing a side; something the parents had obviously chosen not to do. If the choice had already been made for the child, would they later feel compelled to follow that choice and thus increase their identity confusion when encountering the

opposing choice? Therefore, is it really better for the child if the choice is already made?

Barbara (1989,150) noted that there are some extraordinary journeys that often are available only to children from mixed families as a result of choices the child needs to make; choices that other children do not need to make. In my study, parents of Confluents often commented on the privilege their children had of being from an interfaith and intercultural marriage. In contrast, Barbara (1989,151) argued that there are many examples of children from Judeo-Christian couples who "experience gripping, though often very painful, lives". While he acknowledged that this could be temporary, he failed to ask whether it was just a stage and how long it might last. Many of the parents of Confluents in my study mentioned that their child went through stages that might have been painful but were *just a stage*, and that this in fact helped them discover themselves later on in life. This is reminiscent of Erik Erikson's (1950) idea of stages in life that are crucial for the formation of an individual's identity (see Chapter 1). Whether or not parents have made choices for their Confluent children may determine the stages or identity crises the children go through, and also how these young people will respond. Owen (2002), in discussing the choices parents make for their children, concluded that it is better for parents of Confluent children to make these choices before their children are born.

There is also an argument that a shared religious faith strengthens a marriage and leads to a more consistent religious training for the next generation. Lian (in Owen, 2002,108) finds herself as a young adult without a faith at all because each of her parents gave her just a taste of Buddhism and Christianity in a loving effort not to exclude or diminish the value of the other parent's religion. Decisions to wait and let the child decide on a religion could well mean the child never becomes centred in any faith, as exemplified by Lian's description of the lack of structure or guidelines in her own life. The parents had a choice. They chose to marry across racial lines but their children were born into a mixed religion.

My study contradicts this view because many parents of Confluents decided to give their children the choice; they were not born into a particular religion. In fact, this choice was something that Confluent parents valued and did not want to waste. This was something unique to Confluent parents.

The questions that will be explored later in my thesis are whether these choices are what distinguish Confluent youth from Unitary youth; whether the choices seem to

make Confluent youth stronger, especially in dealing with the so called ‘identity crisis’; or whether the choices that parents of Unitaries make for their children are of equal or any importance. The answers can only be determined when the voices of Confluents and Unitaries are heard in the later chapters.

After analysing the interviews from the parents of Unitaries and Confluents, I concluded that parents of Confluents view their children as “origins” (de Charms, 1968) who self-determine their behaviour, whereas most parents of Unitaries perceive their children as “pawns”, whose behaviour is “determined by external forces beyond [their] control” (de Charms, 1968,274).

Crespi (1992,86-87) argued that:

> …if the individual as an identity is largely a product of the social cultural context, then as a result the negative capacity of consciousness allows the individual, both consciously and unconsciously, to establish from the beginning of his [sic] life some defenses against the outer environment.

Crespi (1992,86-87) also argued that “the insecurity of the individual is connected with the uncertainty of having a social identity and being recognised and accepted by others”. Thus, an essential condition for reassurance about the effective consistency of our being is acknowledgment by others. This means that the individual can be a “pawn” and “origin” simultaneously. But what happens if the social identity is negative? Does that make the individual extremely insecure? Before discussing negative social identity, it is important to look at the notion of “pawn” and “origin” in more depth. De Charms (1968,274) uses the terms “origin” and “pawn” as “shorthand terms to connote the distinction between forced and free”. However, such a distinction is “continuous, not discrete” – as a person may feel more like an origin under some circumstances and more like a pawn under others.

If a person feels he or she is an “origin”, this is more important in predicting his or her behaviour than any objective indications of coercion. Conversely, if they consider themselves a “pawn”, their behaviour will be influenced strongly despite any objective evidence that they are free. An origin has a strong feeling of personal causation; that the locus for causation of effects in his or her environment lies within him/herself. The feedback that reinforces this feeling comes from changes in their environment that are attributed to personal behaviour. This is the crux of the concept of personal causation. It is a powerful motivational force directing future behaviour.

A pawn has a feeling that causal forces beyond the individual's control, or personal forces residing in others or in the physical environment, determine the individual's behaviour. This constitutes a strong feeling of powerlessness or ineffectiveness.

De Charms argues (1968,272) that the individual is the origin of their behaviour, and "that man is the origin of his [sic] behaviour means that he [sic] is constantly struggling against being confined and constrained by external forces – against being moved about like a pawn into situations not of his own choosing" (273). Thus, the parents of Confluents, by making the choice not to make a choice for their children, had in fact attempted to make their children "origins" of their behaviour. Parents of Unitaries felt they had less control over how their children were perceived, and made the choice for them to follow, making their children "pawns" whose behaviour was not self-determined.

Conclusion

Despite some similarities, analysis of the responses from parents of both Confluents and Unitaries made it clear that there were many differences between the two groups. My study indicates that parents of Confluents tend to view their children as self-determining in relation to their behaviour, whereas parents of Unitaries tend to view their children as behaving in reaction to external forces over which they have little control.

Parents of Unitaries and Confluents differed considerably when it came to personal choice for themselves and their children, whether about religion, culture, marriage partner or wearing a hijab. Parents of Confluents had already taken choice into their own hands when they married their partner of a different religion and culture. Thus, as a result, the majority of parents of Confluents wanted their children to be able to have similar choices. This differed from parents of Unitaries, who often had not had the same extent of personal choice when they were growing up and when they married. They viewed personal choice as less important than did the parents of Confluents.

The next part of this thesis will look at Unitaries and how they felt about their identity: were they caught between identities or did they hold two or multiple identities they were comfortable in? It will explore their views on culture, their religiosity, their Australianness, what affects this and whether they felt integrated into Australian Society.

PART THREE: UNITARY MUSLIM YOUTH IN AUSTRALIA

Part Three presents the findings from 163 interviews conducted between 1993 and 199? with Unitary Muslim youth in four cities around Australia to explore their distinctive experiences. This part serves mainly as a basis for contrast and comparison of the material about Confluent youth to be presented in Parts Four and Five.

Chapter 10 discusses how Unitaries understand and respond to the wider Australian context, particularly the way they are represented in the media. Chapter 11 explores their views on culture and religion. Chapter 12 investigates to what extent they see themselves as Australians, and how this identity may evolve over time. Chapter 13 concludes Part Three with a summary of the main findings from Chapters 10, 11 and 12.

Chapter 10: Perceptions of Others – Unitary Muslim Youth in Australia

Introduction

This chapter looks through the eyes of Unitaries at any stigma they see the wider community associating with them for being Muslims or Arabs, and how the media portrays them. It also focuses on how certain books affect the public's perceptions of Muslims. The book 'Not without my daughter' (Mahmoody, 1991), for example, gives a misleading and negative portrayal of Muslim women and their treatment. It was often criticised for being a compulsory text when the study's participants were at school[4].

Stereotypes and stigma

Stereotypes that stigmatise Muslims and Arabs are evident in Australian society, and Unitaries widely perceive them as such. Goffman's concept of stigma (1963; see Chapter 1) was explained to all respondents and they were then asked if they felt it applied to Muslims and Arabs in Australia. The vast majority of respondents (n=151) argued that there was in fact a stigma attached to them and that it had a negative impact.

When asked if there could be any indirect positive effects, some suggested that the stigma made them try to reverse the false stereotypes. They argued that there was a need for them to educate the wider Australian community about real Islam and Arab culture, and to clarify the common misconception that all Arabs are Muslims and all Muslims are Arabs. This education extended to their own communities because some Unitaries blamed their communities for failing to dispel the misperceptions and, in some cases, for reinforcing them through behaviour that was not representative of their religion or their culture. The following excerpts from respondents' interviews illustrate the Unitaries' thoughts about stigma:

> *Yes there is definitely a 'stigma' as you said it is called, there are so many negative things attached to Muslims and Arabs. In fact, most people seem to think most Muslims are Arabs but this is not true. … There is no way this could be anything but negative; it causes a lot of problems for us [Muslims].*

[4] Apparently this was still the case in 2013.

(Danny[5])

There is without a doubt a 'stigma' attached to us. Do you know how many times I have had to explain that I am not forced to wear a scarf from my father, husband or brother; that it is my choice. Even then I am not believed. I think this 'stigma' is worse for females than males. I also think that the 'stigma' attached to anybody of Middle Eastern origin is worse than for people of any other culture. For example, if someone hears someone is Bosnian, even though they are Muslims, generally people think of poor things because of all that is happening over there, whereas when people hear someone who is Arab, they think "trouble makers" or "bloody Arabs". So for sure there is a 'stigma' that is attached to Arabs and Muslims, and if you are both you are not seen in a good light. (Sophia[6])

When asked whether this 'stigma' had negative consequences, Sophia said quite sternly:

Without a doubt it is negative because this 'stigma' causes so much misunderstanding and hatred. I think that one thing the Muslim community need to do is spend time educating the wider community about what Islam really stands for; this is the only way to dispel these stereotypes and then remove the 'stigma' attached to us. The Arab communities, even the non-Muslim ones, also need to spend time changing this stereotype of 'Arabs'.

Similarly, the vast majority of respondents (n=153) saw themselves as doubly disadvantaged growing up in Australia because they were both Arab and Muslim. They felt they were misunderstood due to the stigma attached to the Islamic religion and to Arabs. They also thought the stereotypes were widespread in the Western world in general, and particularly in most countries where Muslims were a minority.

Media and literature

Unitaries were asked if they felt any areas of the media (television, radio, newspapers and the internet) and literature (books, both fictional and non-fictional, written about Muslims and Arabs) played a role in creating stigma and fear amongst people and society in general. A large majority cited the media (n=143), and the

[5] Danny - A 21 year old male student from Adelaide whose parents migrated to Australia from Bosnia.

[6] Sophia - A 24 year old female social worker whose parents migrated to Australia from Lebanon. She wore the Hijab.

majority cited commonly read books and popular films (n=116) as playing this role. One-hundred-and-eight respondents mentioned one book, 'Not without my daughter' (Mahmoody, 1991), which was also released as a film in 1991. The film was advertised as the story of an American woman trapped in Islamic Iran by her brutish husband. She must find a way to escape with her daughter. One respondent described their interpretation of the film:

> *Have you seen 'Not without my daughter'? It makes all Muslims look like they bash their wives and are allowed, even encouraged to do so, in Islam. The way it shows Muslim women is they have no rights - it's terrible. It also shows Muslims as being dirty, as it shows the husband urinating on, or near, I can't remember exactly, the prayer mat – when we know that this is no way the case as in Islam urine is considered unclean and then you wouldn't be able to use that prayer mat and all your clothes would be unclean. No joke, I was so angry watching this film and the way they showed the daughter being treated. They had so many false references to the religion. It really upset me. (Shirene[7])*

One-hundred-and-six respondents, over half of them female, mentioned this book as creating a false stereotype and attaching a stigma to them, depicting Muslim women especially in a very negative light. This book, they pointed out, was taught in schools, while the movie of the book was shown on television and sold at major supermarkets in the stand near the checkout counters. Many said this caused the wider Australian society to see Muslims and Muslim women very negatively, as Hoda[8] explained:

> *We definitely have a 'stigma' attached to us [Muslims] and unfortunately the stigma attached to Muslim women is very bad. The media plays a huge role in this as it reinforces negative and incorrect stereotypes of Muslims and this leads to a stigma attached to our name. What really upsets me is the literature used at school that has a huge impact on introducing these stereotypes to the next generation of youth. For example, we are told to teach the novel 'Not without my daughter, and I see first-hand how this book creates a very negative stereotype against Muslims and specifically Muslim*

[7] Shirene - a 21 year old female student from Melbourne whose parents had migrated to Australia from Jordan.

[8] Hoda - A 27 year old female English teacher from Sydney whose parents migrated to Australia from Lebanon.

women. (Hoda)

One respondent[9], whose parents had migrated from the Middle East, wanted to marry an Australian girl whose parents had come from Italy. He said that when she told her parents she was serious about him, they made her sit and watch 'Not without my daughter' and said, "This is what it will be like for you if you marry a Muslim and an Arab". He was very upset about this and said he had to spend so many days explaining to his girlfriend that this was not the case:[10]

I get really sick of people coming up to me and saying to me, "Oh you poor thing, don't worry, have you seen 'Not without my daughter'? She escaped her Muslim husband". When I was at school and we studied this book I got so much flack about this book, people don't realise how much trouble this book is causing. (Laila[11])

The thing is, people that watch films such as 'Not without my daughter' often get the facts wrong anyway and then just judge people accordingly. Film-makers need to think of this and check all the facts before they are released. For example, in 'Not without my daughter', people think the lady [main character] is married to an Arab and the way the husband behaves and what he does is according to his religion [Islam] and what it says. But this is so far from the truth. In fact, her husband is not Arab but Iranian, and the way the husband behaves and what he says is Islam is not only incorrect but opposite to what the religion states. So, films like this are really dangerous and should not be allowed and not encouraged, as in schools, to be shown, because of the problems that they can cause for members in the community. (Mike[12])

As well as 'Not without my daughter' (Mahmoody, 1991), another often-mentioned film was 'True lies' (Cameron, 1994). One respondent described 'True lies' as follows:

You would have seen 'True lies' have you? That film shows Arabs are all

[9] Motaz - A 21 year old male student from Adelaide, whose parents had migrated from Lebanon.

[10] A similar story was reported in an article in the *Sunday Life* called "Upwardly mobile" by Libby Goor, with the wife of John Ilhan, the founder of 'Crazy John's' mobile phone business whose parents had migrated from Turkey (Goor, 2006,12).

[11] Laila - A 19 year old student from Sydney whose parents migrated to Australia from Syria. Laila wore the Hijab.

[12] Mike - A 23 year old student whose parents migrated to Australia from Egypt.

mad, angry, violent and basically all are terrorists. And that you can't trust them in America or anywhere else. Even the way they make him look, they use an Indian actor to play him who is very dark, as this is how they portray us to have one look. (Hiba[13])

Some respondents had been motivated to take action in response to such books and films, for example:

Films can be blamed a lot for these negative stereotypes. At Uni, my Arab friends (mostly not Muslim) and I have signed a petition trying to stop the film 'True Lies' from being shown in our cinemas. It depicts Arabs in a very bad light and will cause this 'stigma' attached to anybody that is Arab. Arab youth do not need this. This will just cause more problems for us and more youth trying to deny their Arab heritage. Films like this should be banned. (May[14])

Hoda, the English teacher, felt so strongly about the book 'Not without my daughter' that she started a petition to remove it from the English teaching programme in schools. However, she has not been successful to date[15].

Wider community perceptions

When these Muslim youth were asked how they thought the wider community viewed them, a substantial majority thought both their religion and their culture were perceived incorrectly:

I feel we [as Muslims] are perceived negatively in the community because of our religion but also because of our culture. (Mohammed[16])

Respondents were asked if others perceived them as Australian. Nine hesitated and said they were unsure, and only 35 thought they were perceived as Australian:

I feel I am seen as an Aussie, my parents come from Albania but I don't believe I am seen as an Albanian as I don't act or look really like an

[13] Hiba - A 22 year old female student from Adelaide whose parents had migrated to Australia from Lebanon.

[14] May - A 24 year old Law student (also an Arts graduate) whose parents had migrated to Australia from Syria. May wears the Hijab.

[15] Hoda - A 27 year old female teacher from Sydney whose parents migrated to Australia from Lebanon.

[16] Mohammed - A 23 year old male student whose parents migrated from Egypt to Australia.

Albanian. I look and act as an Aussie, so I am seen as an Aussie. (Caleb[17])

Nearly three quarters said they felt that the wider community did not see them as Australian. Almost 90 percent spontaneously recounted incidents when they had experienced some racism,[18] of whom the majority thought this was because of their ethnicity or religion:

I am constantly asked where I come from, and when I say, "I am Australian", they look at me like, "Yeah right", and then ask, "Yes but where do you come from?" This shows that even though I was born here I am not seen as an Australian. (Humza[19])

For being Muslim, yeah I have received racism [prejudice]. Just one time I was – there's a lady across the street from us – this girl Mary, she works in the council, whatever, and I just went up to her one day and we started talking and I said, "Hi, how are you today, I haven't seen you for a while", and she's around 40 years old or whatever, and I realised her father was a table tennis coach of mine when I was a young kid, and I'd always go over there and we'd celebrate Christmas together even. I'd go over there when they'd have Christmas dinner, whatever, and through all these years she never knew I was Muslim, and I was just talking about – I was going through a religious period back then, and I was saying, "I was praying with my mother today", and she says, "Oh yeah, you should come to our church", and I said, "No, but I'm Muslim", and then she just gave me a look. And you can tell when someone gives you a look. And then she goes, "Okay, I've got to go now", and that was it. That's the only real … all the other race's views I've seen about, not me, about my religion, has been on television and that was it. (Sam[20])

In contrast, Walid[21] represented the minority experience:

No, no-one's ever been racist towards me. I don't believe so. Never when

[17] Caleb - A 22 year old male Law student whose parents had migrated to Australia from Albania.

[18] When Unitaries were asked this question, even though the meaning of prejudice was explained to them, they almost all referred to it as "racism". In my question, I often had no choice but to use the term "racism" here to mean prejudice.

[19] Humza - A 19 year old male student whose parents had migrated from Lebanon to Australia.

[20] Sam - A 20 year old a male student from Adelaide whose mother came from Lebanon and his father came from Palestine.

[21] Walid - A 24 year old tradesman from Brisbane whose parents came from Bosnia.

I've gone for a job interview. No I don't believe – they might have been but, no, I don't believe so.

Mahmood felt that if racism occurred, it was because people had the wrong impression of Muslims:

I don't think so … I think it depends. I think they've [the Australian community as a whole] got a wrong impression because I think the Muslims vary from fanatics to just normal practising Muslims, or just Muslims by heart. And I think when they hear "Muslims" they all think of all the females being covered up, veiled the faces and all that. They don't like that. (Mahmoud[22])

Respondents differed considerably in how they reacted to such perceived 'racism' or prejudice for being Muslim or Arab. Around one third felt that this racism was in fact a strengthening agent, pointing out that the hatred they felt people had towards them made them prouder to be Muslim and led them to seek to discover what Islam, for which they experienced so many problems, was all about. Over half, in contrast, saw it as influencing them to project a self that was not real due to a sense of shame.

Sixty-one respondents said that their own local communities needed to do more to help with the negative perceptions because community members often played a part in this formation of negative stereotypes. In contrast, when respondents were asked how their own ethnic communities perceived them, 103 said elders saw them as Australian. Eighty-three of the 97 respondents who had visited their parents' country of birth said they were seen as Australians, for example:

When I went to Lebanon to see where my parents came from and to see my reli's [relatives], everybody saw me as Australian whereas here [in Australia] I am not seen as "Aussie" [Australian]; I am seen as a "Lebo" [Lebanese]. To be honest, it is frustrating. (Belal[23])

I was visiting Bosnia and all my aunties, uncles, cousins and friends did not see me as Bosnian. They saw me as an Australian. But here [Australia] I am Bosnian. This goes for my religion as well. When they saw me wearing the

[22] Mahmoud - A 27 year old male from Adelaide who was an engineer whose parents came from Turkey.

[23] Belal - A 23 year old male Engineering student whose parents migrated to Australia from Lebanon.

hijab they said, "Is this what Australian Muslims are all doing now?" (Lina[24]).

Conclusion

Respondents displayed widespread hesitation and dissatisfaction about the way the media and people in the wider community perceived and represented them. This extended to within their own communities in both Australia and their parents' birthplaces.

The next chapter explores this in more depth. It explains how this experience of others' perceptions affects how young Muslims in Australia feel about themselves, as well as about belonging to the wider community, and thus whether or not they feel integrated into Australian society.

[24] Lina - A 27 year old female Science teacher from Sydney. Her parents had migrated to Australia from Bosnia. She wore the hijab.

Chapter 11: Culture and Religion

Introduction

Most young people experience contrasting influences shaping their identity as they grow up. At the least their parents are of an older generation, with views and values formed in an earlier period, which they may see as old fashioned. At the most, for children of recent immigrants, identity-shaping is complicated by the contrast between their family's and peers' ethnic or national culture, and that of the surrounding Australian society to which they seek to belong.

This chapter explores these issues in the case of Unitary Muslim youth, many of whom had difficulty reconciling contrasting values, which led to a sense of being in-between identities or having two separate identities. Religion accentuated the conflicting pressure. Many of the respondents, and indeed many of their parents, had come to admit that their original cultural identity would fade and be replaced by an Australian one. However, religion was too important to be discarded in the same way,[25] and few doubted it would become increasingly important in their future lives.

Respondents grappled with distinguishing Islam as a global religion from the particular cultural values of their parents' place of origin. Often, they undertook this with more awareness than their parents. Some deliberately tried to shed parts of their culture and create an Australian Muslim identity. Many, especially those for whom religion was particularly important, sought to learn more about it and make it a product of choice rather than something that had fallen on them by chance as a result of birth.

Culture and religion

One problem was that the Australian culture in which respondents had grown up was the same culture their parents were so worried about. This Australian culture, which their parents considered *Alien*, was part of the Unitaries' life as they knew it. Many felt that their *non-Australian culture* interfered with their *Australian culture*. Furthermore, Unitaries did not feel they could combine the two; they felt they had to keep them separate. They found this an impossible task, hence the feeling of being *in-between identities* or holding two very separate ones.

[25] Those who had abandoned their religion would rarely have moved in the circles where they would have been identifiable to be selected for these interviews.

Respondents used the term *culture* for both *Australian culture* and an *Ethnic culture*. They felt they were expected to live up to both but this was hard; they could not hold 100 percent to either, for example:

> *It is frustrating, but as I said before, I understand what I should be. The thing is, you also get swayed a lot. You also get people, especially school friends, they say, "Let's do this, let's do that", kind of stuff. It's real difficult because you want to do those things but you know better not to do it. And you do feel confused. You think, "I just wish I could do whatever I wanted without worrying about what parents worry about, what other people say, what being scared of God, whatever". (Alma[26])*

> *All of them [my friends] know that I am Muslim, but I think they also know that I am not a fanatic or a strict Muslim, so they accept me. …Oh, they,I think they know I'm Muslim but they also know that I might not really practice, you know, like, go by the rules. I am both identities as I've got Muslim friends as well as Australian friends. But I think I can make easier friends with my culture friends because they are easier to … I mean … easier to get along with. Whereas my Australian friends go back a long time, so it's just the old friends. So Yeah, Turkish friends, that's right. Oh, I'd say both, 50/50. Yeah, it depends. See my identity is split. (Mahmoud[27])*

> *I consider myself half Lebanese, half Palestinian, with an Australian passport. I don't even know, even if my roots belong, I call myself really Muslim in front of Lebanese/Palestinian, but someone was saying, "What nationality are you?" I'm saying, "Half Lebanese, half Muslim, I never call myself Australian". (Sam[28])*

Many felt that religion was part of their culture and that they came *hand-in-hand*, but others felt they were, or should be, separate. However, the latter found it difficult to say that their Ethnic culture did not play any part in forming their Muslim identity, even though they were trying hard to move away from this.

One area of significant importance was gender. Half of those interviewed were

[26] Alma - A 21 year old female student from Melbourne whose parents came from Bosnia.

[27] Mahmoud - A 27 year old male from Adelaide who was an engineer whose parents came from Turkey.

[28] Sam - A 20 year old a male student from Adelaide whose mother came from Lebanon and his father came from Palestine.

women and it became clear throughout the interviews that culture played an important part in their behaviour. In many cases, they behaved (or were told to behave) according to their Ethnic culture rather than their religion. For example, although forcing girls into arranged marriages is completely against Islam, it was often referred to as an 'Islamic practice':

> *I like the religion. That's number one. The custom to a certain extent, what I hate is the sexism in it. It's very kind of sexist, but that's not so much religious. That's culture. That's a lot of the culture which a lot of people think it's religion but it's not. It's more the culture. (Alma[29])*

When discussing issues of Ethnic culture, whether Arab, Afghan, Bosnian or Turkish culture, respondents were referring to how their parents had passed it on to them, interpreted according to how it was when they had come to Australia. Numerous respondents, however, knew that much had changed since then and commented that these countries were now very liberating for women. When asked, "Do you feel your parents are experiencing a 'cultural freeze', holding onto the culture of their home country as it was at the time that they left?", 110 respondents answered in the affirmative. Many explained that when they went back to visit their parents' place of birth, they realised how 'Western' their relatives were:

> *With my parents, they're very kind of in the old way of thinking – the female has to stay at home, the male has to go to work, stuff like that. When guests come over, the female has to go and serve coffee and everything, and I don't like that at all and that's one of the major problems I have with my parents. I fight a lot with that It's pretty difficult and they just don't understand that I am a teenage girl living in an alien kind of world from what my religion is. My dad doesn't like me reading magazines like 'Cleo' and stuff like that. He thinks I'm too young for that. And he doesn't like me going out. I wouldn't be allowed to go out at all if it wasn't for my brother. He's 24 and my dad doesn't mind when I go with my brother, but he still doesn't like it too much. … Australia, the parents, especially with the females, not so much but pretty much with the females, they're very kind of restricted and don't let them go as much as they would if you were overseas with your own people. (Alma[30])*

This should perhaps be seen more as a generational clash than a current cultural

[29] Alma - A 21 year old female student from Melbourne whose parents came from Bosnia.

[30] Alma - a 21 year old female student from Melbourne whose parents came from Bosnia.

clash, but a generational clash made worse by cultural pressures.

Muslims by chance or by choice

The interviews sought to explore whether these Unitaries were Muslim 'by choice rather than by chance' (meaning their parents had initially chosen for them, even if they had adopted being Muslim as their own choice when older). Respondents were divided in their replies. One group, like many young people today, were not prepared to accept anything by chance:

> *We accept nothing without choosing it, especially when it comes to being Muslim. When everybody doesn't like Muslims, why would we be Muslim if we did not want to be?! (Jamal[31])*

Clearly, many in this group had given much thought to the question and had , discovered an Islam different to that of their parents, often at a young age. They seemed proud of being Muslim because they had chosen this religion rather than having it forced upon them. As mentioned in Chapter 9, some parents of Unitaries also saw the need for their children to choose Islam rather than follow it blindly.

Many among the group who said they were Muslims *by chance* took quite a while to answer the question. When asked why they were hesitating, they said it was because "Yes, we were raised Muslim so this was not a choice", but they felt that they had exceeded their parents' knowledge of the faith and were now *Muslim by choice*:

> *No, obviously I'm a Muslim by chance but I guess I'll choose it. Yeah, I think I have, yeah. I am a Muslim by choice. (Lara [32])*

> *Mainly it was by chance I am a Muslim. But now I'm choosing Islam from my free will. I think the greatest gift that my parents ever gave me was to be Muslim. Not just to give me life but because I was born a Muslim, I think that would be the greatest gift they ever gave me. (Sam[33])*

Sam, like many others in this group, insisted that although he was now acting from

[31] Jamal - A 16 year old male student from Sydney whose parents were born in Lebanon.

[32] Lara - A 26 year old science graduate from Adelaide who was working as a bank officer whose parents were born in Lebanon.

[33] Sam - A 20 year old a male student from Adelaide whose mother came from Lebanon and his father came from Palestine.

choice, there was still a lot more he needed to do:

> *I would love to be a proper Muslim, which again is a choice. I don't know if it would be in my future. I hope to God that one day I'll become a true Muslim. Even though I know it's bad because I know that even today if I made … I can make the decision to but I decide not to. No, I don't decide, I let it go. There's no decision, I just let it go. I'm probably ignorant to my faith. When in choice I shouldn't be. It's there. It's ignorance. I think I'm doing my religion more harm than I'm doing myself, saying I'm Muslim but still going out, I'm … I introduce myself as a Muslim, or people know I'm Muslim, but I still have a girlfriend and, it's wrong [against the religion]. It sets a bad example to my religion. I'm doing my religion more harm than I am myself. There's heaps, heaps more I should know. I have to know. I only know certain bits of the 'Quran'. (Sam[34])*

A few stated that their parents had not read the 'Quran' and they found themselves teaching their parents what Islam really says. These youth felt frustrated when they did things they felt were part of their religion but had to hide them from their parents. Even though their parents had given them this religion, they would not allow them to practise properly. One example of this concerned wearing the hijab or the face covering niqab. Four respondents had chosen to wear the niqab and found that their parents had problems with this. One was disowned:

> *When I studied my religion myself and really understood it, I tried to talk about it with my parents but they did not understand as they had never really studied their religion. When I decided that I wanted to wear the niqab [face covering], I went up to my parents and my mother told me that I was embarrassing her amongst her friends. The funny thing was she was not talking about her Australian friends, she was talking about her Lebanese friends. She also said that she would not know how to explain it to the neighbours [who were Anglo-Australian]. She then told me that if I was to do this, I would have to move out … I could not believe it. (Wafa[35])*

Another example involved a similar conflict about daily religious practice:

[34] Sam - A 20 year old a male student from Adelaide whose mother came from Lebanon and his father came from Palestine.

[35] Wafa - A 25 year old Unitary female medical student from Melbourne whose parents were born in Lebanon.

I have to hide in my room when I pray five times a day, which is a main part of our religion. I feel really upset and frustrated sometimes as I should not have to hide this as I am praying, but if I don't hide they will be upset with me and say that I am being fanatical. I know that if I ever wanted to put the hijab on they would disown me. I have tried to explain to them that this is Islam but they do not get it. (Mia[36])

Some of those who selected the 'choice' answer stated that they were *Australian Lebanese Muslims*. They felt that they could not completely separate themselves from their Ethnic culture but they were not *Lebanese Muslims* like their parents. They felt there was a considerable difference. When asked about the difference, many said that they were living their faith amongst their non-Muslim friends and this made them *Australian Muslims* because they were not raised in a Muslim country like their parents. They were raised in a non-Muslim country, learning about Islam not only from their parents but also on their own through research.

Fifty-two respondents, fewer than I had anticipated, described themselves simply as *Australian Muslims*. Another 54 felt they were *Australian +(ethnic identity)+Muslim*. Twenty-four did not include the term 'Australian' in their self-identification, while three were unsure:

I see myself as an Australian Muslim as I am a Muslim who has grown up in Australia and am different from the Muslims in Afghanistan. (Ahmed [37])

Australian Muslim, as that is what I want to be … to be fully accepted we need to see ourselves as Australian Muslims and disregard our parents' cultures. (Adam [38])

Just a stage?

Respondents were asked, How religious are you at this point of your life?. They were also asked whether they thought this might be just a stage that would change in the future.

[36] Mia - A 24 year old female teacher from Adelaide whose parents came from Lebanon.

[37] Ahmed - A 22 year old male commerce student from Adelaide whose parents came from Afghanistan.

[38] Adam - A 22 old male student from Melbourne whose parents came from Egypt.

Table 11.1: How religious are you at this point of your life?

Not that religious	76
Religious	80
Not religious at all	4
Not sure	3
Total	**163**

Sixty-eight of the 76 who stated they were *not that religious* felt this was *just a stage* and hoped to become more religious when they were older. However, those who felt they were religious at the time of the interview did not think of this as a stage. They felt they had found themselves and hoped to stay at this level or even become more religious in the future. In fact, a large majority of respondents expected to become more religious as they grew older, especially when they had a family of their own. It was almost as if this was something they assumed would happen without much thought or comment:

> *I am happy where I am religiously at the moment and don't feel this is a stage or phase or whatever. I feel like it took me this long to find myself spiritually and I don't want anything to change. If anything, I hope I can become more religious but I am sure this is not a stage. (Soha[39])*

> *For the past ten years I have worked hard to get to this point in my religion. I am very happy where I am and can only hope to become more religious. I don't feel that this is just a stage, as if it was something that happened overnight and therefore will disappear overnight, not literally overnight, but you know what I mean. I think if it was a stage or something like that it would not have taken so long to happen. You can see the ones that are going through stages. They are the ones you have never seen at Muslim functions before and all of a sudden you see them super religious, telling everybody what to do, and then a couple of months later they disappear from that scene. So…. no this is not a stage. (Tamir[40])*

Conclusion

It was clear from the interviews that the majority of respondents felt that culture and

[39] Soha - A 25 year old Lawyer from Sydney whose parents came from Lebanon.

[40] Tamir - A 27 year old Accountant from Melbourne whose parents came from Lebanon.

religion needed to be looked at separately and not *lumped together as one*, which they thought was too often the case. While many cultural values and practices, which they saw as based in the times and places of their parents' upbringing, might be of little relevance to them in Australia or likely to decline in importance to them in the future, this did not apply to religion. Most were strongly committed to the Muslim religion or expected it to be of increasing importance in the future.

The next chapter focuses on Unitaries' feelings of identity and integration into Australian society.

Chapter 12: Identity

Introduction

This chapter explores whether Unitaries felt integrated into Australian society. It seeks answers to the following questions:

1. How far did the identity-form and hostility described in Chapter 10 obstruct integration and self-identification as Australians?

2. Did the different cultural and religious environments in which respondents grew up lead to multiple or conflicting identities? How far did the contradictory pressures enable them to see themselves as choosing and creating their own identity rather than just following that of their parents or mainstream society?

3. Did respondents tend to be less or more open-minded than their parents about the Australian way of life?

4. How far did they see these issues evolving over time as they grew older, and as the Australian and global environments changed?

The impact of prejudice and hostility on integration and self-identification as Australians

As discussed in Chapter 10, the media played a vital role in whether Unitaries felt integrated into Australian society. Respondents repeatedly mentioned media hostility as affecting the wider community's perception of Arabs and Muslims in Australia, which in turn would affect the integration of young Muslims. When asked the question, Do you think Australians have a perception of what all Muslims are like, and why do you think this is so?, most responded that the perception was generally negative and cited the media as the cause, for example:

> *Yes, because of the media, and specially like movies that come from America, they generalise Muslims, and like with the Gulf War. (Shayema[41])*

> *Probably yeah. I guess they just interpret it, what they hear on TV and how the media present it, which is basically wrong most of the time and that's the*

[41] Shayema - A 25 year old student from Perth. Her parents were born in Lebanon.

way they interpret it by what they see. (Zia[42])

I think yeah, they have the wrong view, they seem to think what they see on TV with Lebanon and Iraq and all that stuff, they seem to think that all Muslims, they are all fanatics and you know they run around terrorising people. I think they have a very misleading view from the media. (Boris[43])

Yeah. I think the perception of Muslims in Australia is not a good one, mainly because of how the life and the deeds of Muslims are projected, especially by the media. (Nurhana[44])

At the time of the interviews, many respondents felt that if something was mentioned in the media regarding any local or international event involving Muslims, there would be a negative impact on young Muslims, which would affect whether or not they felt accepted in Australian society. Interviews were conducted during the 1990s, and the First Gulf War had been a formative and sometimes traumatic experience for most respondents when they were growing up. In the most extreme case, a respondent who now called himself 'Tom' had been severely bashed on a Melbourne train after the war. He was attacked because a group of young men saw him sitting by himself and thought he looked 'Arab'. They yelled at him, "Bloody Arab!" and started to bash him, saying, "Because of Arabs like you our men have had to fight in the Gulf War". It was after this that he changed his name, did not want to mix with anybody of Arab background and did all he could to look and sound 'Australian'. When he was asked why he had changed his name, he said it was because his real name identified him as a Muslim and an Arab. He stated:

I can't change my dark skin can I? …you can see I have changed the colour of my hair and I have coloured contacts, basically I have done everything to dissociate myself from Arabs and Muslims. So anything I can do that helps me fit in and not get picked on again I have done. I have even changed who I mix with. I only try to mix with Anglo-Australians. I know all my family can't understand why I have gone to such extremes but try getting bashed. That changes you. I still feel very bitter about it. I can't let this happen to me

[42] Zia - A 26 year old female bank officer who was raised in Adelaide but was now living in Sydney. Her parents came from Lebanon.

[43] Boris - A 25 year old male student who lives in Adelaide. His parents were born in Turkey.

[44] Nurhana - A 26 year old female doctor who was now living in Sydney but was raised in Adelaide. Her parents were born in Turkey.

again. (Tom[45])

Others also spoke of the impact of the war reports on public perceptions:

I mean, if you think for example of the Gulf War, Muslims are perceived as very aggressive, very hot tempered, they're [seen as] hot tempered people.(Nurhana[46])

Yes, I think they [Australians] hate us. I don't know. I think they blame us for it [the Gulf War] all or something. (Hafsa[47])

I think they [the media about the Gulf War] made it look like all Islam, all Arabs are violent. They didn't just look at it as with Iraq and Kuwait. They just thought Iraq, that's a Muslim country, all Arabs, they're violent. This was proved with all the kids that went around and pulled off ladies' scarves and burnt them, but just 'cause they've got a scarf doesn't mean they are Iraqi. Anyway, I don't see what that has to do with what is happening overseas. (Shayema[48]).

Identifying differences

Unitaries often stated that they felt *alienated* or that they did not belong. When asked what they felt the reasons were, they spoke of identifying features that distinguished them or provoked hostility or discrimination, such as their name, appearance, language or visible aspects of their ethnic culture or religion:

With jobs yes. Because if you have a Muslim name a lot of people don't give you an interview, or if they do you don't get very far. You have to be extra good, like have really good marks at school, whatever. With a Muslim name we have to work hard, and being accepted in the workplace is also pretty hard, even at school. (Amina[49])

A large majority used a Muslim or Arab name when with Arabs or Muslims, and had an anglicised or Christian name when at school or university, or for everyday life.

[45] Tom - A 23 year old Law/Commerce male student from Melbourne. His parents were born in Egypt.

[46] Nurhana - A 26 year old female doctor who was now living in Sydney but was raised in Adelaide. Her parents were born in Turkey.

[47] Hafsa - A 23 year old student from Melbourne. Her parents were born in Lebanon.

[48] Shayema - A 25 year old student from Perth. Her parents were born in Lebanon.

[49] Amina - A 23 year old female student whose parents came from Bosnia.

For example, Mohamed would become Michael or Dawood would become David. Unitaries pointed out that an Arab or Muslim sounding name in itself had made them stand out and many had felt forced to change their names for fear of repercussions.

Other Unitaries noted that they did not have such a problem because they had always had neutral sounding names such as Sonya, Lara or Adam, and people were more likely to see them as Australian:

> *Muslims are not seen as Australians because they are Muslims. I think it's because of the name as well. Because my name, you can't really tell I'm Muslim. Because basically, Australians will tend to hire Australians more, Italians will hire Italians, Greeks, that sort of stuff. Bosnian community will hire nobody except for Bosnians. …Yeah, it's definitely a hindrance being Muslim, trying to get a job. Yeah, it's the Muslim bit that stops people seeing you as an Aussie. It's the way you look, like me [he is blonde and blue eyed], people see me as Aussie but if you are dark you aren't. Also, the way you dress; if you wear a scarf you are not seen as an Aussie. (Adam[50])*

When asked if physical appearance affected whether or not they were seen as Australian and thus could feel integrated into Australian society, almost all said they thought appearance played at least some role, although they differed on the extent of its effect. Most thought this role was important because of the stereotype they also held of what an average Australian was meant to look like. When Unitaries were asked about their image of a 'typical Australian', 152 mentioned *blonde hair* and *blue eyes*.[51] Despite Australia being a multicultural society with a large proportion of immigrants from many countries, the blonde hair and blue eyes image was still seen as the norm; an image the Unitaries felt was portrayed by the media and held by Australian society in general. This perception had a major impact on whether they called themselves Australians, and therefore whether or not they felt integrated within Australian society:

> *Yes, I think first impressions last and people make judgements from what they see first off, so yeah. I think having the facial features [dark hair, dark eyes with olive complexion], everyone always asks, "Oh so are you Greek? Are you…?" …you know, Lebanese is always last, but, yeah it plays a role*

[50] Adam - A 26 year old male computer programmer whose parents came from Bosnia.

[51] Some agreed that this might not statistically be accurate but this, they said, was what they thought of (or imagined) when someone said a "typical Aussie (or "Skip" - a term commonly used to describe an Anglo-Australian).

but I think I can have an identity that plays a part with both cultures, but if I was to be myself, my own identity, I would be ethnic. I think my looks cause me to feel like this. (Mia[52])

This reflects Barbara's (1989,160) view that anybody who does not fit the "norm" or stereotype is considered "deviant" to the extent that they are seen as different or foreign. This racialisation of religious identity had some surprising contrary effects. Some fairer-coloured respondents (mainly with parents from Bosnia and Albania) felt that their looks affected their acceptance in the Muslim community, where they felt they had to constantly reassure people they were really Muslims:

A guy came up to me in the mosque once. He came up to me and he goes*, "You Muslim?" I said, "Of course I'm Muslim". He says to me, "You're white". Now I thought he was kidding. I started laughing. He was quite serious. And my sister got told the same thing. Girls there, Pakistani girls, they go, "You're not a Muslim, you've got blonde hair". That sort of stuff. It's weird. (Alma[53])*

Another respondent, Nazar[54], when asked why he did not feel Egyptian, explained, *My looks. That's not really Egyptian. I don't see myself as Egyptian*. Respondents who were fluent in their ethnic language and did not feel as fluent in English tended to feel less Australian and were not confident that they sounded *Aussie*. On the other hand, those who spoke better English without a *woggy* accent felt they could integrate into Australian culture a lot better. Almost all respondents spoke their parents' language. Even though all spoke English and had been born in Australia or had been here since they were very young, many felt they spoke English in a *woggy* way or with a *woggy accent*, which affected their sense of integration. When asked if they thought language was a key to culture, almost all Unitaries agreed.

The impact of growing up in different cultural and religious environments

Another factor affecting integration was the parents' attitude and the child's relationship with them. Unitaries were affected by the varying extent to which parents valued the retention of both their Ethnic culture and the Australian culture in which they lived. Their parents' attitude to Australians and Australia greatly

[52] Mia - A 24 year old female student whose parents were born in Lebanon.

[53] Alma - A 25 year old female scientist whose parents were born in Bosnia.

[54] Nazar - A 27 year old male computer programmer from Sydney. His parents were born in Egypt.

influenced how they felt. In some cases, the Unitaries felt they had no choice but to retain their parents' culture:

> *I've taken up all the culture [Lebanese culture of the parents] because they just force it on you from when you are really young, so this is what you're supposed to do and this is what you're not supposed to do, and it just goes on and on and on, so yeah, it's the same I guess. (Rebecca[55])*

Other Unitaries, however, who had a bad relationship with their parents, tended to reject their parents' culture.

Perhaps the most interesting effect, and one which modified the impact of the other factors, was produced by the size of the ethnic community and thus the level of support it was able to provide to the respondents' ethnic identity. This varied substantially between the five cities. Whether or not respondents felt part of a particular culture depended on which cities they lived in. Unitaries in cities with a larger ethnic community tended to feel more a part of it. In Sydney, for example, a large majority of the Unitaries interviewed identified with their ethnic identity and did not consider themselves Australian. They explained this was due mainly to the fact that they mixed mostly with people from the same ethnic group as themselves and attended schools where the majority were *ethnics* (young people with Turkish and Lebanese backgrounds). They also lived in predominantly Lebanese/Turkish areas and focused on being Lebanese or Turkish in order to feel they belonged:

> *Being in Sydney, there's a greater population of people with the same background so that you can mix with them to a greater degree. There are more ethnic functions you can go to so in that way you have support of your own people and if you like doing things that your own people do, well in that way, in Sydney compared to Adelaide, it would be easier to maintain your own values and cultural background. (Nurhana[56])*

However, some of the respondents who were involved with very large, well-established Muslim youth groups in Melbourne and Sydney tended to focus on their religious/Australian identity rather than their narrower ethnic cultural identity. They were only able to do this because they were from a state where the large number of Muslims generated such groups. Most of these respondents had joined these youth

[55] Rebecca - A 23 year old female student from Melbourne. Her parents were born in Lebanon.

[56] Nurhana - A 26 year old female doctor who was now living in Sydney but was raised in Adelaide. Her parents were born in Turkey.

groups to feel less alienated from their *conflicting worlds*. They finally felt at peace with themselves as *Australian Muslims* because this was how they *fitted in*. They no longer felt like *aliens* because all the other Muslim youth in the groups were experiencing the same issues/stages as themselves. What they all had in common, regardless of their cultural, educational or financial backgrounds, was their faith and their desire to be Australians. This was one way of dealing with being *in-between* identities.

Gender

Gender was an issue integral to growing up in different cultural and religious environments, particularly in two respects: whether girls wore the hijab or head covering (scarf); and their brothers being allowed to mix with the wider community more freely than the girls. This was reflected in the difference between the number of female and male respondents who felt Australian.

When Unitaries were asked if they might marry somebody from a different cultural background, most stated that this would largely depend on their parents:

> *And I think my parents would [mind] too because, especially for a girl, because if a girl says a different nationality, it's more the husband takes over with the nationality with the kids and with the way of life. The way I've seen Bosnian girls get married to say Arabs or stuff, that's the way it has been. They sort of don't socialise with the Bosnian community any more. They are just gone, as if you've died basically. That's the way I see it. This is different when a guy marries somebody else besides a Bosnian. I know because I am a guy and my parents would not worry about this, maybe if I was a girl it would be different… I might feel differently. I know my sister does care what nationality she marries because mum and dad feel differently about who she marries. (Adam[57])*

Gender made a difference to whether a Unitary felt integrated or not. According to some who had been raised with a cultural interpretation of Islam, certain behaviours were seen as *culturally acceptable* for a boy but not for a girl. In households practising this cultural interpretation, boys were often allowed a lot more freedom than girls to mix with the wider Australian community, resulting in some boys feeling more integrated into Australian society than girls:

[57] Adam - A 26 year old male computer programmer whose parents came from Bosnia.

Okay, well I believe it is easier for the boys to assimilate or integrate because generally they have more freedom; they can go out to the pub and to the nightclub and things like that, you know, be with friends, be with their own friends, while for Muslim girls you can't do that and generally that's not really accepted. So if you have…- if a Muslim girl has friends who are less restricted, then she would be more isolated because there would be conflict within the family if she were to assimilate. (Nurhana[58])

Multiple identities or in-between identities

Many Unitaries felt that they were in-between identities. They were asked, In regard to your identity, do you feel you hold two identities, multiple identities or are in-between identities? Alma[59] replied:

Yeah, I would feel in-between, especially when it came to things like going out because I was always not allowed to go out with my friends and I was always restricted in that. Not always because my parents said "No", but also because I understood why they were saying no and in certain circumstances I wouldn't… they always did things that didn't agree with what my parents wanted me to do, and in the sense I wanted to do but knew that I shouldn't. This was hard. I felt I was caught somewhere in-between.

Alma was not alone, as can be seen in the following respondents' remarks:

In-between really, yeah, it's neither one, you know, I can't say I'm both. I mean I have to say I'm both at the same time really, a combination of the two. (Boris[60])

I'm both because I don't know, yeah I'm a bit of both I'd have to say. (Rahmat[61])

I would say I am in-between but still have two identities, if that makes sense. (Ralf[62])

[58] Nurhana - A 26 year old female doctor who was now living in Sydney but was raised in Adelaide. Her parents were born in Turkey.

[59] Alma - A 24 year old female research assistant whose parents were born in Bosnia.

[60] Boris - A 25 year old male student who lives in Adelaide. His parents were born in Turkey.

[61] Rahmat - A 25 year old female student who lives in Adelaide. Her parents come from Indian decent.

[62] Ralf - A 21 year old male student from Melbourne. His parents come from Lebanon.

Were respondents less or more open-minded than their parents about the Australian way of life?

Numerous Unitaries commented on their open-mindedness about culture and religion compared to that of their parents:

> *How do I differ from my parents? Definitely more open-minded. In everything. Well culturally … we are cultural but we don't have Bosnian customs in that sense. Our customs are mainly, if you can call them customs, Muslim etiquette and things like that. So I differ from my parents because I'm definitely a lateral thinker; I think more broadly than my parents. (Amani[63])*

> *I think I am more open-minded, more culturally influenced by two different cultures instead of just one. I can assimilate with both Australians and with Lebanese people, and other cultures. It's helped me being bi-cultural and that. So my parents find it a bit hard still. (Mia[64])*

When asked in what ways she saw herself as an Australian, Mia[65] answered:

> *Well…I was born here but I can't see myself as an Australian…I can see myself as open-minded. Australia's given me an open-mindedness and it's given me my education, which probably my own country wouldn't have given me but … and I'm thankful for that, but, nothing no … I don't see myself as an Australian at all.*

Thus, she indicated that although she could see the benefits of living in Australia and clearly (as evident when she was being interviewed) even wanted to feel Australian, she did not see herself as an Australian. This was not something unique to Mia. It was quite a common feeling among the Unitaries who were interviewed.

How far did the Unitaries see the above issues evolving over time as they grew older, and as the Australian and global environments changed?

The Unitaries interviewed were asked whether the ambiguities and tensions involved in embracing Australian identity were part of life's stages (as mentioned in

[63] Amani - A 27 year old female scientist from Sydney, whose parents were born in Bosnia.

[64] Mia - A 24 year old student whose parents came from Lebanon.

[65] Mia - as above.

the literature review) or were more specific to them as young Muslims in Australia. Did they think their current identity was a continuing process or experience – a stage they might eventually grow out of – or part of who they were as 'Unitaries'?

Responses were mixed, with 86 saying no, they did not see it as a stage; 54 saying yes, they saw it as a stage; and 23 saying they were unsure. The following responses exemplify these different perceptions:

> *It is hard to tell. I can't imagine that feeling like I am not fully Lebanese and clearly not fully Australian will ever change. I think…um, I think this is not a stage. (Sarah[66])*

> *I don't think this is a stage. As long as I can remember I have felt this way and I don't see it as changing. I am somewhere between being Australian and Bosnian. Not a hundred percent either … I think I will always feel this way. (Omar[67])*

On the other hand, Doha[68] replied that:

> *I feel as if I am both Australian and Lebanese but this could just be a stage. I might feel differently when I am older. Aactually, I think it most likely is a stage as I am not really sure about a lot of things at the moment in my life.*

Sammy[69] felt the same way as Doha:

> *Well at the moment I feel not really a "gypo" [Eygptian] or a "skip" [Australian]. I am definitely somewhere in-between but I think this is a stage, I don't think this will last. Obviously as I get older and move further away from the local Egyptian community and start working and mixing more with other Anglo-Australians I will feel more Australian and won't feel caught in-between anymore. Well, I am hoping it is a stage anyway.*

Issac,[70] however, was unsure:

> *At the moment, I feel more Turkish but I am not really sure if this is just a*

[66] Sarah - A 23 year old student from Melbourne whose parents were born in Lebanon.

[67] Omar - A 25 year old tradesman from Brisbane whose parents were born in Bosnia.

[68] Doha - A 19 year student from Sydney whose parents came from Lebanon.

[69] Sammy - A 20 year old student from Melbourne whose parents came from Eygpt.

[70] Issac - A 22 year old student from Perth whose parents came from Turkey.

stage or not. I don't think I can answer this question until much later in life and then I will know if what I am feeling at the moment was a stage or not.

Conclusion

The longer-term outcomes of the kind of identity ambiguities described in this chapter will surely vary with personal choices and circumstances. They will also be heavily influenced by the future evolution of mainstream Australian culture and multiculturalism, and Australia's changing place in the world. The propensity for identity change has been demonstrated by the different responses from Unitaries in different cities in Australia, illustrating the impact of specific environments on Unitaries' perceptions of their cultural and religious identities.

Chapter 13: Conclusion to Part Three

Introduction

This chapter summarises the main findings from chapters 10, 11 and 12 concerning the experiences of young Unitary Muslims growing up in Australia in the 1990s. It seeks to place the findings in the context of relevant literature discussed in Part One, and indicate how they will be used as a benchmark for the distinctive attributes of Confluents, which will be explored in Parts Four and Five of this thesis. The main findings discussed here focus on feelings of otherness ('Doubly disadvantaged others'), identity, integration into Australian society and looking to the future.

Doubly disadvantaged 'others'

It became evident that the participating young Unitary Muslims felt very much like Edward Said's 'Other' (see Chapter 3). Said's (1979) notion of 'Orientalism' can clearly help us to understand the widespread misperception of Arabs and Muslims in Australia, as can Goffman's (1976) concept of 'stigma'. These notions can help explain how these false perceptions are affecting young Muslims, ultimately leading to a sense of inferiority.

According to Riaz Hassan (1991,295,296), most Muslims in Australia face a "situation of double minority status", which for my respondents produced a 'double disadvantage'. Bouma (1994,81) identified that Hassan was referring to the fact that a large majority of Muslims "are not only minority ethnic groups but within that group are a minority religious group". Bouma (1994,61) suggested that this double minority status makes Muslims particularly vulnerable to prejudice and harassment. This suggestion was confirmed in my interviews, reinforcing what I had already found in my Honours thesis – that most young Muslims felt they suffered a 'double disadvantage' by being Muslim and being seen as Arabs in Australia.

Women respondents were often more exposed to prejudice than the men. I had anticipated this because of what I found in the literature (for example Fraser et al. in Cunneen et al., 1997), but the extent of the difference between the genders expressed in the interviews was a surprise. It indicates a 'triple disadvantage' for Muslim women, which might be expected to produce an identity crisis and ultimately affect their integration into Australian society. What is worthy of admiration is that around half of the female respondents, knowing this, still chose to wear the hijab and in some cases even the niqab, despite the backlash they knew they would face

not only from the general Australian public but also, in some instances, from their own families.

I had expected the media to play a part in disseminating misinformation about Muslims and Arabs, as Said and others had claimed, but had no concept of how much importance respondents in my study would attribute to the media's role. Numerous Unitary Muslim youth I interviewed mentioned the media's construction of false perceptions and stigmatisation of themselves as Arabs and Muslims in Australia before I had even asked a question about this. Their responses support Bouma's findings (1994,82), in which participants believed that "Australian and overseas media are held accountable for much … prejudice and disinformation", a view also expressed earlier by Shboul (1989) and Cleland (1992). Kabir (2004,255-326) argued later that the media portrayal of Muslims and Arabs had created certain negative stereotypes that affected the community as a whole. James Murray, writing in 'the Australian' newspaper (25th July 2002, cited in Kabir, 2004, 255), summed up the situation succinctly:

> With Islam, a religion barely represented in Australia until recently, there is an additional burden of being represented as a faith violent in nature, an enemy of social cohesion.

Identities

Unitaries held what Cahill and Ewen (1987) described as a "front door" syndrome (see Chapter 3), a term explaining how many Unitaries experienced a dual life – one at home and one outside with the wider community – and how they felt forced to keep these two worlds apart. Deen (1995, see Chapter 3) argued that this was one way Muslim youth dealt with the conflict they experienced growing up as a Muslim in a non-Muslim country and a child of immigrants. My study found this to be the case for many of the Unitary Muslim youth interviewed, but certainly not for all of them. The conflict that resulted from growing up in Australia as a Muslim and from an immigrant background would indeed often lead them to feel a sense of "anomie", which resulted in "identity crises" such as those described by Chafic (1989,2, see Chapter 3). Chafic noted that one way of resolving this identity crisis was for Unitaries to choose to turn their back on their religion. While I found this to be the case with some young Muslims, it was certainly not the case with most of those I

interviewed[71].

The Unitaries in this study did not always feel they had an identity crisis, often because they had made a conscious decision to be part of, or in some cases to develop, Muslim youth groups. Many of these youth felt that belonging to Muslim youth groups created a sense of pride in being *Australian Muslims*, thus shedding any identity crisis. Belonging to groups where they were all Muslims regardless of their parents' cultural backgrounds and where they were all facing similar experiences (and in some case problems) enabled them to feel like they belonged, which in turn resulted in them starting to feel proud of their Muslim identity. Although many still felt they were either *in-between* identities or held two separate identities, the case can be made that this duality was an identity in itself; they had created it for themselves. Turning to their religious identity, as Muslims together, these youth has adopted the same strategy identified by Akbar (1993) (see Chapter 3), who noted that Muslim youth in Western countries often turned to Islam to deal with the situation in which they found themselves.

Integration into Australian society

As first discussed in my Honours thesis and explored in greater depth in this thesis, certain factors such as name, physical appearance, language spoken, relationship with parents, place of residence and gender affected whether or not Unitary Muslim youth felt integrated into Australian society. One surprising but important finding was that young Muslim women wore the hijab (more than half of the respondents) and in some cases the face covering (niqab), often despite family and societal pressure not to wear them. This accords with Jones' (1993,120) claim that many Australian Muslim women have "fought for the right to wear the hijab, something that often their mothers and grandmothers found hard to understand"(see Chapter 3). Bouma (1994,84) also noted that the number of Muslim women who wore the hijab had increased, with numerous young women adopting it as a "sign of their religion" and a "positive turning point in their lives".

The issue of appearance and its impact on gaining employment was also raised in this study as well as by Bouma (1994,84), who noted that some Muslims who wore the hijab found it difficult to get a job. Some of the female respondents in my study felt they had experienced prejudice in the workplace when they started wearing the

[71] As explained in Chapter 6, most respondents were accessed through student, religious and ethnic youth organisations and the networks that spread out from them, and would not have included many who had turned their backs on their religion.

hijab, and that assumptions were made that their husband, brother or father had forced them to wear it. These assumptions led to a great deal of frustration because the respondents had made the conscious, independent decision to wear the hijab; it was something they believed in strongly. Many of the girls and women felt that by wearing the hijab, and in some cases the niqab, they were expressing themselves as Australian Muslim women rather than Lebanese or Turkish Muslims, for example. They had decided themselves, defiantly and often without family support, to wear them at a time when they knew they would face discrimination for doing so. Adhering to Muslim dress would make them easily identifiable as Muslims. It could attract possible discrimination and often abuse, but this did not stop them.

What became evident was that many of the women respondents had become opposed to their ethnic culture, which they felt reinforced a role for women that they did not accept. This led many of them to feel, and be encouraged indirectly to adopt, an *Australian Muslim* identity, which they could achieve by adhering to Islamic dress codes.

The future

On the basis of the findings of this study, it would appear that many writers (see Chapter 3, e.g. Akbar) were correct in saying that Muslim youth are the future of Islam in the Western world. I think this is the case for Australia, where youth form the majority of Muslims. These young people hold an understanding of both worlds and therefore are able to represent the new community of Australian Muslims within a multicultural Australia.

The analysis of Unitaries was intended primarily to provide a baseline to investigate and compare the distinctive experiences of Confluent Muslims (children of mixed-marriages) in Australia. The next chapters will focus on the latter, investigating the areas explored in this Part to discover any differences between the two groups. Questions posed in the following chapters include:

Do Confluents feel they are experiencing an identity crisis; that they are in-between identities or hold two separate identities, as many Unitaries did?

Do Confluents also see the media as a contributing factor in creating and reinforcing stereotypes of both Muslims and Arabs?

Are they similarly affected by such perceived stigmas?

Are Confluents more integrated into Australian society than Unitaries?

Do the same factors mentioned in this section as influencing the integration of Unitaries into Australian society also influence the extent of integration of Confluents, or are there other factors in their case?

What can Confluents contribute to a harmonious, multicultural Australia?

PART FOUR: CONFLUENT YOUTH IN AUSTRALIA

This Part presents findings from interviews with 69 Confluent Muslim youth around Australia, conducted between 1993 and 1999. Part Five will compare these experiences with those of Unitary Muslim youth presented in Part Three. Parts Four and Five are the heart of this thesis, delving into areas that can help us understand the identities and experiences of Muslim youth who are the children of mixed-marriages. Chapter 14 discusses Confluents' experiences of how others perceive them. Chapter 15 focuses on how Confluents see their own culture and religion. Chapter 16 explores the formation of multiple identities by Confluents, and whether or not they feel themselves to be Australian. Chapter 17 places the findings in the context of the academic literature on children of mixed-marriages and questions some fallacies therein in light of this research.

Chapter 14: Perceptions of Others – Confluent Muslim Youth in Australia

Introduction

This chapter focuses on what Confluents see as others' beliefs about themselves and the impact this has had on them. It starts with their perception of wider society's stereotypes of Muslims and Arabs, and the stigma attached to them in the media, including television, films and widely read books that may be taught in schools. Much of this discussion covers similar ground to that dealing with Unitaries' perceptions in Part Three[72] but with some differences. An additional dimension deals with the stereotypes and consequent stigma attached to mixed marriages and their children, and how much or how little understanding wider society has of their distinctive identity as Confluents. Muslim Confluents differ from each other in how far they network and associate with other (Unitary) Muslim youth (including extended family members on their Muslim side). This is an important part of social life and identity-formation for some but not so much for others.

The chapter also discusses how Confluents feel they are understood, or more often misunderstood, by Unitary young Muslims and others in their ethnic and religious communities.

Stereotypes and stigma

Respondents were very aware of stereotypes of Muslims and Arabs, and the resulting stigma. This was something Confluents shared with Unitaries. When asked, 62 of the 69 Confluents argued that there was, in fact, such a *stigma* attached to Muslim and/or Arab youth, and also that this had affected them at some stage of their life. However, its effect was quite polarised. While 23 Confluents reacted to this *negativity* against Muslims or Arabs by distancing themselves from this side of their heritage (even if this was only at a stage in their lives), others responded to the stigma by seeking to discover and embrace it. (This will be discussed in more depth in the next chapter).

When Confluents were asked what caused this stigma, 57 attributed it to the media first, and to books (commonly read at school) and films second. A few named books

[72] As with the Unitary interviews, Goffman's definition of 'stigma' was explained to respondents at the start of the interview.

first. Thirty-nine respondents (more than half of them women) mentioned the book 'Not without my daughter'[73], which they felt created a false stereotype of Muslims and led to stigma that also affected Muslim and Arab youth[74]. It depicted Muslims, especially Muslim women, in a false and very negative light. (This will be discussed again later in this chapter). This book, which was taught in schools, had been made into a movie that was shown on television.

Another film frequently mentioned was 'True Lies' (Cameron, 1994). When Confluents were asked whether they felt Muslims or Arabs were perceived incorrectly in relation to culture or religion, 57 replied in the affirmative. Thirty-eight referred to religion and culture, and 19 said *mainly religion*. While there was much emphasis on the role of media and negative stereotypes in society in general, 29 Confluents said that local ethnic and religious communities also needed to do more to correct this perception because sometimes they played a part in its formation.

Sixty-four respondents (a large majority) believed that being both Arab and Muslim growing up in Australia would be a disadvantage. However, even though the Confluents acknowledged the existence of this double disadvantage, 52 felt that this did not affect them as much as it affected Unitaries. They felt they had multiple identity options. It was their ability to avoid the effects of double disadvantage that set many Confluents apart from Unitaries.

Wider perceptions of mixed-marriages and their children

Confluents were asked how they thought the wider community perceived them. All felt misunderstood. Fifty-nine replied that they felt people in general had a negative view of religious and cultural intermarriage, leading many to view the children of such marriages as *confused*:

> *Yes, we are seen as confused, not really part of any group, from a broken home because our parents are from different cultures and religions. It's ridiculous but at times really gets to you as it is not the case. (Sally[75])*

[73] The book (Mahmoody, 1991) and movie based on it are about an American Christian woman who marries an Iranian American Muslim. The marriage fails due to their differences. The woman escapes from Iran with her daughter "desperate to save herself and her daughter from her brutish husband".

[74] It is important to mention here that the husband in the film was not Arab but Iranian and most likely Shiite Muslim. Only two Confluents brought this up, but this could be because the interviews took place in the 1990s, before these distinctions had erupted and become common knowledge in Australia.

[75] Sally - A 23 year old female teacher from Adelaide who had an Anglo-Australian mother and an Arab-Australian father.

Two movies were mentioned constantly in the interviews. The first, 'Not without my daughter' (Mahmoody, 1991), as mentioned above, was a stigmatising portrayal of a mixed-marriage. The daughter was a Confluent but too young to have a voice. She was portrayed as a child that needed protection from 'these barbaric people', who happened to be her father and his family. The emphasis was on saving this helpless Confluent but to do so would require her to lose all contact with her father and return to a civilised America.

Confluents noted that after watching this film or reading the book, no one would want marry a Muslim or be a child from such a marriage:

> *You watch 'Not without my daughter' and you would, if you were not from a mixed-marriage, be totally put off marrying somebody from the Middle East and a Muslim. And you would not want to be a child from such a marriage. That is what this film shows. I remember my classmates' comments when we read the book and watched this film…all negative. (Dave[76])*

Another film, 'Guess who is coming to dinner', was an old film that many Confluents said their parents had enjoyed because it was about a mixed-race couple. The film showed a couple who had been raised not to care about race and who were surprised when their parents worried about them marrying. The parents' main concern was how the wider society would treat their future (Confluent) grandchildren. Although the film had a positive ending, all respondents who mentioned it were bothered that it assumed such problems would occur. Confluents felt that this assumption – that the unfortunate child of a mixed-marriage would be confused and never really belong to any particular culture or religion – was common in the wider community and it bothered a large majority of them:

> *I am often asked if I feel confused about who I am or what culture and religion I belong to. Unfortunately there is still such a negative perception of how the child from a mixed-marriage will turn out. (Ali[77])*

Ali was not alone in feeling like this. Megan stated:

> *I don't see being 'half' as something negative but when you tell people about*

[76] Dave - A 24 year old male student from Adelaide whose mother was Anglo-Australian and whose father was Palestinian-Australian.

[77] Ali - A 25 year old male lawyer from Melbourne whose mother was Anglo-Australian and whose father was Lebanese-Australian.

your parents they automatically think your parents are no longer together and you are confused. (Megan[78])

Almost all Confluents felt that they were not adequately represented as a group in any area of the media (television, radio, newspapers and the internet) or in fiction or non-fiction books, and thus had no public/collective voice:

Children from mixed-marriages are rarely mentioned… we should be. You have to really think about examples of when we [Confluents] are mentioned. That shows we were not. Yes, there is a need to be shown as a …group, yeah, this will lead, I think, to a better understanding. (Leen[79])

Furthermore, they noted that when they were represented, it was in a negative light:

Whenever a Confluent (as you have termed us) is seen on television or in books it is negative, for example we are seen as half-castes…we are always seen as confused, not really accepted by any group or the wider community. (Rebecca[80])

This absence or negative portrayal seemed to affect them greatly. They often felt that being a Confluent was something positive and should be represented that way. A follow-up question asking if there was a need for Confluents to be represented as a group met with an overwhelming "Yes". A large majority of Confluents felt there was an urgent need not only to be represented but, more importantly, to be represented in a positive light to generate a "correct" perception of them as a group:

When we are mentioned or characterised, it is usually in a negative light. We [Confluents] need to be shown in a positive light. I don't know when this will happen. I hope it will. (Dave[81])

Many Confluents, when asked, felt that if intermarriage increased this would hopefully lead to more and better representation:

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[78] Megan - A 25 year old female accountant from Perth whose mother was Anglo-Australian and father Lebanese-Australian.

[79] Leen - A 24 year old post graduate student whose mother was Anglo-Australian and whose father was Lebanese-Australian.

[80] Rebecca - A 23 year old female student from Adelaide whose mother was Anglo-Australian and whose father was Lebanese-Australian.

[10] Dave - A 24 year old male student from Adelaide whose mother was Anglo-Australian and whose father was Palestinian-Australian

More intermarriage would lead to better representation I think, yes, because then there would be more of us [Confluents], and the media and society would then have to recognise children from intermarriage and hopefully in a better light. (Rebecca[82])

Confluents were asked if they were perceived as 'Australian'. This question polarised the respondents. Thirty seven said they felt the wider community perceived them as Australian, while 29 did not and two were unsure. Almost all Confluents emphasised that this was not how they felt about their identity but how they thought others perceived them.

Unitaries' perceptions of Confluents

When Confluents were asked how their own ethnic communities perceived them, 43 said elders saw them only as *Australian*. A large majority of these Confluents linked this to the fact that they could not speak the ethnic language. Such misunderstandings were commonly attributed to their community leaders:

I often find from some community [Ethnic] leaders that I have to justify to them how I fit into their community. And when they find out that I can't speak the language, they automatically assume that is my mother's fault - which it isn't; she always encouraged me to learn the language. They make comments such as, "That's right, you can't speak Arabic because your mother is Australian. She should have learnt the language and then you would be able to speak it". They make these false assumptions that are nearly always incorrect. (Joseph[83])

In regard to their religious community leaders, however, the majority of Confluents never felt they were perceived differently than others in that particular community.

Unitary Muslim youth perceptions of Confluents was a topic that often arose in interviews before being asked about it; a clear indication of its salience and importance to them. Some appeared to be deceiving themselves and refusing to accept the reality that this affected them greatly, for example:

I don't care what they [Unitaries] see me as…they often do not consider me

[82] Rebecca - A 23 year old female student from Adelaide whose mother was Anglo-Australian and whose father was Lebanese-Australian.

[83] Joseph - A 24 year old male post graduate student from Sydney whose mother was Anglo-Australian and whose father was Lebanese-Australian.

to be one of them [Lebanese] because I have an Aussie mum, which gets to me. (Nadine[84])

It doesn't really bother me as I am who I am … I just wish they [Unitaries] would not make judgements about what I am because my mum is an Aussie and a convert [from Christianity to Islam]; it is really annoying. (Adam[85])

The large majority of Confluents, however, were aware of Unitaries' perceptions of them and 58 felt these were incorrect, as expressed by Sally:

When I am with Muslim youth, whether they are Lebanese or Turkish whatever, I often feel that they judge my religiosity. They assume that I don't know much about my religion because my mother is a convert. I find this annoying and really frustrating at times. What they don't realise is that having come from such a mixed religious background has made me stronger in the faith; that I am the opposite of what they perceive me to be (Sally[86]).

Conclusion

This chapter has highlighted Confluents' feelings of being misunderstood and judged by not only wider society, mainly through incorrect media and literature portrayals, but from within their own communities and also by Unitaries. While it can be seen that both Confluents and Unitaries (as discussed in Part Three) share the perception that they are misrepresented as negative stereotypes, Confluents also expressed disillusionment with Unitaries' misunderstanding of who they really are. Confluents expressed frustration with some Unitaries' misconceived attitudes towards them. Mutual perceptions and misperceptions of Confluents and Unitaries, as illustrated by their responses to the poem and short story described in the first chapter, will be explored in depth in Chapter 18.

The next two chapters present a wider discussion of the impacts on Confluents of their experiences of misperception within, and beyond, their Muslim communities, and how they respond to it. I seek to understand how it affects their sense of where they belong in the wider society, and in their two distinct cultural and religious

[84] Nadine - A 17 year old female student from Sydney whose mother was Anglo-Australian and whose father was Lebanese-Australian.

[85] Adam - A 19 year old male student from New South Wales whose mother was Anglo-Australian and whose father was Lebanese-Australian.

[86] Sally - A 23 year old female teacher from Adelaide who had an Anglo-Australian mother and an Arab-Australian father.

backgrounds.

Chapter 15 explores the importance of culture and religion, and how this shapes the Confluents' identity. It also examines the notion of choice about what culture and religion they will follow; have their parents made the choice for them or have the Confluents been left to make it themselves? A case will be made that independent choice leads many to create their own distinctive culture. Chapter 16 examines the Confluents' conscious and creative choices, as well as a unique flexibility, multicultural tolerance and open-mindedness in working through the complexities of their situation to reach a positive resolution, often involving multiple selves.

Chapter 15: Culture and Religion

Introduction

This chapter looks at the levels of religious commitment the Confluents felt, the extent to which they had had a choice of religion or culture when growing up and their parents' role in this. They differed on whether it was better for such a choice to be made for them when they were young or left until they were older.

Also discussed is the extent to which Confluents saw their experiences as a final and permanent achievement or more of a stage, still open to change in regard to religion. (This theme will also be developed more broadly in Chapter 16). The issue of how Confluents see themselves as creating their own culture, seeking to define their own religious and cultural identity is explored. In some respects, this was also the case for the Unitaries but was more of a choice for Confluents rather than something they felt had *fallen* on them. Confluents had a wider and more open range of identity options than Unitaries. Thus, they saw this choice as extremely advantageous – a right, an opportunity and a privilege which, according to them, was available mainly to Confluents.

Muslims by chance or by choice

A large majority of the Confluent respondents described themselves as Muslim; none had chosen any other religion (see Table 15.1).

Table 15.1: Confluents' religion[87]

Agnostic	7
Atheist	1
Christian	0
Muslim	61
Total	**69**

Most respondents said they had enquired about religion and had chosen Islam for themselves, even if their parents had also chosen this religion for them before they were born. The few Confluents who said, after thought, that they were agnostic or

[87] Some Confluents, when asked what religion they were, without thinking said they were Muslim. However, later in the interview, they declared that they were probably agnostic as they believed in God but that was where it stopped.

atheist also felt this had been their choice. None of the Confluents who described themselves as Muslims saw this as a result of chance.

Like Unitaries, Confluents were also asked how religious they thought they were at the time of the interview. Just over one third described themselves as *religious*, with similar numbers saying they were *not that religious* and just under a quarter (significantly more than the Unitaries in Chapter 11) describing themselves as *not religious at all* (see Table 15.2).

Table 15.2: How religious are you at this point of your life?

Not that religious	25
Religious	26
Not religious at all	17
Not sure	1
Total	**69**

These results may seem to confirm the doubts of religious leaders to some degree. It is notable, however, that the 'chosen' commitment of the religious Confluents was the product of much thought and evolution over stages of their maturation. Some felt they had already gone through their stages to reach the current point. Some of the less religious felt they may think differently about religion when they were older, so their current stance could be a stage. A few had deliberately chosen not to explore questions of religion in order to avoid family tensions.

A surprising finding was that the majority of Confluents were not happy to make an uninformed choice in regard to their level of religion and their religious affinity. Many, especially the older ones, felt that they had reached their choice after a lot of thought and research. Some felt that they had gone through periods of being confused but had ultimately decided on one spiritual path. Often, the stages in life that Confluents went through had, they felt, eventually led them to a spiritual place where they were comfortable and serious about their religion, as Joseph[88] explained:

> *I definitely went through a lot of stages, especially spiritually. These helped me get to the point where I am now. I am comfortable where I am now. I*

[88] Joseph - A 24 year old male post graduate student from Sydney whose mother was Anglo-Australian and whose father was Lebanese-Australian.

don't think I am going through a stage now, I think I am past that. (Joseph)

Many felt such a journey, in which they confronted choices, was valuable, as the following statement illustrates:

> *Our parents made a choice to be together regardless of the barriers or difficulties that they did or would face in life. So it is only natural that they have brought us up with this in mind. We should have the choice of what religion we want to follow. Why would we want a culture or religion forced on us when our own parents did not abide by what was enforced upon them. (Ali[89]).*

When Confluents were asked whether they would choose their own children's religion or culture, most said they would raise their child in the same religion as themselves but would encourage them to make an educated choice when old enough. Six were unsure and four said they would leave it up to the children to decide for themselves:

> *I would definitely raise my children as Muslims (as I am Muslim) with a good understanding of not just Christianity but to understand and respect all religions and be proud of their mixed religious heritage. With their culture, I would raise them as Australians but proud of their mixed cultural backgrounds. This is how I was raised and I am so grateful to my parents for it. (Simon[90])*

A few were happy that their parents had left the choice to them when they were older:

> *My brother and I were taught that when we were older, what religion we were or wanted to be was up to us, and culturally we were what we wanted to call ourselves. I think this was good and I would probably raise my kids (If I have them one day) in the same way. (Amber[91]).*

Some Confluents felt that the choice of what religion or culture a child from an

[89] Ali - A 25 year old male lawyer from Melbourne whose mother was Anglo-Australian and whose father was Lebanese-Australian.

[90] Simon - A 24 year old male who was a Masters student from Sydney whose father was Lebanese-Australian and whose mother was Anglo-Australian.

[91] Amber - A 21 year old female student from Brisbane whose mother was Anglo-Australian and whose father was Syrian-Australian.

intermarriage would follow should not be made for them, but at the same time there should not be silence about these issues, as Gemma explained:

> *With my children, I would keep it so it was a free choice of who they wanted to be and maybe teach them more about the two different cultures and then let them decide, because I think a lot that I learnt was through school and through other things rather than my parents sitting me down and saying, "This, this, this, is what a Muslim is", and that sort of thing.*
>
> *I think, well for a child to make a decision, I think that's an important thing. But other than that, definitely not force them to be a certain way or to behave in a certain way. Yes, because you can't sort of … I think if you try and force someone to be something that they're not, that's when you'll have problems. Not just behaviour problems but also the way they're accepted and I suppose confidence problems, and not knowing who they really are, and that sort of thing. (Gemma[92])*

Nat[93] also felt the same:

> *I would give them choice but I would definitely educate them on both sides of what it is. I'd like them to keep … I'd like them to be brought up how I've been brought up by my mother because it's been, yeah, it's really good because I've … she's helped me keep … this is what I'd do as well, keep it open-minded on both sides, but to learn the good things about both of them, to also learn the bad things about both of the sides, both of the religions or cultures, whatever, and to be able to choose myself. I'd give my children the freedom to be able to choose themselves what they want to do and what decisions they want to make. I will not pressure them, or force them, into anything because I think that can force them to do something they don't want to do, or can, make them think differently of what they usually think if I didn't force them into it, or, yeah, basically give them the freedom to make their own decisions but educate them on both sides too, so they have an insight on what it's like. … To keep open-minded.*

However, a few of those who had been brought up with no direction in regard to

[92] Gemma - An 18 year old female student from Adelaide whose mother was Anglo-Australian and whose father was Palestinian.

[93] Nat - A 17 year old female student whose mother was Austrian-Australian and father Indian-Australian (parents now divorced).

which culture or religion to follow felt that a choice should have been made; they needed some direction:

> *I think you have to guide them or at least tell them about both religions and cultures. I feel like this because I was left with no choice made for me and as a result was taught no religion. And with culture I was told that whatever I felt I wanted to be part of I could be part of (which I learnt later was not always the case). Growing up like this at times became a bit frustrating and I really did need that choice to be made for me. I needed to be steered in one direction or at least given some sort of options. Especially when you go to an Anglican school and most of the students know what they believe in. It was alright when I was older but this made making a choice take a lot longer than it would have, I think, if my parents had made some choices when I was young. (Amy[94]).*

When respondents were asked whether they thought 'Confluents create their own culture', 61 said "Yes", eight were "Unsure" but none said "No". They were asked to elaborate on this and give some examples. I have used the following responses from Joseph, Megan and Nat to illustrate this point:

> *I think we do create our own culture in the sense that our culture is one that is mixed; we take the good from both our parents' cultures, the bits we like, and this becomes our culture. (Joseph[95])*

> *We do create our own culture, well at least I have in that I have chosen to make my own mixed culture a combination of both my parents' cultures and the culture that I live in. I think this is the case with my religion as well, as I might be Muslim but I feel part of both religions. (Megan[96])*

> *My culture is very important to me. I think my culture more than my religion… I am not really religious. I do adopt a lot of the beliefs of the Christian and the Muslim religions. I believe they are similar, in like, a lot of ways. And my culture is very important, like just the beliefs I have, normally in culture, like, I'm not pushed to things I don't want to do, like, just the way I live my life. I'm*

[94] Amy - A 20 year old female student from Adelaide whose mother was Anglo-Australian and father Palestinian-Australian.

[95] Joseph - A 24 year old male post graduate student from Sydney whose mother was Anglo-Australian and whose father was Lebanese-Australian.

[96] Megan - A 25 year old female accountant from Perth whose mother was Anglo-Australian and father Lebanese-Australian.

really happy and self-satisfied with it at the moment and I don't think I want any changes to it, and I know what I want when I grow up, and I know that for myself, and that reflects how I have been brought up. My culture, you might say, and my religion doesn't come into that bit. … Yes, definitely I think I do understand both sides more now. I'm more open-minded, not as narrow-minded, not set in my ways at all. I'm totally open to finding out which way is best for me, and I'm not prejudiced against either of them. (Nat[97])

Very few respondents described themselves as atheist or agnostic. Even these, when asked, rejected the common view of community leaders and of most Unitaries that this was due to the 'confusion' caused by mixed religious heritage (see Chapter 14):

I think it's more just personal. I don't think it is related to my parents being two different religions. I just don't see any need to give your child a specific religion to follow…I guess like two people coming from another country with different religious backgrounds might want to keep that religion or identity in that country that they moved to. I guess that might be one reason why people from families, or from a migrant background, might keep that religious identity. I think that's true. … Like you look at Italian families and stuff that have moved over in the 50s and stuff, and a lot of their cultural traits come from that generation and are carried over, and so I guess as trying to keep part of that identity they may have … that's why they might hold that religion so strongly. But if they don't hold on to their religion and pass it on to their children, it doesn't mean that is why they are atheist like myself. (Issac[98])

Confluence as positive

When respondents were asked whether they felt being a Confluent was an advantage, 67 said that it was positive and only two (both of whom were the only respondents with divorced parents) said it was something negative. Most respondents agreed with each other and with their parents (see Chapter 13) that being of a mixed religious and cultural background made them more open-minded in regard to different cultures and religions, as exemplified by David:

[97] Nat - A 17 year old female student whose mother was Austrian-Australian and father Indian-Australian (parents now divorced).

[98] Issac - A 23 year old male Politics student from Adelaide whose mother was Anglo-Australian and father Palestinian-Australian.

Yes, I feel I am more open-minded. In a sense that you would still know how to relate to an average Australian more so than an Albanian, so in that sense it makes you more open minded. You wouldn't be so hostile to say Christians, whereas a lot of other ethnics would be, they would run down Australian Christians, whereas you never would…

It just depends on the group that you get in with, a rough group of ethnics who enjoy causing trouble, they'll just be hostile towards any Australians and the same group of Australians would do the same. You know, down Hindley Street and people yell out "bunch of wogs" or "doggers", you know something will start. It just depends on the mind of the people. I suppose I am, yeah, I suppose I am a bit more open-minded compared to Australians as far as other people in the group that I hang around with. So even compared to, like an average Albanian, surely they would speak more hostile than you would against an Australian, but when they talked about Christianity, they couldn't really see it as well as say you could see it because you've got cousins that are Christian.

Yeah, I'm probably a bad example because most Albanians aren't very religious. But still, if you ask Greeks and Italians, I had been introduced to some and most of them resented Australians even though they were born here and they grew up with Australians, there was still that "Australians don't have any morals", and that they are going to use an Australian girl, but they will never marry an Australian girl. They still see Australians without a religion, even though they have a religion. Even though it's the same religion, but they still saw it as not a religion, even though it is Christianity. Whereas, if we were asked, we would probably have a different outlook on it because we still have cousins that are Australian Christians. And we wouldn't use an Australian girl because my mum was an Australian girl.

Just them making a comment like that makes me angry and very upset. In that sense, I am probably more open-minded because I won't have a go at Australians as much as some people, you know, I'm not that hostile towards Australians because of our relatives are Australians. It gives you more of an open mind, gets you into a mixture of cultures. (David[99])

[99] David - A 20 year old male from Adelaide whose mother was Anglo-Australian and father Albanian-Australian.

David, when asked whether being Confluent had been negative in any way, replied:

> *No, your friends might give you a hard time. If they're very hostile towards Australians, they might give you a hard time; depends on who you get it with and that, I haven't had the problem.*

Gemma, like David, said:

> *I think positive...Yes positive… Probably I am lucky in a way because I've got the best of both worlds. I can experience two different cultures whereas people with two Australian parents may have less of an experience or be more narrow-minded about certain things. (Gemma[100])*

Intermarriage

Confluents were asked what their view was about intermarriage and what advice they would give to anyone contemplating it. All but two said they thought such marriages were good. In regard to the second part of the question, 60 Confluents said "go for it" whereas eight advised to think about it seriously but still to go ahead with it:

> *If both the partners were happy and as long as it didn't start family troubles, I would say go for it. (David[101])*

> *I'd say… it's something that can be very good, but hard. Yes. I think it's hard, like you have to be a very accepting person yourself to be able to make it work. And you've got to be willing to give leeway and understand the other person, and sacrifice some of your own culture to learn about the other person's culture… Yes, I think that's the only way it can work. Like, if you're so narrow-minded that you don't want to know about the other person's culture, I think that's when a intermarriage wouldn't work. (Gemma[102])*

Only one respondent said they would advise against getting married.

When respondents were asked whether religion or culture were more important

[100] Gemma - An 18 year old female student from Adelaide whose mother was Anglo-Australian and whose father was Palestinian.

[101] David - A 20 year old male from Adelaide whose mother was Anglo-Australian and father Albanian-Australian.

[102] Gemma - An 18 year old female student from Adelaide whose mother was Anglo-Australian and whose father was Palestinian.

when choosing a partner for marriage or for a long-term relationship, 47 said religion, 10 said cultural background, eight said both and five said it did not matter at all. Noah and Gemma's responses exemplify the religious and cultural perspectives respectively:

> *I think religion is the most important in a marriage as I do not want to argue on whether or not my child is baptised or not…things like that. Also, I saw my poor mum fight with her family about religion all the time. So although I can see the huge benefits of people from different religions marrying each other, there are also lots of things that you have to deal with; you need to be very patient. (Noah[103])*

> *I think culture is more important to me, the culture side is more important, that people learn and are more educated about that, whereas the religion is not an important thing in my life. It's more culture and more that, sort of, society's more educated about different cultures and accepting --- I think if my partner was a different religion it wouldn't matter but I think it might matter if his culture was something different to mine. (Gemma[104])*

Conclusion

Among the Confluents interviewed, there was little evidence of abandonment of their religion. Rather, for many the quest for identity had led to a search for more knowledge and a deeper understanding of their religion. Confluents in general held a positive view of intermarriage, and of the value and advantages of being the child of such a marriage. They had seen the benefits first-hand, in particular producing children who were open-minded and had the opportunity to create their own Confluent culture.

The next chapter discusses Confluents' identity-making and the positive input they can have into multicultural Australia.

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[103] Noah - A 24 year old male who works as a programmer from Sydney whose mother was Anglo-Australian and father was Lebanese-Australian.

[104] Gemma - An 18 year old female student from Adelaide whose mother was Anglo-Australian and whose father was Palestinian.

Chapter 16: Identity

Introduction

Children of intermarriage have more varied and complex identity choices on both sides of their front doors than those from Unitary immigrant or minority parentage. The pulls and pushes, challenges and resources on both sides touch the core of the Confluents' being, and involve close and more distant family members, as well as friends, the wider ethnic community (whose size and influence varies with where they reside) and mainstream society.

A widespread view, including claims in the literature (see next chapter), is that choosing a Confluent identity is an unhappy and confused experience. However, most of the Confluents in this study had been able to work through the complexity, passing through several stages as they grew up and reaching what they felt was a positive, comfortable resolution, often involving multiple selves. This, as previous chapters have suggested, involved conscious and creative choices as well as unique flexibility, multicultural tolerance and open-mindedness. Many felt their experience could give them a role as advisor and coach to young Confluents, and indeed to young Unitary Muslims trying to come to terms with identity problems.

In this study, Confluents were very far from being 'poor lost souls'. Rather, they were individuals who had the best of both worlds; a good fit with a multicultural society such as Australia.

Children in intermarried families

The attitude of the parents and the child's relationship with them were often the most important identity influences on the children of intermarriage. These children were affected by the extent to which the parents valued the retention of both their cultures and whether the child had a closer relationship with one parent than with the other. If the Anglo-Australian spouse had learned Arabic, for example, the child would grow up in a bilingual household and feel they fitted well with their ethnic side. Twenty-two out of the 69 Confluents interviewed could speak both of their parents' languages. David[105], a 20 year old half Albanian, half Australian argued, "If you can speak both parents' language you feel more secure". On the other hand, knowing only English

[105] David - A 20 year old male from Adelaide whose mother was Anglo-Australian and father Albanian-Australian.

could restrict some identity options, as Hamoudi[106] remarked:

> *I only speak English…I don't speak Arabic and I live here [in Australia], so of course I naturally consider myself only Australian.*

In some extreme but unusual cases where the respondents' parents were separated or divorced, this had affected which culture, religion, or ethnic and national identity they tended to adopt. Dawood**[107]**, for example, had a negative attitude towards being Australian, which he clearly attributed to his bad relationship with his father since his parents' divorce. He mixed mainly with his mother's family, who were all Iranian, and was heavily involved with the Iranian community.

Occasionally, a culture clash between the parents polarised the child's sense of identity. Twenty three year old teacher Sally[108] stated that she felt little in common with her Arab father because he was too strict and did not understand the Australian culture, but she felt very close to her Anglo-Australian mother. She ended up moving out of home and severed contact with her father almost completely. Conversely, Hannah, who also had an Arab father and Anglo-Australian mother, felt considerably disconnected from her mother but very close to her father:

> *I feel more Lebanese than Australian as I am exactly like my father. I am like my father in every way. It is because of this I feel more Lebanese than Australian. (Hannah[109])*

In one other case, Jay[110] complained that she was treated less permissively than her brothers simply because she was a female (a situation much more common among the Unitaries):

> *I often didn't feel like an Australian because I was not allowed to do what my friends were allowed to do. Whereas my brothers were allowed a bit more freedom than I was, so they had no problem fitting in with their friends and*

[106] Hamoudi - A 24 year old male student from New South Wales whose mother was Anglo-Australian and father Arab-Australian.

[107] Dawood - A 21 year old male student from Melbourne who had an Iranian-Australian mother and Anglo-Australian father.

[108] Sally - A 23 year old female teacher from Adelaide who had an Anglo-Australian mother and Arab-Australian father.

[109] Hannah - A 21 year old female student from Sydney who had an Anglo-Australian mother and an Arab father. She spoke fluent Arabic and in Sydney her attitude was bolstered by close ties with the large Lebanese community.

[110] Jay - A 21 year old female student from Adelaide whose mother was Anglo-Australian and father Arab-Australian.

feeling like they were part of this society… My mum and I both tell him that in Australia it is different… However, I couldn't believe it when I went to Lebanon, it wasn't like this at all... actually quite the opposite. I suppose, though, dad left Lebanon over 45 years ago and the culture has changed a lot since then. (Jay[5])

In general, however, the strongest influence in most cases was the model of the parents' own free choice of marriage partner and their high valuation of such freedom in their children. This left the door open for Confluents to assert and develop their own values and cultural identities, as described in the previous chapter.

Obstacles and aids in the search for identity

Seeking an Australian identity

A range of different personal and environmental factors could affect how Australian Confluents felt. Encounters with mainstream prejudice could have an impact on their self-image at certain life stages, as it had done with the Unitaries (see Part Three). Sometimes this undermined, at least for a time, their willingness to see themselves as Australians. This prejudice could be triggered by identifiers such as names and physical appearance, although these would not always be as prominent for Confluents as for Unitaries.

Confluents were asked if they used a different name depending on whether they were with Anglo-Australians or Arabs and Muslims. Fifty-one Confluents said they used a Muslim or Arab name when with Arabs or Muslims, and had an English or Christian name when at school or university, or for everyday life. Many of the other 18 had been given a non-identifying name, for example 'Emma' or 'Jason':

I have seen my friends give other people a hard time about their name and would not want that to happen to me. Also, it is just easier. (Mike[111])

Yes, I am lucky that my parents chose this name as a friend of mine was given a typical Muslim name and people are always having problems with it, and it really bothers her. (Kate[112])

[111] Mark - A 24 year old male student from South Australia whose mother was Anglo-Australian and father was Indian.

[112] Kate - An 18 year old female student from New South Wales whose mother was Anglo-Australian

Physical appearance was also a crucial element in whether or not Confluents felt integrated into Australian society. Sixty-seven of the 69 Confluents agreed that physical appearance definitely had an influence on whether they considered themselves to be Australian, according to their own perceived stereotype of what an average Australian should look like. Two were unsure. In Australia, despite its waves of diverse immigrants, the norm for an average Australian, according to most respondents, was still to be fair and blonde with blue eyes. They felt this was the image portrayed by the media and held by mainstream Australian society in general. Numerous respondents quoted the "I am as Australian as Ampol" advertisement that showed a blonde haired and blue eyed man as the 'typical' Australian. In many cases, the Confluents that looked more Arab or European had had to constantly justify their Australian identity whereas those whose appearance fitted the stereotype felt it was not in question.

When the respondents were asked what they meant by a person being 'fair', the majority stated that they meant the person had blonde hair and blue eyes. This interpretation of the word 'fair' was unlike that of the Unitaries, who explained they were referring to the colour of the person's skin. Nadia[113], a Confluent who had grown up with only Australians and saw only her Australian cousins, looked very Mediterranean with dark hair and features. She said, "I look Lebanese but I feel Australian". Samira[114], however, while describing herself as looking very "Mediterranean", never called herself Australian. When asked why not, she replied, "I don't look Australian do I? I look Lebanese, that is why".

At the other extreme was a young man, Adam[115], who went to a school with Lebanese in Sydney and was brought up more like a Lebanese than an Australian but looked (as he said) "extremely Australian". Adam was asked why he felt that way, considering there were many Lebanese that had blonde hair and blue eyes, and his response was, "Look at me. I am Aussie blonde not Lebo blonde". Other Confluents as well as Unitaries referred to this distinction between Australian blonde and Lebanese or 'ethnic' blonde. Adam found that he stood out compared to an average Lebanese and was constantly considered non-Lebanese because of his

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and father Lebanese-Australian.

[113] Nadira - A 19 year old female student from Adelaide whose father was Palestinian and mother Anglo-Australian.

[114] Samira - A 22 year old female student from Melbourne with an Anglo-Australian mother and Lebanese-Australian father.

[115] Adam - A 19 year old male student from New South Wales who had an Anglo-Australian mother and a Lebanese-Australian father.

looks. As he saw the situation, “I look Australian but feel Lebanese”. All of these cases, where Confluents’ outward appearances tended to dictate people’s perceptions of them, and indeed to inform their self-perceptions of identity, illustrate how the respondents had felt entrapped by their looks. This experience was also shared by other Confluent respondents.

Further affirming that appearance played a powerful role in Australian identity-making was the general public’s response to women wearing the hijab. Confluent women who chose to demonstrate their religion publicly through wearing the hijab (headscarf) found themselves labelled as ‘outsiders’:

> *I chose to wear the hijab recently, something that I wanted to do for a long time, anyway, I think putting it on has affected how I am accepted as people see me as no longer an Australian. I am often asked now, “How long have you been in Australia for?” when the way I speak is clearly with an Australian accent. I didn’t have this problem before. I don’t feel any different and why should I… I am still Australian. I have just put a scarf on my head. So you asked me about feeling integrated? This definitely has affected my integration. (Eve[116])*

The interviews showed that almost all respondent children of mixed-marriages felt that physical appearance had a major impact on what nationality they called themselves and therefore affected how far they felt integrated within Australian mainstream society.

Seeking an ethnic identity

Language was also an issue, but it could be an obstacle for integration into the Confluents’ ethnic communities. Although all respondents from mixed-marriages spoke English and had grown up in Australia, some still felt more ethnic than Australian. However, if they lacked competence in the relevant ethnic language, they had been met with questioning about their identity. One example of this was Rima[117], who tried hard to mix with her ethnic side but was not able to do so successfully. Despite her heavy involvement in the Lebanese community, she felt she was constantly considered *just an Australian* due to her lack of knowledge of the

[116] Eve - A 23 year old female post graduate student from Brisbane who had a Lebanese-Australian father and an Anglo-Australian mother.

[117] Rima - A 21 year old female student from Adelaide who had an Anglo-Australian mother and a Lebanese-Australian father.

Arabic language. Rima quoted a Lebanese lady (a second-generation Unitary) who, when introducing Rima to her sister, commented, “Rima is Australian, she doesn’t speak Arabic”. Rima was deeply disturbed by this and went through a stage of thinking there was no point mixing with her ethnic community until she knew the language:

> *I realised after this happened that until I learnt Arabic I would never be part of my father’s culture. I now accept how important that language is to really feel like you belong to a culture.*

Sophia[118] stated that when she was visiting her father’s homeland and relatives, she felt very little connection with the country or her father’s family:

> *Because I could not speak Arabic, I felt a stranger in a place and amongst people that I should feel at home with.*

A different kind of influence that could be strong enough to modify the impact of the factors discussed above was the size of the local ethnic community – its concentration and its level of organisation – and thus the level of support it was able to provide to developing ethnic identity. This varied substantially between the three main cities Adelaide, Melbourne and Sydney, where most of the interviews were conducted. In Sydney, all but two of the children interviewed from mixed-marriages considered themselves primarily Lebanese and Muslims, even though their mothers were Anglo-Australian from Christian families. When asked why, the respondents pointed out that it was mostly due to the fact that they mixed with Lebanese and all had attended schools where the majority were *ethnics* (consisting mainly of Turkish and Lebanese background). They had grown up in a predominantly Lebanese / Turkish area so the Anglo-Australian side obviously had a lesser presence in their lives[119]. For them to fit in, these Confluents had projected their Lebanese Muslim self, although they argued that they projected an Australian identity when they were with their Anglo-Australian relatives. Danni[120], for example, argued that he paid little attention to his Australian side because he had been to school with 75 percent *ethnics* and spoke Arabic fluently. Thus, a variety of personal, familial and community factors shape the identity-formation of children from mixed-marriages.

[118] Sophia - A 25 year old female from Melbourne whose mother was Anglo-Australian and father Arab-Australian.

[119] This clearly reflected the networks I was able to use to find Confluent respondents in Sydney.

[120] Danni - A 20 year old male student from New South Wales, whose mother was Anglo-Australian and father was Lebanese-Australian.

Positive identity resolution

Working through stages

Despite others' perceptions, the majority of these Confluent respondents denied feeling confused by having parents from two different cultures and religions, although they agreed that they had had to work through stages in the past to attain this confidence in their identity and thus become comfortable with who they were. Many thought there might still be work to be done and stages to go through:

> *I think this is part of growing up. I think you need to go through stages to find out who you are. (Megan[121])*

Respondents were then asked if they thought these stages were a result of being a child from a mixed-marriage. Forty-one thought this was the case while 24 did not:

> *Yes, I think the stages I went through, anyway, are directly linked to being a child from a mixed-marriage as I was discovering my different cultural and religious backgrounds during these stages. (Sally[122])*

> *No, I don't think the stages I went through are unique to being a Confluent, as you have termed us, I think it is part of growing up. You need to go through these stages to find out who you are. (Joseph[123])*

All the Confluent respondents were then asked if they thought there were any advantages or disadvantages to going through such stages. Twenty thought there were advantages only, and 47 argued that there were both advantages and disadvantages. However, 35 of these claimed the advantages exceeded the disadvantages:

> *The advantages being that you find out who you are by going through stages and you come out a lot more confident that that is how you are. The disadvantages would be the confusion you feel at the time of the stage and the frustration of it at times. However, the advantages of going through these*

[121] Megan - A 25 year old female accountant from Perth whose mother was Anglo-Australian and father was Lebanese-Australian.

[122] Sally - A 23 year old female teacher from Adelaide who had an Anglo-Australian mother and Arab-Australian father.

[123] Joseph - A 24 year old male post graduate student from Sydney whose mother was Anglo-Australian and whose father was Lebanese-Australian.

stages far outweigh the disadvantages. (Mark[124])

These stages for me were advantageous because they helped me form my identity. I needed to go through these stages in order to find out what I believed in and who I am. I don't feel that this is anything but an advantage for a person. (Kirsten[125])

Only two Confluents saw no advantage to the stages they had experienced. Rather, they saw disadvantages that had affected their personality, for example, "I felt confused as a result and in a way still feel confused". (Lara[126])

Multiple identities

The large majority of Confluents argued that they would possess an identity to suit whomever they were with, enabling them to *fit in* and thus feel integrated into Australian society.**[127]** Thus, being children of intermarriage, they could fit in with both sides.

The interviews demonstrated that a large majority of children from mixed-marriages had multiple selves which they used to give the kind of image the particular social situation demanded. Thus, a Confluent also has the ability to behave in various ways to different people whether it be in the way they dress, speak or behave:

When with Muslims I possess a Muslim identity by knowing what to say and how to behave with them, and vice versa when I am with a Christian, I have a Christian identity. (Nadia[128])

Nadia did not feel confused about this; she felt sure she had advantages over someone who was not the child of a mixed-marriage.

Twenty year old David summed it up succinctly, stating that, "You can relate to a lot

[124] Mark - A 24 year old manager from Sydney whose mother was Anglo-Australian and father was Lebanese-Australian.

[125] Kirsten - A 23 year old female nurse who had an Anglo-Australian mother and Egyptian-Australian father.

[126] Lara - A 24 year old female teacher from Adelaide whose mother was Anglo-Australian and whose father was Lebanese-Australian.

[127] This is similar to what Mead (1972) argued when he pointed out that "we have different selves for different kinds of social relationships" and thus all have "multiple selves".

[128] Nadia - A 23 year old female student from Brisbane who had an Anglo-Australian Christian mother and Egyptian-Muslim father.

of different people in their own terms" [129]. Once again, this indicates that Confluents did not feel this possession of multiple selves, which some termed a "gift", was negative in any way:

> *I have multiple selves that I project, depending on who I am with. When I am with Australians, I project an identity that I feel is necessary to fit in, in what I say, my interests and my behaviour. When with Lebanese, I project a Lebanese identity or 'self' that I know is acceptable to Lebanese, and when with Muslims, I project a Muslim identity by knowing what to say and how to behave. I have realised that it is not that I belonged to neither or was in-between but that in fact I belong to both. This is a major advantage that only we children of mixed-marriages possess, and we must realise this and not waste this great advantage. (Ameena[130])*

Out of this multiplicity, Confluents often felt they were constructing their own culture. Sixty responded positively when this idea was proposed to them:

> *I have never thought about it like that but that is exactly how it is. I think we [Confluents] do create our own culture, which makes us unique. The fact that I feel no one really understands me except for another person who is also from a mixed-marriage, or a 'Confluent' as you call it, shows that this is unique to us and it makes sense this is our culture. (Sabrina[131])*

> *I think Confluents do create their own culture as we have a culture of being mixed. We are unique now but in the future I think there will be a lot more Confluents, which will be a really good thing. (Sam[132])*

Confluent contributions to a multicultural Australia

Tolerance and open-mindedness

When respondents were asked the question, Overall, do you see your culturally and religiously-mixed background as a positive or negative aspect in your life?, all but

[129] David - A 20 year old male from Adelaide whose mother was Anglo-Australian and father Albanian-Australian.

[130] Ameena – A 25 year old female scientist from Adelaide who had a Lebanese-Australian father and an Anglo-Australian mother.

[131] Sabrina – A 24 year old female doctor from Adelaide who had an Anglo-Australian mother and Arab-Australian father.

[132] Sam – A 26 year old male engineer from Sydney who had an Anglo-Australian mother and an Arab-Australian father.

two thought it was positive in that it made them more open-minded. A large majority of these Confluent respondents felt they had this ability to hold two identities and consequently multiple selves. They described it in a positive sense as something that enabled them to be more open-minded, tolerant and flexible towards other cultures than an average second-generation ethnic or full-blooded Anglo-Australian:

> *I am open-minded in the sense that I'm not that hostile towards Australians like other ethnics are because I have relatives that are Australians and I am not that hostile against wogs or Muslims as my Anglo-Australian Christian cousins are. (David[133])*

> *I feel being of two cultures and religions has enabled me to be more open-minded. I am an Australian, with the benefit of having the knowledge of the Lebanese culture and thus an ability to understand what it is like to be an Arab in Australia, more so than the average Anglo-Australian. I am Muslim, with the benefit of having a Christian background that enables me an insight to Christianity more so than the average Muslim. (Laila [134])*

Hoda[135] saw her "mixed heritage" as enabling her to:

> *…understand and relate to all people regardless of race or religion. Furthermore, I am exposed to two different ways of life, of which I can freely accept or neglect… I would not wish it any other way. Being of a mixed heritage gives me an advantage over other children from parents of the same heritage in so many ways.*

Respondents repeated such views many times. A large majority claimed that being Confluent made them better, well-integrated Australians:

> *I hold two cultures, I take the best bits from both so it, therefore, is an advantage.... I would even say that because of this I feel it helps me to be a better Australian. (Arian[136])*

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[133] David - A 20 year old male from Adelaide whose mother was Anglo-Australian and father was Albanian-Australian.

[134] Laila - A 24 year old female lawyer living in Sydney whose father was Lebanese-Australian and mother was Anglo-Australian.

[135] Hoda - A 23 year old female engineer from Melbourne whose mother was Anglo-Australian and whose father was Lebanese-Australian.

[136] Arian - A 21 year old female Medical student from Perth who was half English-Australian and half Iranian-Muslim.

Not only can I relate to an Australian better than an ethnic can, but I can relate to an ethnic better than an Australian can. As an Australian, this is a great advantage. (Yasmin[137])

I can relate to a group of Australians and understand the way they think… when with Albanians, I can understand their way of thinking. This results in me being a better Australian I think. (David[138])

Confluents as leaders and coaches

Many respondents felt that their own experiences in learning to navigate multiple identity pressures could help guide younger Confluents growing up. Surprisingly, they suggested they might also be able to advise Unitary Muslim youth who, many had observed, were not comfortable with their identity situation.

Respondents were asked if they felt the need to act like a 'coach' to fellow Confluents. Those who answered "Yes" were asked for their reasons.[139] Fifty-one Confluents said they felt the need to act as a coach to younger fellow Confluents and many felt they needed to act as a coach to Unitaries as well:

Now that you have brought this to my attention, yes I do feel like that and the term 'coach' sums it up nicely. I am not sure why I feel like this. I suppose it is that I feel a real connection to other Confluents, as you have termed us, and want to help others like myself. But then again, I do feel the need to help younger Unitaries (is that what you called them?) for different reasons, mainly for Unitaries, helping them finding their way in regards to their confidence and their insecurities. (Lara[140])

Respondents were then asked how they understood the identity problems of young Unitaries and whether they were similar to their own. None felt that Unitaries held multiple identities like themselves; nearly all felt this was unique to Confluents:

No definitely, not multiple identities, as you have termed, as I believe that

[137] Yasmin - A 23 year old female accountant living in Melbourne who had an Anglo-Australian mother and an Egyptian father.

[138] David - A 20 year old male from Adelaide whose mother was Anglo-Australian and father was Albanian-Australian.

[139] Strauss' (1969,109) concept of a 'coach' (see Chapter 2) was explained to them before asking the question.

[140] Lara - A 24 year old female teacher from Adelaide whose mother was Anglo-Australian and whose father was Lebanese-Australian.

this combination of different cultures and religions is something unique to us as we have a foot in lots of doors... I mean, we are linked to numerous cultures and religions, and essentially are a part of these. (Bill[141])

I think only if you're mixed, like we are, do you hold multiple identities. (Sarah[142])

On the other hand, 45 of the respondents felt that Unitaries were in-between identities and therefore not really part of either:

I think most Muslim youth, where both parents come from overseas, are not part of any culture really, they would be 'in-between' identities, as you put it. A lot of my Albanian Muslim friends are caught in a way in-between and are not really comfortable in either. (David[143])

I would say in-between identities if I think of my Muslim friends, as I am part of a large group of friends who are mainly Muslim youth of either Egyptian, Lebanese, Turkish etc background and they all seem to be in-between identities, not really part of one. They often talk about how they are different to people from their parents' culture and do not feel Australian…I feel bad for them as I do not feel like that. I think this is because I am from a mixed background. (Kirsten[144])

I am not a hundred percent sure but I would say they hold two separate identities, one that involves their parents' culture and one that involves the Australian society that they live in. I think they are happy living both but I am not certain that they can keep this up. Um, I think also that one day they will end up having to choose what they really are when talking about their religion and culture … This is how they are different to us I think, we are more able to keep up being part of different cultures and religions as this is who we are. We will always belong to all of them as we have family from

[141] Bill - A 23 year old male from Adelaide whose mother was Anglo-Australian and whose father was Palestinian-Australian.

[142] Sarah - A 25 year old female student from Adelaide whose father was Lebanese-Australian and whose mother was Anglo-Australian.

[143] David - A 20 year old male from Adelaide whose mother was Anglo-Australian and father was Albanian-Australian.

[144] Kirsten - A 23 year old female nurse who has an Anglo-Australian mother and Egyptian-Australian father.

different cultures and religions. (Mark[145])

Conclusion

These findings contradict the popular view, also proposed in the literature, that children of intermarriage are confused about who they are. Rather than Confluent respondents not being fully part of either culture or religion, in fact they claimed several complete identities – what Wallman(1983) calls 'multiple identities' (see Chapter 4) – and felt at home in all of them. This was not because they lacked a single identity focus and were therefore 'in crisis', but because this multiplicity was in itself a healthy choice that enabled them to relate to all sorts of people, which is essential for playing a full part in multicultural Australia. In this respect, the Confluents differed from the Unitaries in that they had a wider and more open choice of identity options.

However, as with the Unitaries, certain factors hindered the Confluents' level of social integration, although the Confluents were generally less affected and felt they held an advantage over Unitaries in this regard. They had grown up with two definite identities and in turn had the ability to possess multiple selves. Indeed, the Confluents saw themselves as creating their own 'culture'. Far from being 'poor lost souls', they felt they were in a position to advise and guide their Unitary friends.

The next chapter examines the findings related to Confluent respondents in the context of the theoretical literature on identity and the children of intermarriage.

[145] Mark - A 24 year old manager from Sydney whose mother was Anglo-Australian and father was Lebanese-Australian.

Chapter 17: Confluents in Theory and Experience

Introduction

It is now time to place the findings of this study of young Confluent Muslims in Australia into the context of the theoretical literature on identity, described in Chapter two, and the sparse literature on the children of intermarriage, summarised in Chapter 4, to see how far they develop or contradict what is already known.

A word of caution is in order here. This study does not claim to be, and indeed could not be based on, a statistically representative sample. The same is true of all other studies into the children of intermarriage. There is no database, no organisation and no location where Confluent young people can be found, counted and selected, and their experiences shared. Even the collective name 'Confluent' had to be constructed for this thesis because there was no way of identifying this particular population. It is notable, however, that respondents welcomed the name and many asserted elements of a shared identity with other Confluents they may have never met without the study.

The study does not claim to cover all types of experiences for the Confluent population group but major efforts were made to compensate for this by following as many and varied leads and networks as possible. My persistence and introducing myself as a Confluent resulted in very few refusals. My Confluent status not only helped me persuade respondents to be interviewed but helped me obtain the best possible research outcome. Respondents felt comfortable to share often intimate experiences with another from this as yet undefined group to which they felt they belonged.

After all interviews had been completed and analysed, I found the following advice from Bystydzienski (2011) in his study of intercultural marriages, which confirmed the validity of my strategy:

> Traditional social science research methods emphasise keeping the researcher's view and experience out of the research process. I am convinced, however, that letting the participants know that they and I shared the experience of being in an intercultural partnership, and my willingness to talk about it and answer the questions, encouraged them to be more open with me than would have been the case otherwise. This type of "strategic

> disclosure" [DeVault and Gross 2007] has been shown to aid collaborative interview encounters. Disclosing to participants similarities and acknowledging differences in social locations and perspectives can produce strong rapport [Edwards 1990] (Bystydzienski, 2011,179).

This was definitely the case with my respondents. Their hesitation about being interviewed was often overcome when I disclosed our shared background. One example of this was when a mother told me that her Confluent son would rather not to be interviewed, but if I could meet him, I could try to change his mind. After telling me he worked as a doctor at a busy hospital on the other side of town, I went there and told him about myself and my research, whereupon he agreed to the interview.[146]

Overall, my findings gave little or no support to the long-held view that children of intermarriage were confused and insecure. On the other hand, they reinforced the arguments and findings of writers such as Fried, Barbara and Ali[147], who assert that when such children actively develop complex multiple identities, this can result in strength and confidence.

Confusion and the construction of identity

One of the most persistent negative interpretations of Confluent experience in the literature is of dislocation and identity confusion, and their damaging effects. Gordon, in his1964 book on intermarriage, laid the seeds of doubt about the possibility of children from intermarriages knowing their identity. He argued (1964,317) that the children rather than their parents were victims of intermarriage:

> Even the most well intentioned intermarried parents find it difficult to provide their children with the security that results from "knowing who I am and what I am".

Bhabha followed this negative approach in1994 when he wrote that children from intercultural unions occupied "in-between" spaces. This approach suffers from failing to distinguish internal and external factors, and by assuming any confusion to be a direct result of mixed-marriage. Dewey's (1938, in Dewey, 1956) notion of a "normal

[146] Unlike Bystydzienski (2011), I tried to avoid sharing my experiences in too much depth until after the interview so as not to influence their response to questions. I would mention my own experience and views during the interview only if it aided in obtaining information, but was careful not to influence the respondent.

[147] After my research was completed, I found Ali's book 'Mixed-Race, Post-Race: Gender, New Ethnicities and Cultural Practices' (2003) dealing with the UK, which presented results very similar to mine.

experience" involving both external and internal forces (see Chapter 2) is more useful when exploring the realities of identity-making among Confluent young people.

Cooley (1964,184) further developed Dewey's idea of "external forces" and how they affect the "self". His notion of the "Looking-glass self" implies that a "conception of the self is derived from the responses of others" (see Chapter 2). Thus, our concept of our self is derived from this reflection, as we not only learn from, but are affected by, people's responses to us. The distinction between internal and external forces meshed well with respondents' own interpretations of their experience, whereas their response to the following passage from Gordon's book, when read to them, was outright rejection; they did not see it as applicable to themselves:

> The child who "doesn't know who or what he [sic] is" because his parents, however happy their mixed-marriage may be, are identified with different religions, may become emotionally insecure, unhappy and even on occasion develop neuroses. (Gordon 1964,3)

All of the Confluents said that their experience was quite different, even the opposite of this. They also stated that they did not know any Confluent who had suffered badly from being from a mixed-marriage.

Multiple identities

Gordon's (1964) one dimensional approach had limited applicability to the respondents in this study. However, a simple reaction to external and internal forces was also inadequate, as was the idea that the only healthy goal would be a stable single identity. Bun and Ngoh (1994,190) argued that besides the individual being subjected to external and internal forces, newly constructed meanings and lines of action would in turn modify these influences and lead to change. This process could create some confusion, and the change would often not be achieved alone but through interaction with others.

Many respondents in the study admitted to having felt confused at some time as they were growing up, but denied it was due to internal or psychological factors. Most asserted it was due to external forces such as the stigma attached to Arabs or Muslims, or to the children of mixed-marriages. Karl's response was typical of most respondents' thoughts:

> *I think definitely external forces, things like how people make you feel, whether you have received racism or not. Negative stereotypes of Muslims or Arabs, these sorts of things. I don't believe it is from within yourself because you are a child from a mixed-marriage. It is how you are made to feel, which then leads to confusion. (Karl[148])*

The respondents' acknowledgement of periods of confusion as *just a stage* in their lives along the way to reaching their identity as a Confluent accords with Erik Erikson's (1975,199-200) notion that "identity confusion and moratorium are followed by identity-formation", as all individuals go through certain stages in order to form their identity. Respondents' description of how coming to terms with their situation had helped them discover, and be comfortable in, their Confluent identity echoes Erikson's moratorium.

Similarly, respondents' descriptions of how they learned from their stages to reach their Confluent identity reflect Maslow's (1968) notion of "peak-experiences" (see Chapter 2). Maslow (1968,103) stated that the position of peak-experiences was attained after learning from, and integrating, experiences, and reaching a point closest to an individual's "real", "unique" self. The Confluents often seemed to have reached something like Maslow's "peak-experiences", indicating that their "stages" were neither a direct result of being a Confluent nor unique to them; rather, the stages were part of normal identity-formation.

Barbara (1989,130) took a different approach than Gordon to identity-formation among children of intermarriages, arguing that rather than being insecure and unhappy, a child of intermarriage becomes the dynamic synthesis of a dual cultural allegiance made up of elements which, as they combine, enhance both cultures by bringing them together in a positive way:

> These children will not in reality live between two worlds, between two countries and between two cultures but rather in actual fact will live in one country or the other, within an intimate family context and will be governed by various social codes which will have a considerable formative influence on them and of which they will be the products. (Barbara 1989,131)

Confluents in the study often described how they felt these stages or times of

[148] Karl - A 25 year old social worker from Sydney whose mother was Anglo-Saxon and whose father was Lebanese-Australian.

confusion had helped them form a unique and positive identity. In fact, rather than possessing no identity, they possessed at least two complete identities and thus could use their multiple selves to their full advantage. They possessed 'Multiple identities' or selves Mead (1934) as part of their dual heritage.

Wallman (in Fried 1983,74) stated that the multiple identity of children from intermarriage is not an indication that they lack a single identity focus and are therefore "in crisis", but rather that multiple identity in itself is a healthy choice. In this respect, the position of a child from a mixed-marriage overlaps with other second-generation immigrants, but they have a wider and more open choice of identity options and can feel more completely at home in several of these at the same time.

I agree with Wallman's (1983) position. My study has indicated that most children from mixed-marriages had multiple selves, which they used to convey the kind of image demanded by each particular social situation. The Confluent child also has the ability to behave in various ways to suit different people, whether it be in the way they dress, speak or behave (Chapter 16). Most respondents valued this ability to hold two identities and have multiple selves very highly. They described it as enabling them to be more open-minded, tolerant and flexible toward other cultures than an average second-generation "ethnic" or a "full-blooded Anglo-Saxon" Australian. Most respondents argued that the social situation and the people they were with would determine which identity they would possess in order to fit in and thus feel integrated into Australian society. Having a wide and open choice of identity options enabled the Confluents to create their own culture. This is similar to Mead's (1972) argument that "we have different selves for different kinds of social relationships" and thus all have multiple selves (Mead, 1972).

The results of my study in relation to Confluents' identity-formation are similar to those in Ali's (2003) research, 'Mixed-Race, Post-Race: Gender, New Ethnicities and Cultural Practices' (see Chapter 4), which highlights the positive aspects of Confluence:

> In this research, I have confirmed that 'mixed-race' individuals [in UK] do not necessarily inhabit spaces of in-between-ness as suggested by Bhabha (1990b). They (we?) occupy multi-layered, multi-faceted possibilities. This means that the children manage a range of different aspects to what they call "self" in ways that are not easily mapped onto a notion of a "third space" and are heavily influenced by embodiment and embodied practices. Post-

> structucturalist theories of the materialisation of bodies provide possibilities for understanding this "mixedness" in process (Ali 2003,171).

Confluents' bridging roles

One of the most striking illustrations of the outgoing self-confidence of those interviewed in my study lies in the expressed desire of the majority to act as *coach* to fellow younger Confluents. Particularly noteworthy and an unexpected finding was the desire of some to provide the same guiding role for Unitaries, demonstrating that they did not feel their multiple identities would be a barrier to understanding, and connecting with, others, and building bridges for them. It shows that Confluents' multiple identities allowed for a strong connection to other Unitary Muslim youth, thus supporting Strauss' theory of 'coach'. The findings also demonstrate that such connectedness might extend to other groups and may be part of a wider generational change.

In 'Mirrors and Masks', Strauss (1969) developed the notion of 'coach' to describe someone who assists people through a difficult status passage. Those who play the role of 'coach' are "those who have gone through the recognized steps and stand ready to guide and advise their successors" (Strauss,1969,109). According to Strauss (1969,112), timing is an important aspect of coaching. He points out that the 'coach' must relate different things to the person at the time when the person is at a stage when they are able to use that knowledge to successfully cope with the task. Poor timing will hinder the person's efforts to learn the skills and make the adjustments required for the transition. My study's findings indicate that Confluents understood this notion of timing through their emphasis on coaching younger Confluents because they could recognise the stages they were going through.

Confluents played another bridging role in clarifying what "racism" really means in order to address it. When Confluents (and also many Unitaries) mentioned the term "racism", often they were referring to prejudice of any kind. This is similar to Ali's (2003,180) suggestion that:

> … for many young children, "race" is not always the most salient factor in their lives. … there are multiple meanings to the word "racism" and … what they really are concerned about is "colourism", "culturism" and "nationalism".

The Confluents' ability to change their behaviour and identity according to different contexts reflects their experiences of prejudice and their ability to deal with it

positively. This leads to the question of whether Confluents can guide the way in bridging racism and prejudice in Australian society. Ali (2003,108) asked a similar question when writing about racial intermarriage in the UK:

> The challenge for the ('mixed-race') children is whether they can use post-race thinking to provide new spaces for identity within societies for which the idea of "race" still has real and profound effects.

Conclusion

This study's findings contradict the literature that claims children from mixed-marriages are confused about 'who they are'. Rather than not being fully part of either a single cultural identity or religion, the majority of Confluents had two complete identities and thus could feel comfortable in both worlds; they had what Wallman (1983) calls "multiple identities" or selves that gave them the ability to relate to all sorts of people, cultures and religions.

Far from being confused victims, in navigating and developing multiple identities Confluents underwent experiences that helped them develop a constructive and tolerant role within multicultural Australia. If Confluents can build a collective presence, they may be able to offer guidance to others. In fact, a large majority claimed that being a Confluent made them better Australians.

This experience of the Muslim children of intermarriage in Australia in the 1990s resonates with Wallman (1983), Barbara (1989) and Ali's (2003) descriptions of the children of inter-racial and inter-religious marriages in Europe. All of these groups of children seem to have much in common. Perhaps the desire of the Australian Confluents to be collectively recognised and favourably represented in the media could be extended to other children of intermarriage around the world.

The final part of this thesis (Part Five) will focus on the similarities and differences between Confluents and Unitaries. It will also endeavour to look at whether there are emerging convergences between the two groups. Are Unitaries moving towards a situation that Wallman (1983) had noted whereby they "are of two systems, not between two systems, and therefore they have access to, and participate in, and have different degrees of identification with both systems?"(1983,75). If this is the case, then there will be a convergence between the two groups that will be significant for both Confluents and Unitaries in Australia.

PART FIVE: CONFLUENTS AND UNITARIES COMPARED – CONTRASTS, MISUNDERSTANDINGS AND CONVERGENCES

Not many studies focus on the adult Confluent children of intermarriage. Few, if any, are able to make systematic comparisons with the Unitaries from the same group and the same cohort. Given the multitude of factors and contexts that can shape Confluents and Unitaries, such a comparison is needed to identify to what extent their distinctive multiple backgrounds have shaped their identity and values. The contrasts in the study have many unavoidable weaknesses, for example the two groups were, of necessity, selected in different ways. While a diversity of Unitary Muslim youth were found easily in clubs and meeting places, Confluents had to be traced individually by word of mouth and snowballing techniques. Many differences between them may be due to these different participant recruitment methods. Nonetheless, this research is important in suggesting the outlines of an overall picture and raising questions for further investigation.

This Part consists of two chapters. Chapter 18 seeks to contrast the findings about Confluents and Unitary Muslim youth in Australia. While there are many similarities, the main focus here is on the differences that highlight the distinctive nature of the Confluent experience. Chapter 19 describes what seem to be emerging convergences.

Chapter 18: Contrasting Experiences of Confluents and Unitaries

Introduction

While there were many similarities in the experiences of Confluent and Unitary Muslim youth in Australia, there were also some striking contrasts. These particularly concerned how they had come to see themselves in the context of what they felt to be stigmas that the wider society attached to them. While both groups were conscious of these stigmas, Unitaries in particular felt many stigmas could not be removed; a perception worsened by recent world events. They felt stigmas affected their identity significantly. Confluents, on the other hand, felt there were ways to overcome such stigmas. They tended to have a very positive outlook on how to achieve this. Their different attitude appeared to be related to them feeling more 'at home' in the wider society.

Problems of identity and self-confidence

Homelands

Children of intermarriage considered themselves to have *two homelands* to which they felt they belonged. Unitaries also felt that they had two homelands but, in contrast, did not feel completely part of either. Ali discussed this notion of home in her book about interracial marriage in England[149]:

> Home is central to identity. Being at home, feeling at home, knowing 'where you come from' and where your spiritual roots are, all are crucial for ('mixed-race') identities. In this chapter I have shown how home has multiple meanings and locations, which may at times be in conflict for those who have multiple positions. However, through speech acts, narratives of 'home' and 'belonging' are reconciled, even though there is a level of ambivalence for most who took part in the study (Ali, 2003,139).

Confluents interviewed in my study explained that such conflict was actually rare, and many (65) felt the multiple homes to be an advantage. Unitary respondents, being children of immigrants from places where the culture was different from that of

[149] After my research and analysis were finished, I was delighted to find some similar findings and conclusions in the work of Ali (2003) and Ata (2003), and have drawn upon their work in constructing my account.

mainstream Australia, often felt a conflict between belonging to each of their two homes. They found it harder than Confluents to feel at ease in, and with, both. Confluents often mentioned that they were lucky having two homes.

Front door syndrome

"Front door syndrome", as described by Cahill and Ewen (1987) (see Chapter 3), was explained to all respondents. Many Unitaries agreed that it often matched their experience. They felt like they had one identity outside the front door and another inside it. This caused them and their parents a great deal of stress, as discussed in Chapter 7. This experience was largely absent for Confluents.

Table 18.1: Do you feel you have experienced/or are experiencing a front door syndrome? [150]

Respondents:	Yes	No	Unsure	Total
Unitaries	56%	29%	14%	100%
Confluents	6%	87%	7%	100%

Confidence and self-worth

Overall, Confluents tended to have more confidence than Unitaries, and this affected the way they dealt with the racism[151] or prejudice they all experienced. They still felt their identity was challenged but they had enough confidence not to let it affect who they were as individuals.

When respondents were asked whether they had any issues with their confidence or self-worth, many more Unitaries than Confluents spoke of problems and had experienced at least one occasion when they suffered from low self-worth. Confluents, on the other hand, stated that even though they may have gone through a stage of feeling unsure about themselves, they now felt generally confident. Some Unitaries noted that teachers at school had made negative comments about their religion and/or their ethnic cultural identity. These comments greatly affected the Unitaries' sense of self-worth, whereas few Confluents commented on this. In his book *Christian-Muslim Intermarriage in Australia,* Ata (2003) suggested that a positive response was achievable:

[150] All percentages have been rounded.

[151] See Chapter 17 on the broad and inclusive use of this term

> These children can develop a positive feeling about themselves and will be fully prepared to deal with discrimination from the outside, without losing self-confidence and self-worth (Camara, cited in Ata, 2003,118).

This was the case for the majority of my Confluent respondents. The level of personal confidence in navigating diversity (and indeed hostility) inside and outside the front door as they grew up was also involved in values relating to marriage, the upbringing of children, and to religious and cultural non-conformity, open-mindedness and expectations about the place of women.

Marriage and intermarriage

Confluents tended to see marriage as a direct product of love. This differed considerably from Unitaries, who felt there were numerous valid reasons for marriage choice, including shared religion, ethnic culture and education. Confluents often commented how love could overcome most obstacles and cited their parents as examples. They tended to be romantics who totally opposed arranged marriages whereas Unitaries were less romantic and had mixed feelings towards such marriages. Overall, Unitaries were not as positive towards ethnic or religious intermarriage as Confluents. They were divided in their approach. Those who were involved with Muslim youth groups generally held the view that it was beneficial to intermarry with Muslim partners from different ethnic groups because this would strengthen the focus on being Australian Muslims together rather than being divided into Lebanese Muslims or Turkish Muslims. On the other hand, those Unitaries who were more involved with their ethnic identity were more opposed to intermarriage, especially intercultural intermarriage. One such Unitary noted that he would rather marry a *Lebanese Christian than a Indonesian Muslim as what would they [the Indonesian Muslim woman and himself] have in common*?

Children's upbringing

The upbringing of children was an area that polarised both groups. The extent to which offspring of intercultural unions identify with the heritage of one or both parents has been shown to depend in part on how such couples raise their children (Coontz 2008; Judd 1990, in Bystydzienski, 2011,173). One approach was for the parents to make certain choices for their children in regard to religion and culture. The alternative was to leave certain choices for their children to make when they were older.

Confluents and Unitaries differed in the sense that Confluents had a *laid back* attitude towards instilling particular views in their children. However, they insisted that their children must be made to feel Australian no matter how they practiced their religion. Confluents felt it was vital for their children to understand that they must see people as individuals rather than as representatives of particular ethnic cultures. This was not always the case with Unitaries, who were divided in regard to how they would raise their own children. A little more than half of all Unitaries felt they needed to play a key role in their children's lives and that they needed to decide in what religion and culture they should raise their children, and to what extent.

Religiosity

Another perhaps surprising contrast was the extent of respondents' religiosity. There was a significant difference in how Unitary and Confluent respondents felt towards religiosity. Although some religious and cultural leaders had mentioned this, I had not expected it. While the proportions describing themselves as *religious* were only moderately higher for Unitaries, there was a very sharp contrast in those willing to describe themselves as *not religious at all*, with many more Confluents than Unitaries identifying with this option.

Table 18.2: How religious are you at this point in your life?

Religiosity	Unitaries	Confluents
Religious	49%	38%
Not that religious	47%	36%
Not religious at all	2%	25%
Not sure	2%	1%
Total	100%	100%

This result could be linked to how I found interviewees to participate in the study. No Confluents were found through religious organisations, whereas over half of the Unitaries were found through Muslim youth groups, University Muslim groups or Muslim events, as detailed in Chapter 6.

Education

In relation to education, Ata (2003,110) noted that children from mixed-marriages were less likely to attend a Muslim school:

> It is interesting to note that while 71.4 percent of children attended school, only 13 percent attended Muslim schools. This figure is comparatively small given that almost 71 percent of the spouses were Muslim-born.

This may be linked to the difference in religiosity between the Confluents and Unitaries in this study. At the time of my interviews, there were significant differences. Another contributing factor was that there were few Islamic schools. South Australia had none until 1998. Only a few Confluents in Sydney went to Islamic schools or schools with many Muslim children. This was in direct contrast to Unitary children.

Table 18.3: Type of schools respondents attended

Type of school	**Unitaries**	**Confluents**
Islamic schools	18%	3%
State schools with a lot of Muslim students	33%	25%
Others[152]	49%	72%
Total	**100%**	**100%**

Open-mindedness

The above results may also reflect Confluents' broader-mindedness; a trait that Ata (2003,118) found:

> In some cases, children are able to transcend the realities of cultural and religious differences, and develop a positive conception of the origin of both parents. The cultural diversities may enrich them, make them more open, tolerant and adaptable to different cultural circumstances.

The Confluents in my study also tended to be more open-minded overall, especially in regard to different cultures and religions. Such open-mindedness was something they tended to mention spontaneously, while with Unitary respondents I had to ask them about it. Even then, only about half felt that they were open-minded:

> *Both my parents' individual culture and religion was shared amongst us equally. We can come from both. Us children from mixed-marriages must*

[152] Others included State schools, Independent private schools and Catholic schools.

establish a self that is founded on mutual respect, mutual sensitivity, mutual recognition that is unique to a Confluent (Jarrad, aConfluent youth)[153].

Language

The importance attributed to language competence for belonging to a certain ethnic cultural group was another clear difference between the responses of Confluents and Unitaries. The Unitaries viewed language as an important key to a person's acceptance as part of a certain culture, whereas Confluents felt language, although one key to a culture, was not the only one. They felt they could be part of a culture whether they knew the language or not, and saw language as an added bonus. They did not see it as the primary characteristic of ethnic-cultural identity.

Gender

Unitary females felt there were certain cultural, as distinct from religious, expectations and restrictions on them, as females, that did not affect their male counterparts. Unitaries noted on numerous occasions how identity conflicts made it more difficult for women than for men. Confluent women did not feel that such expectations affected them and seemed to totally disregard them as unimportant.

Confluents' perceptions of, and relations with, Unitaries

Confluents frequently described themselves as having *multiple identities*. When they were asked whether they felt this was also true of Unitaries, all said "No". Nearly all Confluents felt that having multiple identities was unique to themselves:

I don't think they [Unitaries] hold multiple identities as they only have two cultures; the Australian one and the Lebanese one, or whatever their other ethnic culture is. I think only if you're mixed, like we [Confluents] are, do you hold multiple identities. (Sarah[154])

No, definitely not multiple identities, as you have termed it, I think that this combination of different cultures and religions is something unique to us [Confluents] as we have a foot in lots of doors…. I mean, we are linked to

[153] Jarrad - A 24 year old Masters student from Adelaide.

[154] Sarah - A 25 year old female student whose father was Lebanese Australian and mother was Anglo-Australian from Adelaide.

numerous cultures and religions and essentially are a part of all of these. (Bill[155])

Forty-five out of the 69 Confluents felt that Unitaries were in-between identities and therefore were not really part of either:

I think most Muslim youth where both parents come from overseas are not part of any culture really, they would be in-between identities, as you put it, a lot of my Albanian Muslim friends are caught in a way in-between and are not really comfortable in either of them. (David[156])

David was not alone here. Confluent Kirsten[157] said that:

I would say in-between identities, if I think of my Muslim friends, as I am part of a large group of friends who are mainly Muslim youth of either Egyptian, Lebanese, Turkish etc background and they all seem to be in-between identities, not really part of one. They often talk about how they are different to people from their parents' culture and do not feel Australian… I feel bad for them as I do not feel like that. I think this is because I am from a mixed background.

Eighteen Confluents stated that they felt Unitaries held two separate identities. However, they were not certain that they felt they belonged completely to both:

I think they hold both identities as they are living both. I think they are quite separate and wouldn't say they were in-between. I am not sure I would say they are completely comfortable in both … they belong in both but I am not sure if they are completely comfortable in both. (Kate[158])

I am not a hundred percent sure but I would say they hold two separate identities, one that involves their parents' culture and one that involves the Australian society that they live in. I think they are happy living both but I am not certain that they can keep this up. Um … I think also that one day they

[155] Bill - A 23 year old male whose mother was Anglo-Australian and father a Palestinian Australian from Adelaide.

[156] David - A 20 year old male from Adelaide whose mother was Anglo-Australian and father was Albanian-Australian.

[157] Kirsten - A 23 year old female nurse with an Anglo-Australian mother and Egyptian-Australian father.

[158] Kate - A female 27 year old lawyer from Melbourne, whose father was Turkish-Australian and whose mother was Anglo-Australian.

will end up having to choose what they really are when talking about their religion and culture… This is how they are different to us, I think. We are more able to keep up being part of different cultures and religions as this is who we are. We will always belong to all of them as we have family from different cultures and religions. (Mark[159])

A few of the Confluents were not sure about whether Unitaries were in-between identities or held two separate identities. As these Confluent respondents had anticipated, Unitaries themselves did not feel they had either multiple identities or just one separate identity. Instead, some considered themselves as living in-between two identities while others thought of themselves as holding two separate identities, but not being completely comfortable with either.

Many respondents from both groups felt that an important part of their social environment consisted of other young Muslims, also living in Australia, who may have faced the same kind of dilemmas. It is notable that Confluents in particular felt able and willing to guide others, including young Unitaries, across the bridges they had already learned to navigate confidently.

Taking the role of coach

As explained in Chapter 17, Strauss, in 'Mirrors and Masks' (1969), developed the notion of coach to describe someone who assists people through a difficult status passage. Those who play the role of coach are "those who have gone through the recognized steps and stand ready to guide and advise their successors" (Strauss, 1969,109). Confluent respondents were asked if they felt the need to act as such a coach[160] to fellow Confluents and if so, why.

Fifty-one out of 69 Confluents felt they did need to act as a coach to fellow, younger Confluents. This response may be linked to the fact that they were conscious of their lack of public representation as a group and their desire for a collective identity. They may have felt they could help achieve this by supporting each other. More surprising was that many Confluents felt they needed to act as a coach to Unitaries. Older Unitaries also felt the need to play coach, but to a lesser degree than Confluents:

[159] Mark - A 24 year old manager from Sydney, whose mother was Anglo-Australian and father was Lebanese-Australian.

[160] The concept was explained to them first.

I suppose it is that I feel a real connection to other Confluents – as you have termed us – and want to help others like myself. But then again I do feel the need to help younger Unitaries – is that what you called them? – for different reasons, mainly for Unitaries helping them finding their way in regards to their confidence and their insecurities. (Lara[161])

Many of the Confluents worked as youth workers amongst young Muslims, teaching in Islamic schools or running cross-cultural workshops.

The impact of Sophia's story

The impact of a short story and a poem on the research participants was described in Chapter 1. Sophia's story was an unflattering account of a Confluent girl, written by a Unitary friend of the researcher. Sophia's story is a distinctive and significant part of this thesis because it demonstrates the sharp contrast between the responses of Confluents and Unitaries. The difference between how Unitaries perceive Confluents and how Confluents perceive themselves highlights the latter's distinctive identity. All respondents were asked to read the story and explain how they reacted to it. When the story was used in interviewing the respondents, discussion centred around the following research questions:

a) Whether or not Sophia was confused, and whether this was something that would remain with her all her life or was just a stage.

b) Whether this was true of all Confluents.

c) Whether they had a positive or negative opinion of Sophia's situation and why.

d) Whether they thought this was natural to Sophia, not negative, not positive, just a natural occurrence that she did not think about, or whether this was something that was well thought out by the Confluent.

e) Whether or not this was how all Unitaries perceived Confluents.

The story

"Where's my foundation?" screamed Sophia from the bathroom, her voice echoed across the house in a deafening tone. She was going through her

[161] Lara - A 24 year old female teacher from Adelaide whose mother was Anglo-Australian and whose father was Lebanese-Australian.

ritual of preparing herself as she always does prior to an engagement. This ritual drove the family into a frenzy, only the lucky few escaped. Sophia was incredibly self-conscious, unless she felt she looked perfect, her night would be ruined for not only her but her friends as well. Despite reassuring comments from her best friends, Sophia strongly felt the need to be accepted. She was not fully Lebanese nor fully Australian, Muslim but still felt a connection to Catholicism, neither cultural group accepted her as one of their own. Her only means to acceptance was her physical appearance and her mental ability to swap very quickly into her prescribed role/identity. Sophia was a Chameleon, who changed her appearance (and name) in relation to the environment she was in. She looked Lebanese at a Lebanese function, Australian at an Australian do, and Muslim in a religious function. Sophia would become Sophie.

Despite the appearance change and her three different characters she conducted herself in, she was Sophia in her own right, which only her parents accepted her as. Sophia's personality reflected her inner self's fight for acceptance. Not a day went by in Sophia's life where she did not argue - a reflection of her struggle. Her struggle for acceptance and belonging did not bring out a submissive nature in Sophia but rather a dominant nature determined to succeed.

Interpretation of respondents' reactions to the story

I have interpreted the Confluent and Unitary respondents' reactions as summarising the differences and convergences between the two groups, and the distinctive attributes of Confluents. While both groups recognised Sophia's Confluent experience in the story, there was a clear contrast in how they interpreted it. Unitaries agreed with the negative portrayal and Confluents rejected it as a misunderstanding and misrepresentation of a positive experience.

The interviews described in Part Four contradicted the widespread view (see Chapter 4), illustrated by Gordon (1964), that children from intermarriage are confused about "who they are". Rather than Confluents being fully part of neither identity nor religion, Confluent respondents felt they were of two complete identities and could feel at home in both. They felt they had what Wallman (1983,74-75) and Mead (1972,170-171) called "multiple identities or selves". Such multiple identities were not because Confluents lacked a single identity focus and were therefore "in

crisis", as has been claimed, but because such multiplicity was a conscious choice, enabling them to relate to all sorts of people; an ability they saw as essential for being full participants in a multicultural Australia. They differed from second-generation immigrants and, more specifically, from Unitaries, in having a wider and more open choice of identity options.

A large majority of Unitary respondents said they expected Confluents to be confused by having parents from two different cultures and religions. Most Confluent respondents denied feeling this way. The different responses to Sophia's story illustrated this misunderstanding clearly. My own early rejection of the story's negativity towards Confluents led me to use it in the interviews to see if I was alone in this rejection. Surprisingly, all Confluent respondents (and many of their parents) shared this rejection and the reinterpretation of the story in a positive light, not only for themselves but with reference to Confluents in general.

Positive or negative?

After reading the story, all but three of the Confluents felt that Sophia was *lucky* and at an advantage. On the other hand, all but nine of the Unitaries felt that the story showed a girl who was confused, unlucky and at a disadvantage as a direct result of being a child from a mixed-marriage. The other nine were unsure about what the story was trying to portray.

When Confluents were asked whether they felt Sophia had multiple selves, the majority (62 of the total 69) agreed that she did and that this was something positive. In contrast, no Unitary said that there was anything positive about Sophia's story. They could only see it in a negative light. They felt Sophia was confused, exactly as the story depicted her. Some Unitaries added that the story may have been a bit exaggerated, but even so, Sophia was a confused girl as a direct result of being a child from a mixed-marriage. Furthermore, when Unitaries were asked whether they felt all children from mixed-marriages felt like this, a large number said "Yes". Most of the Unitaries who had friends or cousins who were Confluents thought they, too, were confused like Sophia. However, they conceded this was not based on anything these relatives and friends had said to them but on their own assumptions about how they would feel.

In contrast were the unexpected Confluent respondents' positive reinterpretations of Sophia's story and their identification with certain aspects of it, despite their

awareness that it was written in a negative way. Confluent Lula[162] believed that:

> *The person who wrote this story wanted you to think Sophia was experiencing something negative but actually her situation is positive. She is lucky she has a chance to be part of a lot of different groups – that has to be a good thing!*

Nat[163] stated:

> *… she can choose a decision that she wants to do, but then again it is written in a way to be a negative one because she may be…it sounds like she's feeling pressured to go to each one's … pressured by the Australian society, pressured by her Muslim society. I think it is positive though, as this is like me.*

Nat might have found it difficult while growing up but then she realised the advantages of being in a similar position to Sophia:

> *I think I do understand both sides a lot more now – I'm more open-minded, not as narrow-minded, not set in my ways at all. I'm totally open to finding out which way is best for me, and I'm not prejudiced against either of them, and I'm not racist; I am at an advantage.*

Unitary reactions were very different. Adele[164] said, "I think she's [Sophia] confused and doesn't have much self-confidence". Another Unitary, Zafe[165], said:

> *Sophia is clearly confused. She doesn't know who she is, this is a problem. This is because she is from a mixed-marriage…there is nothing positive about her situation.*

Parents of both Confluents and Unitaries were also given Sophia's story to read. The responses were very similar to their children's. Almost all parents of Confluents felt that even though the story was written to portray Sophia in a negative light, she really had multiple identities, which was a gift that she was able to use. Therefore,

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[162] Lula - A 22 year old student whose mother was Anglo-Australian and whose father was Arab-Australian.

[163] Nat - A 17 year old female student whose mother was Austrian-Australian and whose father was Indian-Australian. This marriage had broken down and Nat had not been brought up as a Muslim.

[164] Adele- An 18 year old science university student from Adelaide whose parents came from Lebanon.

[165] Zafe- A 24 year old male student from Adelaide whose parents came from Lebanon.

they described being a child from an intermarriage as a positive experience. All but one of the parents of Confluents felt this story did not represent their Confluent child fairly and all said that they could not speak for their children – they needed to ask them how they felt.

The vast majority of parents of Confluents dismissed the negative view of Sophia's dual or multiple identities as a disadvantage, as presented by the Unitary author of the story. Many of them thought this was a misconception that would be shared by the parents of Unitaries. Indeed, interviews with the parents of Unitaries confirmed this. A large majority of them felt that, like Sophia, children from mixed-marriages were at a disadvantage and therefore were confused. Most of these parents of Unitaries said that they felt sorry for Sophia and that this was a clear example of why they would prefer their child not to intermarry; they did not want their future grandchildren to feel confused.

The majority of Unitaries did not identify Sophia with themselves. They identified more positively with their own identity, even though they often stated they felt in-between identities. However, compared to Confluents, they felt their situation was better. Some Unitaries identified with Sophia because they thought her situation was "clearly confused". Sam explained what he saw as the confusion he shared with Sophia[166]:

> *Very confused. She wants to be accepted – I see Sophia in a lot of ways like me. Some days it's like I have fun with my friends here at university, with my girlfriend, and with her friends, and like we really have–… we do as we please without the thought of God coming into my mind. Then some days or some nights I just sit outside or in my room and I sit down and think to myself, "I shouldn't be doing this. I should be praying". No, I should just first give my heart to God before praying, give my heart to God and really make a decision and stop what I'm doing, because I know that to the eyes of God it's bad. The problem is if I show people I am Muslim and if I dress today like a Muslim, I'd get all these bad looks and whatever from these people today; right now it is not a good time to show that I am a Muslim in public…*
>
> *With Sophia? She's caught in three different worlds. She has to make up the choice like I have to make a choice. If she really, really wants … it doesn't*

[166] Sam - A 22 year old male student from Adelaide whose mother came from Lebanon and whose father came from Palestine.

say there whether she loves God, it's just, she wants to be accepted there in the Muslim community, and she wants to be accepted with her Christian friends, or Christian whatever, non-religious friends. She just has to make up a decision for herself.

She can still be accepted by her Christian friends, but just when they talk about certain things she just, she can listen but she might say to them, "I think that's wrong", but if they choose to say, "You're stupid" or whatever, or don't hang around her, she should know that's better for herself, that if they don't accept her for what she is, and for what ideas she has, well they're not really true friends. They should see that … like we started off talking … I go up to a bunch of friends now and say, "I don't drink, don't do this, don't do that", they think you're crazy. They think you're crazy for believing in God and believing His commandments and everything. So I can't be who I want to be.

Conclusion

This comparison of Confluents and Unitaries has highlighted many differences, in particular Confluents' apparent greater confidence and their ability to navigate multiple identities and cultures. However, the absence of any visible shared public presence or discourse, or even an acceptable collective name for them, was identified as a handicap they have had to overcome individually. The reactions to Sophia's story illustrated in the sharpest and most concise way the polarised interpretations and misunderstandings of the Confluent experience.

The next chapter explores the emerging convergences between Confluents and Unitaries identified in this research.

Chapter 19: Shared Challenges and Converging Responses

Introduction

The contrasts described in the previous chapter were very sharp. They demonstrated the distinctive attributes and values of Australian Muslim Confluents as well as the high level of misunderstanding about them in the literature, public opinion and the perceptions of other Muslim youth. Their own understanding of their identity and strengths were quite different.

Equally as interesting as the contrasts are some of the convergences between Confluents and Unitaries identified in this research. There is some evidence of responses to the Australian environment that indicate Confluent convergence with the Unitaries, who are usually part of the same communities as themselves and for whom they have been willing to act as guides and coaches. Both groups felt a rising level of anti-Islamic prejudice and a need to counter it. At the start of this century, they began to come together to assert novel values and an identity as a new generation of Australian Muslims.

Questioning

Both Unitaries and Confluents mentioned the importance of questioning. When asked to explain this in more detail, both groups wanted to think through the choices their parents had made for them when they were young, or why they themselves had made certain choices at another period in their lives or had sought answers to such questions as, What is culture? What is true Islam? Both groups felt they needed first to question things in order to fully understand and accept them. The younger Unitaries were similar to Confluents in that they felt it hard to blindly follow anything without researching it. Many of the younger Unitaries felt that they did not want to be Muslim by chance; they wanted to be Muslim by choice. This was where they began to align with Confluents who did not even contemplate the possibility of belonging to a religion or having no religion by chance; it must be by choice. This also applied where some Confluents and Unitaries were interested in finding their religious identity. A majority of both groups said they had found Sufism (Islamic mysticism) as a way of finding their spiritual being.

Sufism

Sufism, as discussed in earlier chapters, was a way for some Confluents and Unitaries to construct their 'self'. It is important to mention here that this thesis was not undertaken as a complete study of Sufism and Sufi writers. Rather, my research attempted to discover how youth, whether Confluents or Unitaries, used the journey element of Sufism in their construction of self or the formation of their identity. Linking Sufism to part of their identity journey was necessary to analyse and thus understand the main focus of my research; how young Muslims from intercultural and interfaith marriages in Australia form their identities.

A poem by Jawhara Sullivan, 'Journey into Islam', expresses Sufism's appeal as a way for young Unitaries in Australia to cope with their insecure identities; their feelings of being caught in-between their parents' cultural backgrounds and Australian societal expectations. Indeed, my research found that some Unitaries turned to this spiritual side of Islam to help them deal with the conflict they were feeling as in-between identities. Some Confluents also were attracted to Sufism as a way of discovering their religious path. Sufism has been one reason for an Islamic resurgence among youth groups in Australia. Both groups saw Sufism as a part of them choosing their faith for themselves.

Journey into Islam

There is a longing
That I can't explain,
To an endless chain,
That began in Yearnings
long ago,

I'm treading lightly
On unknown land
Guided gently
By God's Hand.

My heart's at peace,
No more to roam,
I've found my niche.....
*I'm finally home (*Sullivan, in Hamid, 1993,89*).*

Sufism originated as a desire to escape the hardships arising from the social and

political upheavals of the time. It was a tendency towards quietism in reaction to worldliness. Sufis note that they have methods for finding God's mystic knowledge. The Sufi mystic, described as a pilgrim on a journey, follows a path of seven stages, similar to Erik Erikson's eight stages of human development, which were discussed in Chapter 2. According to Chishti (1985,25):

> … in its progression through life, the physical body passes through stages, from infancy to youth, adulthood, and old age. Similarly, the soul passes through specific evolutionary stages and stations.

Sufism has become a vital force in attracting more people to Orthodox Islam, especially in western Asia. It has not always been unique to Muslims and has numerous followers around the world, particularly in America and Canada where people use Sufism as a way of finding inner peace. Sufism was something that appealed to both Confluents and Unitaries.

Some Unitaries stated that Sufism was:

> *… a way I found my way back. I feel more peace now with myself. It has been a way of finding myself and bringing me a lot closer to God. Everything seems to fit now. I was having a lot of problems before with fitting in [being Muslim in a non-Muslim society] but Sufism is something that actually appeals to a lot of non-Muslims as well. My friends, who are all religions, and I have a group at University where we discuss Sufism, which is really great. (Salim [167])*

> *Sufism interests me as it has been my spiritual awaking… it has brought me back closer to God. I started reading Rumi [sufi poet] and I was attracted to the spirituality. This led me back to finding more about my faith. (Faras [168])*

> *Likewise, some Confuents stated:Sufism does interest me…I suppose I am interested in the Mystical side of religions as it is something that looks at the similarities between different religions, which is important to me I suppose because I have two religions in the family. (Bony [169])*

[167] Salim - A 21 year old male student from Sydney whose parents come from Turkey.

[168] Faras - A 23 year old male lawyer from Melbourne whose parents came from Afghanistan

[169] Bony - A twenty three year old female Postgraduate student from Adelaide whose mother was Anglo Australian and Father had come from Lebanon.

Sufism for me has helped me with my relationship with God, which has been good. It started with Rumi [Sufi poet] and then into Sufism and then I started to look back into the Islam. (Aiden [170])

Therefore, Sufism was an important element when researching youth from an Islamic background.

Perceptions of prejudice

Both Unitaries and Confluents felt that all areas of the media (television, radio, newspapers, the internet and books about Muslims, both fictional and non-fictional) played a huge role in creating fear of Muslims, and felt wider society also directed this stigma towards themselves as individuals. They were constantly afraid of what was going to happen next; all felt the repercussions. Both groups, like Australian society, were worried about terrorism but in addition they had to worry constantly about the effect of terrorist attacks on their communities. These stigmas seemed to have a more profound effect on Unitaries than on Confluents.

Such concerns were elevated in the case of Muslim women who, both groups said, would experience more racism than men. Muslim women were often more identifiable if they wore the hijab (headscarf). Unitary women were often more exposed to added prejudice compared to their male counterparts. This was something that I had anticipated finding and my research indicated that this was indeed the case. However, the extent of the difference in struggle between the genders was not anticipated. The situation of Unitary Muslim women had a third layer of disadvantage – gender. Fraser et al. (1997), as pointed out earlier in the thesis, illustrate the consequences Muslim women may face when they wear the hijab:

> The Arab Australian Muslim woman who wears the hijab (headscarf) and is assaulted in the street, is assaulted both because of her ethnicity and because of her religion (as well as her gender). Whether the motivation of the perpetrator can be subsequently classified as racial or religious in no way affects the fact that the crime was committed because the victim was seen as a dangerous Other (Fraser et al., in Cunneen et al., 1997, 77).

Therefore, Unitary women could be seen to be at a triple disadvantage from

[170] Aiden - A 22 year old male teacher from Adelaide whose mother was Anglo-Australian and whose father was from Palestine.

prejudice towards their gender, religion and ethnicity, which could affect their identity crisis and ultimately their integration into Australian society, whereas male Unitaries faced the double disadvantage of prejudice towards their religion and ethnicity). Female Unitaries were more exposed to added prejudice if they wore Islamic dress. Some younger Unitary females, knowing this, still chose to wear the hijab, or in some cases niqab, despite the backlash they knew they would face. This was even surprising to some parents of Unitaries, who could not understand why their daughters would choose to wear the face covering.

Confluent females were divided about whether they, themselves, ever felt this triple disadvantage, or whether they might be protected from it. Although they all agreed this would probably be the case for Unitaries, they felt it was slightly different for Confluents.

Table 18.4: The percentage of females in each group who felt they experienced a triple disadvantage

Respondents	Yes	No	Not sure	Total
Female Unitaries	63%	27%	10%	100%
Female Confluents	20%	71%	9%	100%

More females and males in both groups felt that females would experience more prejudice, or *racism* as they called it, than the males.

Table 18.5: Do you feel females would experience more prejudice for being Arab and/or Muslim compared to men?

Respondents	Yes	No	Not sure	Total
Female Unitaries	93%	0%	7%	100%
Male Unitaries	88%	1%	11%	100%
Female Confluents	83%	3%	14%.	100%
Male Confluents	76%	6%	18%	100%

Unitaries and Confluents alike felt a need to counter what they perceived as the broader society's hostility and racism, and to explain how terrorism was incompatible with Islam. Confluents expressed this desire more strongly and with much greater confidence than Unitaries. Confluent women felt that these stigmas could be overcome and needed to be overcome, while Unitary women felt the

stigmas needed to be overcome but were less confident that this was possible.

Confluents felt that despite everything, they were still Australian and had every right to call themselves Australian. They felt quite strongly about the fact that no one had the right to challenge this. Unitaries, however, did not have such strength of mind in this regard. Many felt that at the end of the day, if they were not made to feel Australian, then they could not consider themselves Australian. Furthermore, it was the Confluents who felt the need to educate Muslims about how best to deal with racism and attacks on Muslim women. Confluents felt they needed to play the role of coach in making Muslims in general feel part of the wider community, and in reassuring them that they were really Australian Muslims and had rights as such.

When the interviews were conducted in the late 1990s, recent events were affecting how both Confluents and Unitaries felt in regard to Australian society, media and government. Their responses to the events appeared to vary with age. A new generation of Muslim youth were using the racism they had experienced as Muslims or Arabs almost as a strengthening agent. Thus, younger Unitaries pointed out that the *hatred* people had for them only made them prouder to be Muslim, leading them to discover more about this religion that was causing them so many problems. This was in complete contrast to those (generally older) respondents for whom this same hatred had generated shame in being Muslim, thus leading them to portray different selves outside the front door.

It was the new generation of Unitaries that had similar views to Confluents with regard to recent events and their effects on them[171]. This also extended to their identity. The new generation of Unitaries tended to focus on being Australian Muslims rather than Lebanese Australian Muslims, for example. This was similar to those Confluents who were practising Muslims and had always considered themselves to be Australian Muslims. There was indeed, to some extent, a cultural convergence between these Confluents and Unitaries in this regard. In future studies, it will be interesting to see whether these new generations of Unitaries will become even closer to Confluents in their identities.

When discussing Australian attitudes to Islam, Saeed (in Johns & Saeed, 2002,209) noted that “Islam as a politically loaded stereotype, based on media images, dominates the public consciousness”. More than 90 percent of both groups felt that education of the whole local and wider community was the only way to dispel these

[171] At the time of being interviewed, students were talking about the Gulf War.

myths. Furthermore, both groups identified the need to further their own education, as they differentiated between educated Muslims and uneducated Muslims. They agreed that it was important for the youth of both groups to educate themselves and others to dispel misunderstandings if the commonly felt stigmas attached to Muslims and Arabs were to be removed. A point of difference in this quest was that Confluents were talking about removal of stigmas attached to three groups: Muslims; Arabs; and Confluents.

Nearly all Confluents agreed that many stigmas could be removed simply by intermarrying because this would expose people to understanding different cultures and religions, and discovering the truth about them. Confluents' positive experiences of their parents' intermarriage led many to generalise its advantages. They felt there was a real need for intermarriage of all kinds, especially because Australia was seeking to encourage multicultural understanding between different cultural and religious groups. Many Confluents noted how they felt intermarriage was the only way to dispel stereotypes between all cultures and religions. The fact that Confluents were part of different cultures and religions enabled them to have *a foot in different doorways*.

Confluents and Unitaries shared many similarities and experiences. Perhaps most surprising and significant were their shared responses to the famous poem by Lebanese poet Khalil Gibran (1992), which both groups saw as a manifesto for desirable values.

Khalil Gibran's poem

When I first heard the poem, I immediately thought of how such a challenge might distinguish between Unitary and Confluent families. Having just completed my Honours thesis, I decided to make the poem's themes central to my study. When both Unitaries and Confluents were interviewed, they were given this poem to read and asked whether they felt it explained how 'Ethnic Muslim youth' felt growing up in Australia:

> *And a woman who held a babe against her bosom said, Speak to us of Children:*
>
> *Your children are not your children*
> *They are the sons and daughters of life's longing for itself.*
> *They come through you but not from you,*

And though they are with you yet they belong not to you.

You may give them your Love but not your thoughts,
For they have their own thoughts.

You may house their bodies but not their souls,
For their souls dwell in the house of to-morrow,
Which you cannot visit, not even in your dreams.
You may strive to be like them, but seek not to make them like you.

For life goes not backward nor tarries with yesterday.
You are the bows from which your children as living arrows are sent forth.

The archer sees the mark upon the path of the infinite, and He bends you with His might that His arrows may go swift and far.
Let your bending in the Archer's hand be for gladness,
*For even as He loves the arrow that flies, so he loves also the bow that is stable (*Khalil Gibran from 'The Prophet', 1992,20-23*).*

The respondents in this study interpreted Gibran's poem as expressing the struggle between first and second-generations that was common to most Unitary families. Confluents and Unitaries were in agreement that this was the case and also that the poem was prescriptive rather than just descriptive; a manifesto for the rights of young people.

Confluent youth were asked about whether or not they felt the poem reflected the situation of Unitaries in Australia, and also how they perceived its relevance to themselves. The level of agreement among them was amazing. All Confluents felt that the poem depicted the kind of conflict Unitaries experienced (although six were unsure how to explain why). In fact, they saw it as less a description of Unitaries than a prescription for how parents, especially parents of Unitaries, should relate to their children. Confluents, however, felt that their own parents, unlike parents of Unitaries, did not need this advice because they had already given their children freedom, for example:

We do not need this advice in the poem whereas Unitaries do, as we already experience this freedom. Parents of Unitaries need to give their children more freedom and accept that they cannot control their children's lives. As the poem says, they cannot make them like you ('but seek not to make them

like you'). (Mina[172])

On the other hand, Unitaries felt that they lacked such self-determination and their experience in relation to the poem's goals was negative because they needed their parents to give them more freedom:

We [Unitaries] really needed this advice in the poem as we really needed somebody to talk to, to understand us, to let us be free as mentioned in the poem. This is not how I was raised and still my parents can't let go because they do not understand what I am going through. I am not alone on this, many other Muslim youth whether Afghans, Lebanese etc feel this way. My parents need to adhere to the proposal in the poem. (Walid[173])

Thus, even though both Confluents and Unitaries agreed that the poem prescribed a desirable relationship between parents and children, they differed in their perceptions of how far their own relationship with their parents matched it. Confluents tended to have a more positive perception than Unitaries, whose reactions are illustrated in the following examples:

I can really relate to this poem in the line where it talks about them giving you their love but not their thoughts, and housing their bodies but not their souls. This is exactly how I feel actually, even though it gives you hope as it shows that you will always be connected even if you think differently. (Ilham[174])

This poem does explain, I think, what we [as Unitaries] experience in Australia growing up as "wogs" and "Mossis" [Muslims]. It shows that we are often not understood by our parents and also we probably don't understand them. I wish, like the poem said, that my parents gave us more freedom. But, I think it also shows how much our parents love us regardless of our differences in understanding each other. I think the last line ['for even as he loves the arrow that flies, so he loves also the bow that is stable'] shows that parents will accept that their children will be different from them but will love them regardless. I feel this is the case with most of our parents. (Samirah[175])

[172] Mina - A 24 year old female student from Adelaide who had a Lebanese father and an Anglo-Australian mother.

[173] Walid - A 26 year old student from Adelaide whose parents come from Afghanistan.

[174] Ilham - A 24 year old male accountant whose parents come from Turkey.

[175] Samirah - A 25 year old female teacher whose parents come from Lebanon and live in Sydney.

Another Unitary expressed the opinion that:

> *I can relate to this poem. Oh, yeah I'm totally different with my parents. Very much. …The bit in the poem about them loving you but not knowing you is right. They don't understand me, not at all. They even admit it themselves, that they really don't think that they know me. I mean, I guess they don't. It's like I think they're very ignorant to some things. I will try to show them, like I was saying before, like even things I want to do, they just … my interests are just, they don't want to hear about. It's what they want. So I just, I'm just what they want, but then when I'm away from them I'm me, what I'm like. (Adele[176]).*

Confluents agreed with Unitaries about the desirability of the poem's prescriptions and about what the Unitaries were experiencing. They all agreed that their parents loved them and would ultimately love them regardless of their life choices. Confluents, however, differed from Unitaries in that they felt their parents understood them:

> *When I read this poem I automatically think of my Lebanese and Turkish Muslim friends in that I think their parents and them see things so differently but obviously [their parents] really love them regardless. But their parents do need to let go and really do what the poem says. … I feel, in my case anyway, that being a child from a mixed-marriage, my parents are a bit different because my mum is already from this culture and my father has been here so long and married someone he wanted to, so I think he probably went through this himself with his parents. And as a result of this he understands what it is like to think differently to your parents. My parents do not need the advice in the poem. (Ann[177])*

There was only one Confluent who felt the same gap and incomprehension from parents as the Unitaries. In this case, the parents were no longer together:

> *I can relate to this [the poem]. I think it's talking about … it's a different sort of generation and what I do with my generation, they're not involved in that because they've relived their generation. That's how they were in their*

[176] Adele - An 18 year old science university student from Adelaide whose parents came from Lebanon.

[177] Ann - A 23 year old female student from Adelaide whose mother was Anglo-Australian and whose father was Lebanese-Australian.

generation. And you cannot visit, even in your dreams … I can relate to that as well because they have not grown up the way I've grown up. They have not grown up … like either of my parents have not grown up in this society that I have, half sort of Muslim, and half sort of Christian, if you like to put it. …So, yeah, and they've both not got to understand how it is that I feel, and what I go through because they have no experience of what it is like. Maybe my mum might have because she was married to my dad, and she did not convert, and she saw the Muslim way, she went to India and saw the family and everything but … and her side of the family was like Christian, so maybe she might be able to relate, but I know my father could not relate to it as her family didn't accept him. Even though now I am happy and see that it is positive now, and I still don't know if my parents understand me. (Nat [178])

Parents of both Confluents and Unitaries were also asked to read this poem and give their opinion about whether they thought this was what Unitaries felt growing up in Australia. Surprisingly, the majority of both groups of parents agreed. One parent of Unitaries stated:

I think this poem represents the struggles of youth and especially a lot of Muslim youth at the moment but also the love and understanding that a parent has for their child, which indicates that there is hope for the parent-child relationship. … I would agree with this advice but it is not always as easy as it seems, especially when you are living in a place different to where you were raised. Even though you call this country your home now, it is still a place that raises their children different to the way you were raised. It is what you are comfortable with, whereas my children were born and raised here; this sometimes causes a division in our thoughts. I can see though how this poem makes a lot of sense. I would really like to be able to do this and I really try to give my children a certain amount of freedom but I cannot let go completely. (Jalil[179]).

Another Unitary parent stated:

This poem really does show the relationship and struggle between parents and their children. I think this is really the situation for us in Australia as our

[178] Nat - A 17 year old female student whose mother was Austrian-Australian and whose father was Indian-Australian.

[179] Jalil - A 58 year old male academic from Sydney who was born in Lebanon.

children are being raised in a place very different to the place where we were raised but we still want them to be proud to be Afghans and Muslims. I don't know if it is really possible to let go like this poem suggests … this is very difficult; it might be an ideal but I am not sure if possible. (Mariam[180])

Even though Confluent parents agreed with parents of Unitaries that this poem depicted the generational struggle between ethnic Muslim youth and their parents, they differed in how they saw themselves adhering to its prescriptions. Parents of Unitaries, like Mariam, felt that they might want to give their children the freedom advocated in the poem but in most cases this was an ideal rather than a reality. Parents of Confluents similarly saw this poem as a good representation of the kind of struggle taking place between two generations of ethnic Muslims in Australia but, unlike parents of Unitaries, felt they already gave their children the freedom Gibran advocated. Parents of Confluents considered it a reality rather than an ideal:

The poem shows this conflict or struggle a lot of my Muslim friends from Lebanon, Turkey etc are facing with their children. That line in the poem, 'you may house their bodies but not their souls', really does explain their situation with their children and how their children really need and want more independence and freedom. … But I don't think this is the case with myself and my friends that are in mixed-marriages. I think my husband and I went through this with our parents, especially when we got married, but we have not raised our children this way because we went through this. I think like this line, 'And though they are with you yet they belong not to you', we have already accepted this and therefore give our children more freedom and accept that we cannot control what happens to them and need to give them independence. (Jean[181])

Another parent of Confluents stated:

This poem shows the problems, or maybe struggle is a better word, between Muslims regardless of what country they come from and their children. I think these parents do need to follow some of these suggestions, even though it is not easy for parents, but need to so there are no struggles and just for parents to get to really know who their children really are. I see with a lot of my friends' [Unitary] children, they lead these dual lives and their parents in a

[180] Mariam - A 53 year old teacher from Melbourne who came from Afghanistan.

[181] Jean - A 55 year old female from Adelaide who was a nurse.

lot of cases do not realise. This is not my relationship with my children because this is what happened with myself, as my parents did not understand what was really happening with me. … So, with my children, we are already doing what is talked about in the poem and have a completely different relationship with our children. I feel we really know our children and discuss most things. I am not sure if all people involved in a mixed-marriage treat or raise their children this way but the ones I know do. I would strongly advise my Muslim friends, it doesn't matter what nationality, to try to understand their children, even though it is hard, even for them to read this poem and try to really think about what it is trying to say. I think the longer they [parents of Unitaries] are in Australia, maybe the next generation might be different. (Hani[182])

Thus, parents of both Confluents and Unitaries agreed about the significance of this poem as an explanation of how Muslim youth in Australia felt at the time of this research.

Conclusion

This research has indicated that Confluents and Unitaries shared numerous challenges and converging responses. Both groups felt that the increased stigma attached to Muslims and Arabs, especially in the media, needed to be addressed. Many Unitaries, like Confluents, began to question their position in regard to their culture and religion. They did not want to be a Muslim *by chance*. They wanted to be a Muslim *by choice*. Some respondents in both groups turned to the mystical side of Islam, Sufism, as a way of finding their religious position. Overall, Confluents and Unitaries expressed the desire for more choice in their religion and their everyday life. The parents of Confluents felt they gave their children freedom of choice, while the parents of Unitaries struggled with the realities of doing so.

The next chapter concludes this thesis, drawing conclusions from a summary of the thesis and adding a postscript of events impacting on Muslims in Australia since completion of the original research.

[182] Hani - A 58 year old male Engineer from Sydney who was born in Lebanon .

Chapter 20: Conclusion

Introduction

This project began with an Honours thesis in 1992. I knew then that I wanted to explore the topic of children of interfaith and intercultural marriage further, by doing a PhD. My hope was eventually to develop a name and public identity, with no negative connotations, for all children born from an intercultural or interfaith marriage.

The name 'Confluent' was proposed at the start, as in the confluence of two rivers which merge to form a mightier and more complex one. This expressed the initial findings of the Honours thesis and seemed a positive alternative to existing names such as 'half caste' and 'mixed-blood' that I and many other Confluents found offensive. Confluents were, and still are, in desperate need of a collective voice and recognition.

The interviews with Muslim Confluents and Unitaries (children of two Muslim parents[183]), and their parents, all took place in the 1990s. Many things, however, interrupted finishing this PhD, including serious health problems and the birth of six children, leading to long intermissions. The unfinished work weighed heavily on me. Eventually, I was given permission to complete it, with an absolute deadline in September 2014. Much time had passed since the interviews and I tried opportunistically to track down some of my initial respondents for re-interviews. However, my time ran out and I was unsure of how far those I found were representative of the initial survey. Therefore, I decided to restrict my timeframe to the 1990s. Nonetheless, I was much encouraged to discover that the limited results from the re-interviews between 2002 and 2006 mainly confirmed the earlier findings described in this thesis. A brief account of events during the time of the re-interviews is given below. Raw material for the re-interviews is included in the postscript.

A changing context

Much has changed in the 15 or more years since my interviews were completed. The September 2001 destruction of the World Trade Centre in New York and the 2002 terrorist bombing in Bali set off a chain reaction of anti-Muslim hostility in many

[183] One partner to the intermarriages in the study always came from a non-Muslim background, although some converted later.

countries, including Australia. These hostilities included burning of mosques and attacks on women wearing the headscarf, who were spat on and their scarves pulled off. Australian government policy also promoted some indiscriminate measures, including raids on the homes of Australian Muslims. The media spread fears about terrorism, rapes committed by some young people in Sydney with Lebanese heritage and the menace of undocumented refugee arrivals, often from Muslim countries.

On the other hand, intermarriage in Australia, as elsewhere, continues to rise, including in the Muslim community. The next Confluent generation, who were children when I did my interviews, are now adults and becoming vocal and visible around the world. A more recent example came to light in the 2014 FIFA World Cup where two Confluent brothers, born and raised in Germany, each chose to play for a different side of their dual Ghanaian/German cultural heritage. They saw no problem in doing so, as they felt themselves to be part of both countries[184]. More famous is the case of Barack Obama, President of the United States of America, who was raised as a Christian by his white mother but had an African Muslim father, and later an Indonesian Muslim step-father.

Intermarriage and family life

The thesis demonstrates clearly the positive views held by Confluent children about intermarriage, not only for themselves but for the country, as promoting openness, tolerance and diversity. I had wondered whether such views would survive in the changed circumstances of the new century, but the re-interviews showed that they have (see Postscript).

Chapter 8 and Part Four of the thesis have demonstrated that such marriages obliged the parents of Confluents to learn about other cultures and religions. While this might open novel vistas to the Anglo parent, it also gave the non-Anglo parent a new insider view of Christianity and of being part of a different culture, not just by living next door in a new country but by being married to somebody from this culture and becoming part of their extended family. Intermarriage made people rediscover

[184] The brothers had grown up in Berlin as the sons of an African immigrant and native German mother. “Like many children of immigrants, Jerome and Kevin-Prince Boateng have a diffuse relationship to their nationality and roots, with two hearts beating in their chests. When it comes to playing for the national team, however, they can only opt for one country” (Grossekathofer, 2014, 2).

themselves and question more deeply the importance of certain cultural practices.[185] This experience was passed on to their Confluent children with significant benefits, and their children in turn expressed their wish to pass them on to their own children in the future.

This thesis does not deny that cultural, linguistic or religious problems may exist with intermarriage, or that the children of these marriages may experience familial conflict at certain times in their lives. However, from the data gathered from respondents in this study, these problems generally resulted in the family dealing with the issues and learning from the experience. Parents setting an example by overcoming such problems made a Confluent a different but better child. Learning to deal with these differences helped them develop a culture of their own in which they felt comfortable. In fact, Confluents felt they were better Australians as a result of their multifaith and multicultural upbringing.

The fact that Confluents had, as was often stated, *a foot in lots of doors*, enabled them always to feel part of Australian society. They often cited their parents' constant insistence that no one should ever question their right as Australians because of their religion. Confluents who were re-interviewed all felt strongly there was a need for intermarriage at that time to encourage understanding and to undermine mistrust of Muslims and Arabs. Unitaries, however, when re-interviewed, differed among themselves on this point. Approximately one quarter felt that intermarriage at this time would be hard and it was better to avoid it. They did not think it was *worth the heartache and trouble* it would cause.

Identity

Every family has their culture. The study indicated that Muslim respondents from intercultural and interfaith marriages had a Confluent culture at home, created from various combinations of their parents' dual cultures and religions. This enabled the Confluent child to create their own individual culture, based on what they experienced on a daily basis at home. They felt that this gave them the ability to possess multiple identities and to present different selves as the context required. These selves could co-exist within an Australian identity that could not be questioned because *that is who I am.* Confluents had been raised not to just accept

[185] It was often the Anglo-Christian partner in an intermarriage who had the most learning to do. In the case of my own parents, my mother knew very little about Islam (due to the environment she was raised in) whereas my father had grown up beside Christians in Lebanon, although never as closely as he became with my mother's relatives in Australia.

something because *that is the way it is*, but to question what it means to be part of a particular culture or religion. The majority of those re-interviewed felt that they had changed for the better religiously and culturally over the period since the first interviews, despite the changing attitudes of the wider society.

The situation was different for Unitary respondents. Parents of Unitaries had claimed they sought to make their children feel Australian at the same time as reinforcing their ethnic identity as Lebanese or whatever their ethnic origins. In this case, however, the duality was more difficult to integrate harmoniously and could promote the sense of *not belonging* that many Unitaries felt. Many *felt in-between identities*, *foreign* or *alien* in this society, and not really Australian. They felt uncomfortable and afraid of being seen as *different*.

Re-interviews showed some continuing convergence between Confluents and Unitaries with the passage of time. However, while both groups were very aware of elements of growing hostility in the external environment, this tended to affect them differently, with Confluents more willing to assert themselves against the hostilities and confident of their ability to do so.

Tolerance on both sides

Problems between some Muslim parents and their children is a topic that needs to be explored further. Problems arise because Muslim parents tend to have a fear of the loss of their religious and cultural identity. An example they often cite the Afghan camel drivers who came here late last century and are believed to have been almost completely absorbed into Australian culture.

Muslim parents themselves feel alienated when they see their children learning the Western way of life. They start losing the sense of reverence for the elders, which is an integral part of the Muslim culture. The mother becomes more and more isolated because she is no longer a part of what the child does. She and the father then feel resentment and try to enforce the Muslim way of life on the child (Asarae, Muslim Education Quarterly, 1986,3). Thus, the problem arises because the majority of migrant Muslim families are not fully aware of Australia's way of life and how the system works in general. They do not realise that their children are being raised in an environment completely different to their own. Therefore, huge gaps exist between the young people and their families.

I feel the problem arises due to a lack of parental awareness of the Australian

environment and culture because parents do not know (or want to know) or understand about the Australian way of life. They sometimes force their children to behave according to their culture, often due to the simple fact that they see their culture as the safest and therefore the best. Thus, Muslim youth are under double pressure to integrate in their own peer culture but to maintain their parents' cultural lifestyle at home.

An important point to make is that cutting the children off from mainstream society, as some immigrant parents try, will not achieve anything other than more conflict and misunderstanding. As an often quoted Muslim tradition says: "Educate your children, for they must live in a time different to yours".

My personal opinion is that Muslim parents must accept that their children are not going to be Turkish Muslims, Lebanese Muslims, Afghan Muslims etc.. Rather, they will be Australian Muslims. Thus, there is a need for education of Muslim parents, as well as, and probably most importantly, of mainstream society.

Due to religion being an important and sensitive part of group identity, the religious needs of different communities in a multicultural society such as Australia are very important. These needs are significant for the second-generation members of minority communities, born and brought up in a different cultural environment from the first-generation migrants, and experiencing tensions between minority and majority culture. These tensions strongly influence their attitudes towards the religious and other values of their own community, as well as of society as a whole. Problems arise when the attitudes of first-generation Muslims, who regard themselves as migrants and whose native countries are their constant frame of reference, clash with those of the second-generation whose standards of comparison and points of reference are drawn from Australia (or other Western countries). This different approach has naturally created tensions between the older and younger generations. In particular, second-generation Muslims are pulled between two cultures. They live in the culture of their parents at home and are taught a different one in school, the neighbourhood and through the media. I feel that the real test of future identity rests with second-generation Muslims.

Self-assertion and confidence

Naturally, a child raised by one Anglo-Australian parent, as in the case of Confluents, will feel more at home in an Anglo-Australian majority environment than someone with two parents from an ethnic minority Muslim background. Furthermore, it is understandable for an Anglo-Australian to feel part of Australian culture and

society, and to pass that on to their children. The Anglo parents of Confluent children felt their children were Australian regardless of religion, simply because they (parents) were. The majority of Confluent respondents were confident in their Australian identity.

In the re-interviews, all Confluent and Unitary respondents were highly aware of changes in previous years, especially the growing level of fear. They felt increased anxiety about terror around them and a growing sense of uncertainty about what would happen next in the wider Australian society. Along with this came misunderstandings that led to people's hatred against Muslims and Arabs, and to verbal and physical attacks on individual Muslims and Muslim places of worship. However, the re-interviewed respondents' reactions to this situation were very different for Confluents and Unitaries. While both groups wanted to learn about their religion and were proud of being Muslim, they differed in their confidence about displaying their pride in public. Re-interviewed Confluents had found that because of what had happened around the world, they did not want to hide who they were. Unitaries, on the other hand, had become more hesitant. The contrasting responses were demonstrated most clearly among some of the re-interviewed women.

Three female Confluents out of the 10 interviewed had started wearing the hijab since the first interview[186], while none of those already wearing it had taken it off. These Confluents felt that they had wanted to wear the hijab for years but only now felt it was time. They felt they wanted to *come out* with what they were feeling. It was important for their children to see them wear the hijab because this was who they were. They wanted to demonstrate that wearing the hijab did not, or should not, call their Australian identity into question. If it was questioned, they saw that as a greater reason to wear the hijab.

On the other hand, four of the 12 female Unitaries had taken off the hijab, and even though they were internally conflicted, none had put it on. In their heart, those who had taken the hijab off did not want to but felt they had no choice considering the prejudice and racism they suffered when wearing it. They felt they needed to take the hijab off to live in Australia and to be accepted. They felt that their children might suffer too if they wore the hijab because they would be identifiable as Muslims.

[186] This was also the case for the researcher of this thesis.

Conclusion

Something I discovered in my original interviews was convergence between some of the views of the younger generation of both Confluent and Unitary Muslims who had focused on being Australian Muslims, as evidenced in the shared respect for independent thinking and questioning, in the reactions to Gibran's poem and in the openness of both groups to Sufism. Such convergence became more prominent in the re-interviews, with respondents now 15 or more years older than during the original interviews. Those Unitaries who had identified with their ethnicity as a priority or as a major part of their religious identity tended to continue to face identity issues. On the other hand, the Unitaries who had identified themselves as Australian Muslims tended to feel a need, like Confluent Muslims, to act to dispel misperceptions about Muslims.

This thesis has found that the experiences described were not peculiar to a few individual Confluents but were shared by most or all of the Confluents in this study. Further research is needed to compare these findings with the children of other kinds of inter-ethnic, inter-racial and inter-religious marriage in other countries and time periods. It would be interesting to identify other Confluent public figures, such as President Obama.

The Confluents interviewed welcomed the use of the novel term 'Confluent', and agreed they needed a collective voice and positive public recognition. It is hoped that this study will promote more such research, along with a more positive representation of Confluents in the media and literature. Being a Confluent enables the individual to step outside the 'box' to become a world citizen, which is perfect for today's global environment. Many Confluents noted that their parents had told them when they were young (as I was told by my parents) that they "belonged to the world" and this was how they continued to feel when they were older.

This is a major advantage that Confluents have. It is beneficial not only in Australia's multicultural society but in the global village of today. Confluents of the world need to realise this and not waste this great advantage. Further research is desperately needed into this underexplored field of the lives of Confluents. This thesis has explored only a few representative issues that we must continue to address ourselves. I would like to conclude with the quotation that actually enticed me to do this study because it clearly shows how important and vital intermarriage, both inter-cultural and inter-religious, is, and the importance and vitality of the Confluent

children of these marriages for the world's future:

> Racial prejudice still exists and will continue to until religious and racial intermarriage becomes more commonplace, and one's background is of no more importance than the state in which one is born (Dinnerstein & Reimers, 1975,155).

Postscript – notes on preliminary steps to update this research in a longitudinal study

Introduction

The interviews analysed in this study were completed during the 1990s. At various times since, I have sought to track down the original respondents for re-interview to explore the impact on them of unfolding global and national events, and to see the effects of personal maturation. This proved difficult and final submission deadlines were looming. There was no way of knowing how representative they were of the original group and how far I could rely on these findings. I decided to mention them only briefly in my Conclusion and to summarise this material below, hoping to undertake a more thorough longitudinal study at a later date.

The results of my research have shown that many Unitaries, even though they had developed youth groups and associations to deal with the sense of being *in-between* identities, still felt a sense of not belonging. Furthermore, as a direct result of this feeling, many of these young Muslims had not felt integrated within Australian society. My research findings indicated that this was not due to Muslim youth not wanting to be part of the wider Australian community but rather that the wider Australian community was not accepting them as Australians due to their religion.

At the time of submitting this thesis (September 2014), the most salient issue in Australia (more recent than any of the re-interviews) is the claimed danger of some Australian Muslims (often born here) becoming radicalised and going overseas to fight with terrorist groups. My original respondents are now too old for this to be an issue for them and their children are too young. However, I feel that this research can be of particular importance in understanding recent events in Australia.

Re-interviews

Twenty-three re-interviews were conducted, consisting of 11 confluents and 12 Unitaries. Parents of both these groups were also interviewed. These were conducted between late 2001 and early 2007.

Table PS 1: Youth re-interviews

YOUTH	CONFLUENTS	UNITARIES	TOTAL
Adelaide	6	7	13
Melbourne	0	2	2
Sydney	5	3	8
Brisbane	0	0	0
Perth	0	0	0
Canberra	0	0	0
OVERALL TOTAL:	11	12	23

Table PS 2: Parent re-interviews

PARENTS	CONFLUENTS	UNITARIES	TOTAL
Adelaide	5	6	11
Melbourne	0	2	2
Sydney	5	3	9
OVERALL TOTAL:	10	11	22

The changing context

Events

After the main study was completed, certain world and local events happened that would alter the situation of Muslims in Australia and affect the responses. Other more recent events, and the literature concerning them, may have occurred after the re-interviews but raise more questions for further study. The events include:

1. Rapes in Sydney for which Lebanese youth, both Muslims and Christians, were convicted (2000).

2. September 11th , attack on the World Trade Centre, New York (2001).

3. The aftermath of September 11th in Australia, for example Mosques being

burnt, women wearing the hijab being spat on etc.

4. Cronulla attacks by Anglo youth in Sydney on young people of Middle Eastern appearance (2005).

5. Australia's support in the war against terror and the *Australian Anti-terrorist Bill* (2005).

6. The sentence of the Sydney rapist increased to an unprecedented 55 years (2006).

7. Terrorist bombs in Bali that killed Australians (2002, 2005).

8. The aftermath of these bombs, as once again mosques were burnt and women wearing the hijab were abused.

9. The asylum seeker issue (as a large majority of refugees were Muslim).

10. The terrorist threat to Australia.

11. The raids of Australian Muslim homes (since 2002, still continuing).

The Sunni-Shia divide

One area that was not an issue when talking to Muslims in Australia in the 1990s but has now come to global prominence, is the re-emergence of the ancient historical Sunni/Shia divide. Intermarriage between the two religious groups was common, often among those parents of Unitaries who had come from the countries where they are now fighting each other. The division was never mentioned in my interviews or in my upbringing. In Adelaide, all Muslims prayed together and only recently have separate Shia mosques been established.

Islamophobia?

Hamish McDonald, in an article titled 'Islam in Australia…a diverse society finds a new voice', in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, noted that terrorism and Islamic dissidence in the West, particularly since the London underground bombings by British-raised youth, has had a pervasive impact on Australian Muslims. He stated that "in a way, it is heightening their religious identity, where previously being Muslim might have been more of a cultural marker" (Mcdonald, 2007).

McDonald (2007) quoted Michael Humphrey, Professor of Sociology at Sydney

University, as saying that “people become more conscious of the fact that they are Muslim in an environment where they are being identified as such”. This can add to their alienation. McDonald (2007) quoted Unitary Adel Salman as saying, “We are almost always being forced to apologise for the actions of other Muslims and to reaffirm our Australianness”. Furthermore, McDonald (2007) noted that Adel Salman told him, “it is creating a sense among some people that we do not belong”.

The Prime Minister and ‘Team Australia’

A recent article in the *Sydney Morning Herald* (August 19, 2014), “Islamic Council of Victoria boycott ‘media stunt’ with Tony Abbott”, describes the Prime Minister’s failure to understand the Muslim community. This had been evident in his recent talk about what he calls ‘Team Australia’. Prime Minister Abbott had held talks with approximately 20 of Sydney’s leaders to discuss how to stop young people becoming extremists and joining groups like the feared ‘Islamic State’ in Iraq. On Sydney radio the same day, he had said, “You don’t migrate to this country unless you want to join our team”, implying that all Muslims are new arrivals.

Ghaith Krayem, the Islamic Council of Victoria secretary, explained their boycott, saying, “Half our community was born and bred in this country” and that the Prime Minister seemed to be ignoring this in a way that would ultimately have consequences for the Australian Muslim community. “The language of leaders has an absolute influence on what the person in the street says and does”, Krayem said, pointing also to Attorney-General George Brandis’ comments about the “right to be a bigot”. The Prime Minister’s comments could add to the rise of Islamophobia in Australia, which could in itself lead to some young people turning to radical groups.

Positive recent media coverage

Documentaries such as ‘Once upon a time in Punchbowl’, a recent SBS television series, was a positive coverage of how the Lebanese community in Sydney overcame the odds they faced as new migrants and found their place in multicultural Australia. It showed how the Lebanese community (all religions) were “besieged by events beyond their control” but ultimately have emerged stronger. It showed their struggle to become “Australians”.

In relation to Muslim youth, Muslim youth groups and associations were, and still are, seen as a healthy way for youth to focus on being Australian Muslims. However, there was, and still is, a need for the wider Australian community to also

see them as Australian Muslims.

Re-interview questions

Questions for Confluents:

1. Over the last couple of years, what do you feel has changed? Why do you feel this to be the case?
2. Have you changed culturally or religiously? If so, in what way?
3. How and in what way have the following events [see list above] affected you?
4. Have these events or any other event or events led you to associate with one side as opposed to the other? How do you feel about this?
5. Have you felt that your "Australianness" is, or has been, questioned?
6. If you are Muslim, do you still feel you are an “Australian Muslim”?
7. Do you feel anything has changed with people’s attitude to you in general?
8. Do you feel anything has changed with your Australian side? (For example, their attitude to you and thus yours to them)
9. Do you still feel that intermarriage is advisable, especially with Muslims and non-Muslims, considering recent events?
10. Do you still feel it is advantageous to be a Confluent?
11. If you have children or you wish to, do you think you will bring them up the same way that you had previously anticipated or has your view changed now? If so, what made you change?
12. Do you think Confluents are now more represented in the media/public life? Is there still a need for this?
13. Is there anything else you would like to add about being a Confluent at this time?

Questions for Unitaries:

1. Over the last couple of years, what do you feel has changed? Why do you feel this to be the case?
2. Have you changed culturally or religiously? If so, in what way?
3. How and in what way have the following events [see list above] affected you?
4. Have these events or any other event or events led you to associate with a certain group of people as opposed to another? Do you still attend Muslim functions, youth groups etc?
5. Have you felt that your "Australianness" is, or has been, questioned?
6. Do you still feel you are an “Australian Muslim”?
7. Do you feel you are treated as an “Australian Muslim”?
8. Do you feel anything has changed with how people treat you in general? (For example their attitude to you and thus yours to them)
9. Do you feel that intermarriage is advisable, especially with Muslims and non-Muslims, considering recent events?
10. If you have children or you wish to, do you think you would bring them up the same way that you had previously anticipated or has your view changed now? If so, what made you change?
11. Is there anything else you would like to add about being an Australian Muslim or a Unitary [term explained] at this time?

Please see Appendix 4 for parent re-interview questions.

Re-interview responses

When re-interviewed, both Confluents and Unitaries noted that the media played a huge role in reinforcing negative stereotypes of both Muslims and Arabs. Furthermore, Australian Muslims were often asked to apologise or explain terrorist or criminal activity because there were Muslims involved. This just reinforced the message that they were not considered as Australians because they were Muslims.

All respondents, both Confluents and Unitaries, agreed that a lot had changed on a wider as well as individual level, although they differed in their responses. They all spoke of a growing level of fear of Muslims by Australian society; a fear of terror and a growing sense of uncertainty about what would happen next. Alongside this came misunderstandings that led to people's hatred against Muslims and Arabs, which in turn led to attacks on individual Muslims and Muslim places of worship.

Both Unitaries and Confluents felt that all areas of the media (television, radio, newspapers and the Internet) played a huge role in creating this fear of Muslims, which had repercussions for themselves as a group and individually. Both groups expressed that they, too, were worried about terrorism and in addition had to worry constantly about the effect of terrorist attacks on their communities.

The majority of Confluents felt they had *improved* religiously since their last interview and that they were practising their religion on a different level. Some Confluent women had decided to wear the hijab, whereas some Unitary women had removed it. Unitaries were divided in their responses. Some were like Confluents and felt this was a time when they needed to work together as *Australian Muslims*. Others felt even more *alienated* now, as they felt they were not considered *Australian* and their *Australianness* was *always being questioned*. On the other hand, Confluents had much more confidence than Unitaries in dealing with the racism they were all experiencing. Confluents felt that despite everything, they were still Australian and had every right to call themselves Australian. They felt quite strongly about the fact that no one had the right to challenge this.

I was surprised to find that many Confluents felt the need to inform the Australian community about Islam and how terrorism is not in Islam. Furthermore, it was the Confluents who also felt the need to educate Muslims about how to deal with racism and with attacks on Muslim women. They felt they needed to make Muslims in general feel part of the wider community by reassuring the wider Muslim community not to feel they are not Australian because they *really are Australian Muslims*.

Confluents felt the real need for intermarriage at this time to encourage understanding. I was surprised with this finding because I suspected that this might have changed after previous interviews, considering the changing situation. However, Confluents felt quite strongly about this. A large majority of Unitaries, on the other hand, felt that intermarriage would be harder now for the families involved. Unitaries did, however, advocate intermarriage among Muslims of different ethnic

backgrounds in order to *unite Muslims as Australian Muslims rather than Lebanese Muslims or Turkish Muslims*.

Overall, the majority of Confluents felt that they had changed for the better religiously and culturally. This was not the case for all Unitaries, half of whom felt they had no choice but to change themselves culturally and religiously in order to be accepted.

Recent academic literature

A lot has changed in recent years, especially in America and Britain in regard to literature and websites about children from mixed-marriages. One recent website, Intermix.org.uk, is a "website for the benefit of mixed-race families, individuals and anyone who feels they have a multi-racial identity and want to join us". In 'Mixed heritage: Identity, Policy and Practice', a recent publication by Dr Chamion Cabellero (2014), numerous writers explore whether it is useful to speak of the mixed category as a single group and whether a mixed community exists. (Cabellero, 2014) rejects the idea that:

> … those who cross the colour and faith line are led to understand that they may not only be consigning their children to the marginal and tragic 'between two worlds' status envisaged by early 20th century sociologists' (recently revived by Trevor Phillips' comments on mixed children suffering from "'identity stripping' and being 'marooned' between communities"), but as the popularity of media accounts of children being abducted abroad by their Middle Eastern husbands or Asian fathers suggests, they may lose their children forever.

Cabellero (2014) presents data from a study in Britain that contradicts the idea that mixed families suffer from inherent "culture clashes" and that their children are doomed to be "identity stripped" or "marooned between communities". In fact, she argues that the overwhelming picture of parents is that this is not the case and that they "challenge longstanding ideas of 'mixed' families' on several levels" (Cabellero, 2014). Finally, Suki Ali (2014) and Miri Song (2014), also studying children from mixed heritage in Britain, argue that more focus is needed on how the identities and experiences of these children are shaped.

Conclusion

The only certainty is that as the world changes, new events will impact on Confluents and Unitaries in Australia, and will continue to shape their perceptions of themselves and other Muslims as either Australian Muslims or something else. Ongoing research is needed to gain a full, evolving and true picture of the effects of intermarriage on children of such unions, and perhaps gain some insight into the power of intermarriage to address current identity issues.

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Appendixes

Appendix 1: Letters of introduction and ethics/progress report

Appendix 2: Further observational research collation

Appendix 3: Full list of interview questions for all participants

Appendix 4: Parents' re-interview questions

Appendix One: Letters of Introduction and Ethics/Progress Report

Flinders UNIVERSITY

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Tel: 08 201 2026

CRICOS Provider No. 00114A

LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

Dear Sir/Madam,

This letter is to introduce Ms Karima Ann Moraby who is a PhD student in the Department of Sociology at Flinders University. She will produce her student card, which carries a photograph, as proof of identity.

She is undertaking research leading to the production of a thesis or other publications on the subject of "Confluents: A study of children of Inter-faith and Inter-cultural marriages, between Christian Anglophones and Muslim immigrants, in Australia in the 1990's".

She would like to invite you to assist in this project, by granting an interview which covers certain aspects of this topic. Interviews will take approximately one hour.

Be assured that any information provided will be treated in the strictest confidence and none of the participants will be individually identifiable in the resulting thesis, report or other publications. You are, of course, entirely free to discontinue your participation at any time or to decline to answer particular questions.

Since she intends to make a tape recording of the interview, she will seek your verbal consent, to record the interview, to use the recording or a transcription in preparing the thesis, or other publications, on condition that your name or identity is not revealed. The recording will not be available to other researchers. It may be necessary to make the recording available to secretarial assistants (or a transcription service) for transcription, in which case you may be assured that such persons will be asked to sign a confidentiality agreement which outlines the requirement that your name or identity not be revealed and that the confidentiality of the material is respected and maintained. All tape recordings will be disregarded after interviews are analysed.

Any enquiries you may have concerning this project should be directed to me at the address given above or by telephone on 8201 2264, or by email

Thank you for your attention and assistance.

Yours sincerely

Dr Constance Lever Tracy
Senior Lecturer
Department of Sociology

This research project has been approved by the Flinders University Social and Behavioural Research Ethics Committee). For more information regarding ethical approval of the project the Executive Officer of the Committee can be contacted by telephone on 8201 3116, by fax on 8201 2035 or by email human.researchethics@flinders.edu.au..

inspiring achievement

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CRICOS Provider No. 00114A

LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

Dear Parent/Guardian

I am undertaking research leading to the production of a PhD thesis and possibly other publications on the subject of "Confluents: A study of children of Inter-faith and Inter-cultural marriages, between Christian Anglophones and Muslim immigrants, in Australia in the 1990's".

I would like to invite you to assist in this project by consenting to your child being interviewed which covers certain aspects of this topic. Interviews will take about I hour on one occasion would be required.

Be assured that any information provided will be treated in the strictest confidence and none of the participants will be individually identifiable in the resulting thesis or other publications. Your child is, of course, free to discontinue participation at any time or to decline to answer particular questions.

If you would like to consent to your child being involved please sign the consent form attached.

Any enquiries you may have concerning this project should be directed to me at the address given above or by telephone on 8201 2026

Thank you for your attention and assistance.

Yours sincerely

Karima Ann Moraby
PhD Student
Department of Sociology

This research project has been approved by the Flinders University Social and Behavioural Research Ethics Committee. For more information regarding ethical approval of the project the Executive Officer of the Committee can be contacted by telephone on 8201 3116, by fax on 8201 2035 or by email human.researchethics@flinders.edu.au.

inspiring achievement

SECTION C

REFEREES are also requested to provide comments below on the applicant's qualities, including:

- capacity to work well with colleagues.
- future potential for research contribution to the field of knowledge.
- particular aspects of the applicant's performance that have impressed you in regard to his/her research potential.
- in the case of applicants in the Arts/Humanities/Social Sciences areas, relevant comments concerning cultural understanding and awareness, linguistic ability etc. may be helpful.
- any information as to the applicant's research potential which is not apparent from the academic record.
- any information as to the contribution of the applicant to publications.

Your written report is **IMPORTANT** and may be referred to in detail during the selection process. If possible, please complete this form electronically, or attach typewritten comments, to ensure that your report can be easily read. This form can be downloaded from http://www.flinders.edu.au/scholarships/forms/hdrscholarships.html

Karima Moraby has developed a sophisticated theoretical framework, critical of othodox paradigms, and a wealth of empirical data, aiming to present a new way of understanding the position of children of inter faith and inter ethnic marriages, who she conceptualises, in an original and creative way, as 'confluents'. When complete, I believe it will transform our sociological understanding of this group and of the problems and strengths of intercultural relations. Insofar as her study focusses on the children of immigrant Moslem and mainstream Christian Australian parents, and compares them with second generation children of two immigrant parents, it is of particular importance for the future of Australian multiculturalism in the era of the 'war on terrorism'. The study has grown and become more complex over time, developing also significant longitudinal elements.

Karima contributes lectures to Soci 1009 One World, Many Societies, which student evaluations regularly label one of the highlights of the topic. She has shown great determination to complete her study, in circumstances which have led most students to abandon it. She has learned to work through significant levels of pain and is making rapid progress again.

Referee's Name:	Constance Lever-Tracy
Referee's Position:	Supervisor
Institutional Address:	Department of Sociology Faculty of Social Science

Signature of Referee: **Date:** 31/10/05

Return this form directly to Flinders University (see ~~front page~~) by the closing date (31 October 2005).

hdr2006RefsRpt: 26/5/2005

This is a correct version of the report [illegible] which [illegible] notes [illegible] approval is granted in 1994. It may [illegible] be there is no other record of this approval 29/9/2014

Appendix Two: Further Observational Research was Collated from the Following Activities

1. Feedback from newsletters

- Collation of research materials
- Evaluations written from observations.

2. Attendance of a series of Youth Forums (Muslim)

An example of some activities that I was able to get a substantial amount of information was the following:

TABLE A1: YOUTH ACTIVITIES

ACTIVITIES
Youth Forum-Wandana Mosque Adelaide
Youth Picnic- Botanical Gardens Adelaide
Video Production-“Dance in my shoes: Australian Lebanese Youth” produced in South Australia.

3) Attendance of a series of Ethnic Forums

Bosnian, Lebanese, Egyptians, Turkish, Afghan, Iranian, Turkistan, Albanian

4) Participation of Ethnic Committees(youth)

United Ethnic Communities, Western Area Multicultural Youth Services, Ethnic Communities Council, Service to Youth Council, Office of Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs, “Women in Multicultural Network”.

5) Participation in conferences interstate and local

- Bureau of Immigration and Population Research
- Migrant Health Unit

- Southern Multicultural Forum: an interactive workshop “mainstream services and NESB clients”
- FACS working in partnership with families in child protection
- OMEA Community relations forum “Lets bring Australians Together”
- FAMSY Annual National Conference “Islamic Identity in Australia”(1993 and 1994)
- La Trode University Conference on “Identities, Ethnicities, Nationalities” July 1994

6) Participation in Cross-Cultural training sessions:

Talks about Muslim Youth at the following places:

- 19/12/94-Thebarton College
- 21/3/95- South Australian Medical Women’s Society
- Department of Social Security-Enfield March 1995 - Modbury, December 1994
- An Introduction to Muslim Community Youth Issues- Enfield 9/9/95 - Noarlunga 29/7/94
- Bosnian Community Centre-Adelaide - Brisbane
- YMA(Young Muslims of Australia) Camps(NSW and VIC)
- Valley View Secondary School
- Gepps Cross Girls High School 1994
- Windsor Gardens High 1993
- Cardijan College 1995
- Cabra College 1994
- Scriptwriting Workshop with the U.E.C. “The Funny side of Living Two Cultures”(A Play about Confluents and Unitaries growing up in Australia).

From all the above places I observed and interviewed youth (mainly) through survey questions) and teachers to find out the issues that these youth were facing. These were also places that I managed to find people to interview that were not connected to the mainstream communities.

7) Feedback from Newsletters:

I have written articles and helped organised YMA, ISSA Newsletters and Muslim times. From these Newsletters and articles I have received feedback from the Muslim Communities this combined with actually speaking to youth has enabled me to have an insight in not only the problems youth are facing but also what is being done for these Youth.

8) Collation of resource material:

- Pamphlets
- Articles
- Books
- Resource materials for schools
- Bureau of Statistics data from 1991 till now
- A detailed bibliography of Muslims and Intermarriage in Australia

9) Evaluations written

- Arab Youth Picnic
- Youth Forums
- “Cultural Differences”- A comparison of Lebanese and Bosnian Youth
- Results of School Workshops

Appendix Three: Full List of Questions Used in Interviews

The following are a list of the questions used in the interviews; they are in order of questions looked at in the Thesis. These questions were just a starting point for interviews to encourage conversation. The majority of these questions were asked. There are some questions that were not asked and some questions that were asked at the time that were not in this list but seemed appropriate at the time of the interview. Some of these questions were very similar but asked in different ways in a way to gather information that was needed for this study. Each Interview was taken on an individual basis according to the respondent.

Questions for Parent Interviews:

Introductory Questions:

Introductory questions the same for both groups of parents:

What is your date of birth and place of birth?

If not born in Australia what age did you come to Australia? Why did you come to Australia?

What state are you currently living in? Have you always lived in this state? If you have changed states is there a difference? Why did you choose to live in this state?

What is your present occupation?

What is your Education level?

What is the nationality and religion of you and your partner?

Were you raised this religion? If not what religion were you raised as?

Can you tell me about your parent's background (Family, Education, Occupation)?

What religion do you see yourself as? Why?

Do you see yourself as a Muslim(or Christian etc) by chance or choice? Has this feeling changed over the years?

How important is religion in your life?

Do you ever go to the Mosque/Church?

What nationality do you see yourself as? Do you see yourself as Australian? If so why? If not, why not?

How would you describe an Australian(Both physically and in character)? How would you describe a Lebanese(Turkish etc whatever nationality one or both parents belong to)?

Do you see yourself as integrated into Australian society? If so why? If not why not?

Do you think your physical appearance influences how well one can integrate into Australian society?

In what ways would you say you differ (both culturally and religiously) from your parents?

Do you think you have a narrower or open-minded view of religion? Is this linked to your cultural or religious upbringing?

What do you think the relationship between culture and religion is?

Do you think adhering to prior cultural norms is important?

Parents of Unitaries only:

How did you meet your spouse? Did your parents approve of the marriage? Did you have your parents blessing when you married? If not, do you wish you did?

Was it an arranged marriage?

How would you define arranged marriage, was it a forced marriage or one simply organised by family members?

Was choosing a spouse from the same cultural and religious background expected

of you? Was your parents' expectations the main reason for you choosing a spouse from the same background?

Did you see (at the time) the benefits of marrying within your own culture and religion as both were important for the marriage to be successful?

What is your view of Intermarriage is it something that is positive? Do you think religion an or culture are crucial elements in choosing a marriage partner? Are these both important for a marriage to be successful?

Does Australia have a history of intermarriage?

Do you view marriage as a marriage of families rather than just individuals?

If they said family is not important as the following question: Why did you reject the idea of a 'marriage of families'? Is family not important?

Do you feel that the family play a major role in selecting a spouse?

Is this an indicator of whether a marriage would be successful?

Do you think *name* of a family (meaning reputation) had a major impact on the selection of a spouse? Is it important?

Was raising your children hard because you have or are raising your children in a different country to where you were raised?

Have or are you still having difficulties raising your children in Australia? If so what are some of these difficulties?

Was another difficulty the small number of Islamic schools at the time of raising your children? Would it have helped if there were/ or more Islamic Schools?

Did you send your children to any religious lessons at the Mosque?

Did you find it hard having the sole responsibility for teaching your children about Islam? Did you find this difficult due to other life commitments eg work etc?

Do you have your or your partner's family in Australia? Do they live close to you? Is it important to have family around for a successful marriage? Do you think having

extended family around helps with marriage and raising your children? If so why?

If not, why not? Do you think for a successful marriage you need to keep extended family at a distance?

If you did not have family around did that cause problems in your marriage?

In your country of origin does the extended family give practical and emotional support in raising children? Being in Australia do you feel you have had to rely on yourselves for everything, does this cause a strain on your marriage? Has this reliance on each other led to strengthening your marriage?

Do you think Australia is a good place to raise a child? Do your children have more opportunities than you did? In what ways?

Have you ever encouraged your children to feel different from others (in regards to culture etc)? Has this affected them?

Do you think raising children in their non-Anglophone ethnicity (Lebanese, Turkish etc.) and being Muslim in Australia contributed to these difficulties?

Do you think they are at a double disadvantage?(An explanation of this was given here) If so in what ways?

Did or do you feel your children were or are often torn between what mainstream society expects from them and what you expect from them?

Do you think your child has dual or two separate identities or are they in-between identities?(explain terms to them before asking this question)

Do you think being in-between identities or having dual identities was something that was positive or negative for your child? If so how was it positive/negative?

Do you think your child/children are comfortable with being either in-between or having two separate identities?

Explain 'Front door syndrome' Do you think your child experiences one life in front of you and your partner and one life when not at home? If yes, does this cause a conflict for your child?

Do you think this is just a stage? If it is just a stage do you think that when your child

is older they would be clearer about who they are as a result of these stages?

Does your child feel any negativity about growing up and being seen as different from the norm?

If so, do you feel this negativity was just a stage or something that would always be a negative experience for your children throughout their lives?

Do you think religion is an important part of your child's identity? Do you think religion is part of your child's cultural identity?

Do you feel your child/children is/are practicing Muslims? Are they the same as you? Do they practice in a similar way as yourselves?

Do you feel that you had a say in your children's religious upbringing when they were young?

What about as the children got older, has your influence lessened due to numerous outside influences that are out of your control?

Do you feel your children are discovering their religion for themselves as they are getting older?

What do you think of Sufism? Have you ever been interested in Sufism? Is or has your child been interested in it at any time?

Have any of your children decided to comply with the Islamic dress code? Did you expect this? Has this created a problem for you in any way?

Have you made your children wear Islamic clothing like the hijab?,

Was your daughter forced to wear it by someone (father/brother/husband?)

Were you made to wear Islamic clothing when young?

Did you have the choice or freedom to wear what you wanted when you were young?

Is this different for your children?

Did you encourage your daughter to wear the hijab or niqab? Would you ever force her to wear the hijab or niqab?

Have any of your children chosen to wear Islamic dress by themselves even if you have shown concern about this decision?

Do you have a daughter or daughters who chose to wear the hijab or niqab?

Are there any other members of the family or extended family that wear either hijab or niqab? How do you feel about this?

If parents have a daughter that has chosen to wear hijab or niqab ask the following question: Has your daughter chosen to wear the Hijab? Have you noticed that if our daughter/daughters had chosen to wear the hijab, they were constantly made to feel *less Australian?* Does this upset you?

Do you think your child has the right to practice their religion publicly for example wearing the hijab or niqab? Should they still feel Australian?

Do you think it is up to you as parents to educate your child about their faith ie Islam? Do you expect your children when they are older to research the religion further?

Do you feel your child/children have gained a different or even wider understanding of their religion to yourself?

Is your perception of Islam from their ethnic/cultural background? Do you think culture and religion are intertwined?

Is there a difference between the way you and your children view, interpret and practice religion? Did this affect your children's personal choices?

Do you feel your child/children are Muslim by chance or by choice?

Is your culture a crucial part of your child's identity and do you think it makes them who they are? Which culture are you referring to – their "Australian culture" or their "ethnic/country of birth" culture?

Do you think what 'people' (their ethnic/cultural community) would think was important to them? Does the opinion of the wider Australian Muslim community or their ethnic community matter more?

Do you think your child's wider sense of belonging was affected by whether they lived in states with larger ethnic and religious communities? If so why, if not why not?

(If from Sydney or Melbourne as the following question) Did you choose to live in Sydney and Melbourne so your children did not lose their cultural and religious identity?

Would you want a say in the choice of your children's marriage partner?

Do you think it is entirely your child's choice who they marry?

Do you think you will influence your child's choice in any way?

Do you think culture and religion would be important factors in whom their children chose to marry? Why would culture matter?

Is language an important part of your culture?

Which is more important – ethnicity/culture or religion?

If you had a choice, would you prefer your child to marry someone of the same ethnicity/culture?

Do you think shared religion and culture would be important when their child chose a marriage partner?

What is your view of intermarriage (Anglophone with non-Anglophone)? What is your view of children from intermarriages?

Do you think that intermarriage is bound to fail? Do you think the religious and cultural differences would make it too difficult?

Do you think children from an intermarriage always end up confused about what culture or religion they belong to?

Would you mind if your child married somebody from a different culture and religion? Which is more important, religion or culture?

Do you value education for your child? Is it the same with your sons and daughters?

Do you think education is needed for your children to succeed in Australian society?

Is higher education important for them to succeed in today's society?

Did you settle in Australia so you could give your children more opportunities than they had in their own countries?

What nationality do you feel your child/children are? For example do you see your children as Australians, Australian Lebanese etc?

Do you think your child/children ever feel alienated? What are the reasons for this?

Do you think your child/children are integrated into Australian society? What is the reason for this? If no what factors do you think affect this(eg media??)

Do you think it is your child's religion or culture that affects their integration into Australian society?

Do you think certain factors influence the extent of whether or not your child/children feel integrated or not? These factors include:

a) Name

b) Physical appearance

c) Language

d) Relationship with parents

e) Place of residence

f) Gender.

Do you think if your child joined a youth group with other Muslims from different cultures helped your children form a stronger identity?

Explain the notion of coach:

Does your child feel the need to act as a "coach" to fellow younger Unitaries?

Do you feel that if your child identifies themselves with the wider Australian Muslim community they would forget about their particular ethnic/cultural heritage?

Do you think your children will feel less connected to you?

Do you have a problem about your child feeling Australian as long as they did not disown or forget their ethnic/cultural and religious backgrounds?

Does your child/children feel Australian because Australia was the country they lived in and the country they call home?

Does your child/children feel integrated into Australian society?

Do you think the wider Australian society presented obstacles to your children's integration? For example media and literature, physical appearance and dress.

Do you think the media has a negative impact on your children?

Do you think media and literature have a negative effect on your children being accepted into Australian society?

Do you think the media's negative portrayal of Muslims in general and Arabs in particular had a negative effect on your children?

Do you think this can make you child feel as if they did not belong?

Can you think of any examples of movies etc that have given that portrayed Muslims and Arabs as terrorists and suicide bombers with a hatred for the West?

Do films like these make your child feel like the other?(explain Edward Said here)

Do you think this negative portrayal by the media made your children feel less integrated into Australian life? Did it affect their identity?

Do you feel alienated at times as a result of media portrayal? Do you think your child feels alienated?

Do you think that the media stereotypes of what is an Australian harmed your children's sense of identity?

Have these negative stereotypes or stigmas, made your child come to terms with their identity?

[Before asking this question explain Goffman's notion of "Stigma" give them the paragraph on Stigma to read]

Erving Goffman, in his book 'Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity' (1963, p. 3), argues that stigma – a powerful negative social label that radically changes a person's social identity and social concept, and is intimately associated with stereotype – is related to the unconscious expectations and norms that act as unseen arbitrators in all social encounters. He also argues that smooth interaction depends upon the participants having a socially accredited identity that is acceptable to others. Whether it is a blind man, the dwarf, or, as in my research, a member of a religious minority, all share some decisive characteristics; they are all socially "abnormal" and, therefore, in danger of being considered less than human. Thus, stigma is a study of situations where normal and abnormal meet (Goffman 1963, ch. 1).

Do you feel that there is or was a Goffman's notion of "stigma" attached to Muslim and or Arab youth? Do you feel this "stigma" was positive or negative?

Do you feel there were any indirect positive effects from these 'Stigma's'?

Did your(Confluent) children, feel that their Australian identity was called into question at some stage of their lives, making it difficult to identify themselves as Australian?

Did the continuous negative media portrayal of Arabs and Muslims, worsen since the Gulf war? Can you give some examples of this please?

Did this negative portrayal lead your children to be ashamed to identify with being either Arab or Muslim in fear of a backlash? Did this lead to them either changing their names, or preferring to use their non-Arab names(for Confluents), both to avoid open displays of their religious beliefs?

Was this just a stage?

Did this negative portrayal from the media make their children feel the need to unify

with other people from these groups and to involve themselves in activities such as cross-cultural training and writing articles to dispel the myths and false stereotypes?

Do you feel your child's physical appearance was a factor in their integration into Australian society?

Do you think if your child looks more *Australian* [Anglo Celtic] or fair/white European, they had more of a chance of fitting in?

If your child is darker do you think that their skin colour make them feel less integrated into Australian society due to the stereotype of what an Australian should look like?

Do you think if your child's adhere's to the Islamic dress code that this affects their children's integration into Australian society?

If your daughter wears the hijab or their sons wore traditional ethnic clothing, will this in turn affect their level of integration within the Australian community, producing a rejection that made them feel they were not Australians?

Has your child had considered this possibility and still chosen to wear 'Islamic clothing'?

Do you feel the circumstances of your own upbringing had been quite different from that of your children?

Do you feel you were unprepared for your role as parents in this society?

Do you think your children have been faced with and had more of a range of choices than what you have had?

Do you think your children being able to make such choices was positive or negative?

Do you feel you are losing control of your children?

Is the control, such as the control(if their parent's did) your own parents had had over them, negative?

Do you have enough control, little control or have you lost control completely over your children?

I explain to Unitaries parents again the term Confluent).

Do you know any Confluent public/historical/fictional media figures? If so what was your impression?

Hand out Sophia's story and explain a little about the story.

Sophia's story

"Where's my foundation?" screamed Sophia from the bathroom, her voice echoed across the house in a deafening tone. She was going through her ritual of preparing herself as she always does prior to an engagement. This ritual drove the family into a frenzy, only the lucky few escaped. Sophia was incredibly self-conscious, unless she felt she looked perfect, her night would be ruined for not only her but her friends as well. Despite reassuring comments from her best friends, Sophia strongly felt the need to be accepted. She was not fully Lebanese nor fully Australian, Muslim but still felt a connection to Catholicism, neither cultural group accepted her as one of their own. Her only means to acceptance was her physical appearance and her mental ability to swap very quickly into her prescribed role/identity. Sophia was a Chameleon, who changed her appearance (and name) in relation to the environment she was in. She looked Lebanese at a Lebanese function, Australian at an Australian do, and Muslim in a religious function. Sophia would become Sophie.

Despite the appearance change and her three different characters she conducted herself in, she was Sophia in her own right, which only her parents accepted her as. Sophia's personality reflected her inner self's fight for acceptance. Not a day went by in Sophia's life where she did not argue - a reflection of her struggle. Her struggle for acceptance and belonging did not bring out a submissive nature in Sophia but rather a dominant nature determined to succeed.

What's your impression of Sophia? Do you think she is confused?

Do you think she possesses multiple identities? Do you think Sophia's situation is a positive one?

Do you think Sophia is just going through a "stage"? If yes do you think Sophia's age has something to do with this "stage"? Do you think Sophia would eventually have to choose one definite role?

Do you think all Confluent children act like Sophia?

Do you perform differently depending on which cultural setting you are within?

Can you relate to Sophia in anyway?

What role do/did your parents play in your identity development? What would you do differently with your children?

Did either the wider or your cultural or religious community have an impact on your identity formation?

Do you feel the need to help other youth from a similar background? Would you help them from a religious or cultural level? Are you doing/or have done anything to help these youth?

What image do you have when you hear of "Mixed Marriages" and children from such marriages?

Give Khalil Gibran's poem out.

And a woman who held a babe against her bosom said, Speak to us of Children:

Your children are not your children

They are the sons and daughters of life's longing for itself.

They come through you but not from you,

And though they are with you yet they belong not to you.

You may give them your Love but not your thoughts,

For they have their own thoughts.

You may house their bodies but not their souls,

For their souls dwell in the house of to-morrow,

Which you cannot visit, not even in your dreams.

You may strive to be like them, but seek not to make them like you.

For life goes not backward nor tarries with yesterday.

You are the bows from which your children as living arrows are sent forth.

The archer sees the mark upon the path of the infinite, and He bends you with His might that His arrows may go swift and far.

Let your bending in the Archer's hand be for gladness,

For even as He loves the arrow that flies, so he loves also the bow that is stable. **(Khalil Gibran from 'The Prophet',pp. 20-23)**

Can you relate to this poem? Do you agree with the line "You may give them your love but not your thoughts"?

Tell me how you would interpret the following three lines:

“You may house their bodies but not their souls,

For their souls dwell in the house of tomorrow,

Which you cannot visit, not even in your dreams”

Can you relate to this poem? In what sense? Do you feel you will ever understand your children? Do you think they will ever understand you?

Do you think Unitaries are “in-between” identities and thus never really belonging to either or do you think they hold two separate identities and belong to both equally. Or do you think they hold multiple identities?

How important is your culture and religion to your children? What do you think makes a person a certain nationality? What makes a person Muslim? When you meet a person does their culture and religion matter to you? Does it matter for your children if they were thinking of a long term relationship?

Do you think this is the case for all Muslim youth? Does gender/nationality/state/class/education affect this?

Parents of Confluents

Ask introductory questions the same as the parents of Unitaries

Then the following questions:

How did you meet your spouse? Did your parents approve of the marriage? If not, did you elope? Was this hard?

How would you define an arranged marriage, is it a forced marriage or one simply organised by family members? Do you approve of them?

Was choosing a spouse from the same cultural and religious background expected of you? Was your parents' expectations the reason for them not approving (if they didn't) of your marriage?

Did you see (at the time) it as beneficial to marry within your own culture and religion? Do you think this is important for the marriage to be successful or it is not important at all?

Do you feel that intermarriage alleviates certain problems or expectations that might often occur when marrying someone from the same cultural background?

Do you feel that the family should play a major role in selecting a spouse?

Is this an indicator of whether a marriage would be successful?

Should family be involved at all in choosing a partner for their child/children?

Do you think *name* of a family (meaning reputation) had a major impact on the selection of a spouse?

Do you view marriage as a marriage of families rather than just individuals?

If they say not a marriage of families ask the following: Why did you reject the idea of a 'marriage of families'? Is family not important?

Did you have your parents blessing when you married? If not, do you wish you did?

Is this a reason why you would not want to impose the restriction of finding a partner with the same culture on their children was to save their children from such an experience?

Do you believe culture played a significant role in marriage?

Do you think shared religion and culture would be important when their child chose a marriage partner?

Is it important to have family around for a successful marriage?

Or do you think it is important, for a successful marriage, that you needed to keep family at a distance?

If you did not have family around did that cause problems in your marriage?

For the migrant parent: was raising your children hard because you have or are raising your children in a different country to where you were raised?

Does Australia have a history of intermarriage?

Do you tend to mix with other couples who have intermarried?

Do you mix with other families with Confluent children?

Do you feel that your interfaith and inter cultural marriage was a positive or negative experience? If positive in what ways? If negative in what ways?

Did you face any difficulties in your marriage related directly to being involved in an intermarriage?

Is Intermarraige something that is positive? Do you think religion an or culture are crucial elements in choosing a marriage partner? Are these important for a marriage to be successful?

What is you view of intermarriage? Would you say it is positive or negative? If you had any problems with either of your families when you got married,

how are things now? Do you still have problems or difficulties with either of your families? Did both your parents accept your marriage? Did you lose relationships with your siblings and/or friends when you chose to intermarry?

Do you regret marrying your partner? Do you feel your experience of marriage as positive overall, despite difficulties along the way?

Do you feel having both of your extended families away from your immediate family actually made your marriage more successful than if they had been close?

Do you feel your children have the *best of both/ two worlds?*

(If parents have not mentioned this haven't mentioned this then ask): Do you think your children *belonged to the world* rather than to one nationality?

What do you think is meant by the phrase *belonged to the world?*

Do you think your children could ever entirely belong to both *worlds?*

Do you think belonging to both worlds was or would be an advantage for your children that you never had?

Do you think your children might have had some difficulties? Were these temporary do you think?

Do you think your child is at an advantage or disadvantage being exposed to two different cultures and religions? Do you think your child has advantages over other children? For example, having insights into two different cultures and religions.

Do you ever worry about your children that they would never fully belong to either culture and that this was something they would always feel?

Do you feel your child/children will or have faced obstacles along the way and would never fully belong to any one culture?

Explain 'Front door syndrome' Do you think your child experiences one life in front of you and your partner and one life when not at home? If yes, does this cause a conflict for your child?

Do you feel there are any benefits of being from a mixed marriage for your children?

Do you regret marrying *out* because of the hardships and complications that you have experienced? What about your children, do you regret it for your children?

Do you think your children's mixed background benefits them for the world today?

Do you think being a confluent is particularly beneficial for Australian society?

Do you feel your child has multiple identities **(read them what Wallman says)**?

Do you think multiple identities, is unique to Confluents? Is it something positive or negative? Why?

The term Confluent was explained to them

Do you think there is a chance of your child or any Confluent in some circumstances, resulting in the children not being fully comfortable in any one culture?

Do you think it is an ability to be completely comfortable in their multiple identities Does this lead your children to form their own identity?

Do you think your child has a *unique* identity? Is this positive?

Do you think your child/children go through stages of self-doubt? Was this mainly just a *part of growing up?* Or is it because your children are Confluents?

Do you feel your children's identity stages were a direct result of being a Confluent?

Do you think your children need to go through these stages in order to find themselves?

Do you think this is a positive experience for your child because it has/or will help their child find out who they were in terms of culture and religion?

Why do you feel your child/ children went through these stages?

When you married did you consider the issues that their future children may face?

Did you think that their children would be lucky to have both cultures and religions?

Did you ever worry that your children might encounter some issues (finding their feet) about who they were and where they fitted in?

Do you feel that it is up to the parents to make their children comfortable with both cultures and religions?

Do you feel culture and/or religion is important when your child marries?

Do you think Australia is a good place to raise a child? Do your children have more opportunities than you did? In what ways?

Do you consider your child to be Australian? Do you think they understand both cultures? Do you think your child's understanding of dual cultures will help them to adjust to such differences in their future marriages?

Do you think intermarriage is beneficial for Australian society as a whole?

In regards to religion does it matter if your daughter or son marries a person with a different religion? Would you advice your new daughter or son in law to convert?

Do you think that because your child has been raised with an understanding of different cultures and religions that they would be more understanding than if both parents were of the same religion and culture if they themselves were to intermarry.

Do you think your child is open-minded, as a direct result of having an insight into

two very different cultures and religions? Do you think your child/children is more open-minded than yourselves?

Do you think your child/ children being 'open-minded' was a direct result of being a child from an inter-religious and inter-cultural marriage or a result of living in a multicultural society?

Is this something that is positive?

Explain the notion of coach.

Does your child feel the need to act as a "coach" to fellow younger Confluents?

Do you think choice(in regards to giving your child/children the choice to decide for themselves which culture or religion they wish to follow) is important?

Did you make a conscious decision with regard to your children's culture and religion? Did you decide as a couple to either to make the choices for your children before they were born, which would apply until they were old enough to make final decisions for themselves, or did you decide to leave the choices completely up to the children to be made later?

Would you ever force a religion on your child? Did you ever doubt this decision?

How important was it to you to teach your child about religion? Do you feel you have or are teaching them enough?

What do you think of Sufism? Have you ever been interested in Sufism? Is or has your child been interested in it at any time?

Do you think it is important to be respectful of two different religions and cultures?

Do you think cultural differences are important? Do you pick and choose the best of both cultures? Do you want the children to be proud of their cultural heritage?

Is it important for that your child/children feel proud of their dual cultural heritage? Is it important to you that they feel Australian?

Did you as parents try to make your children feel *Australian?* Was this ever at the expense of disregarding their other cultural heritage? Do you think your children are

Australians, Australia Muslims etc?

Does your child feel Australian because Australia was the country they lived in and the country they call home?

Does your child/children feel integrated into Australian society?

Do you think your child/children ever feel alienated? What are the reasons for this?

Do you think certain factors influence the extent of whether or not your child/children feel integrated or not? These factors include:

a) Name

b) Physical appearance

c) Language

d) Relationship with parents

e) Place of residence

f) Gender.

Has your daughter chosen to wear the hijab? Have you noticed that if our daughter/daughters had chosen to wear the hijab, they were constantly made to feel *less Australian?* Does this upset you?

Do you think your child has the right to practice their religion publicly for example wearing the hijab or niqab? Should they still feel Australian?

What term applied to your child (for example 'half', 'mixed-blood' etc.)?

Do you mind these terms? Do you feel these terms have negative connotations?

Do you like the term Confluent? Does this reflect your child?

Do you think media and literature played a significant role in people's perception of mixed marriages, religion and ethnicity?

Were or are your children sensitive to the portrayal of movies about mixed

marriages and children from these marriages, and especially in how they were portrayed?

Do you think the media has a negative impact on your children?

Do you think that the media stereotypes of what is an Australian harmed your children's sense of identity?

Did your(Confluent) children, feel that their Australian identity was called into question at some stage of their lives, making it difficult to identify themselves as Australian?

Did the continuous negative media portrayal of Arabs and Muslims, worsen since the Gulf war? Could you give me an example of this please?

[Before asking this question explain Goffman's notion of "Stigma" give them the paragraph on Stigma to read]

Erving Goffman, in his book 'Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity' (1963, p. 3), argues that stigma – a powerful negative social label that radically changes a person's social identity and social concept, and is intimately associated with stereotype – is related to the unconscious expectations and norms that act as unseen arbitrators in all social encounters. He also argues that smooth interaction depends upon the participants having a socially accredited identity that is acceptable to others. Whether it is a blind man, the dwarf, or, as in my research, a member of a religious minority, all share some decisive characteristics; they are all socially "abnormal" and, therefore, in danger of being considered less than human. Thus, stigma is a study of situations where normal and abnormal meet (Goffman 1963, ch. 1).

Do you feel that there is or was a Goffman's notion of "stigma" attached to Muslim and or Arab youth? Do you feel this "stigma" was positive or negative?

Do you feel there are certain 'Stigma's' attached to Confluents or intermarriage in general?

Do you feel there were any indirect positive effects from these ‘Stigma’s’?

Did your child ever feel ashamed for being a Confluent because of these stigma’s?

Did your(Confluent) children, feel that their Australian identity was called into question at some stage of their lives, making it difficult to identify themselves as Australian?

Did this negative portrayal lead your children to being ashamed to identify with being either Arab or Muslim in fear of a backlash? Did this lead to them either changing their names, or preferring to use their non-Arab names (for Confluents), both to avoid open displays of their religious beliefs?

Was this just a stage?

Did this negative portrayal from the media make their children feel the need to unify with other people from these groups and to involve themselves in activities such as cross-cultural training and writing articles to dispel the myths and false stereotypes?

Do you think your child played the role of a ‘coach’? Does this explain the role their children had taken? Do you feel your children feel the need to extend this knowledge to others, thus acting as a “coach” (this notion of coach was explained to them)?

Did certain advertisements for example “I am Australian as Ampol” pushing “the blond blue-eyed image” of what an “Australian” looked like had an effect on your children when they were growing up?

Did this ever make your child go through a period of not feeling Australian?

Did this depend on your child’s physical attributes?

Did this end when your child/children became more confident in themselves as a Confluent?

Do you think that the media has played or plays a key role in the portrayal of Arabs and Muslims? Is it negative or positive? Do these negative portrayals had/have a bad effect on your children?

Has this led to a period (or stage mentioned above) where your children would deny or simply never mention they were Muslims for fear they would be persecuted?

Has this negative portrayal in the media having a negative effect on Confluent youth at one stage, ever led them to rediscover their “Arab” side and find out the truth about their religion? Have your children become stronger Muslims as a result of this?

Do you think that education of all children to see past the stereotypes is essential for society?

Do you think this is the virtue of intermarraige; teaching the child not to be limited by cultural and religious boundaries, and to see past them?

Do you think your children had a tendency to have a good understanding of both their parents’ religious and cultural backgrounds?

Do you think Confluents tend to seek a higher education? If so, do you think that your children are trying to prove a point.

Do you feel your children are fortunate in being given a lot more choices, from a young age?

Do you feel what your child/ children possessed as Confluents was an advantage?

Do you think this is advantageous to your children themselves and/or to Australian society as a whole? Would this affect social cohesion?

Do you feel that your children would contribute to a decline of separate cultural identities and create more of a focus on being Australian?

Do you think Confluents as “Australians” would undermine the narrow stereotypes of blond hair and blue eyes, and the notion that all Australians are Christians?

Do you think that Confluents being part of at least two different cultures and religions, could lead Australians to no longer look at where a person is from but what they are like and who they are as an individual? Could this lead to social cohesion being achieved?

Do you feel the circumstances of your own upbringing had been quite different from that of your children?

Do you feel you were unprepared for your role as parents in this society?

Do you think your children have been faced with and had more of a range of choices (as mentioned above) than what you have had?

Do you think your children being able to make such choices was positive or negative?

Do you feel you are losing control of your children?

Is the control, such as the control (if their parent's did) your own parents had had over them, negative?

Do you have enough control, little control or have you lost control completely over your children?

Hand out Sophia's story and explain a little about the story.

Sophia's story

"Where's my foundation?" screamed Sophia from the bathroom, her voice echoed across the house in a deafening tone. She was going through her ritual of preparing herself as she always does prior to an engagement. This ritual drove the family into a frenzy, only the lucky few escaped. Sophia was incredibly self-conscious, unless she felt she looked perfect, her night would be ruined for not only her but her friends as well. Despite reassuring comments from her best friends, Sophia strongly felt the need to be accepted. She was not fully Lebanese nor fully Australian, Muslim but still felt a connection to Catholicism, neither cultural group accepted her as one of their own. Her only means to acceptance was her physical appearance and her mental ability to swap very quickly into her prescribed role/identity. Sophia was a Chameleon, who changed her appearance (and name) in relation to the environment she was in. She looked Lebanese at a Lebanese function, Australian at an Australian do, and Muslim in a religious function. Sophia would become Sophie.

Despite the appearance change and her three different characters she conducted herself in, she was Sophia in her own right, which only her parents

accepted her as. Sophia's personality reflected her inner self's fight for acceptance. Not a day went by in Sophia's life where she did not argue - a reflection of her struggle. Her struggle for acceptance and belonging did not bring out a submissive nature in Sophia but rather a dominant nature determined to succeed.

What do you think of Sophia's situation? Do you see any similarity between her and your children? Do they behave differently depending on who they are with?

Do you think Sophia is just going through a "stage"? If yes do you think Sophia's age has something to do with this "stage"? Do you think Sophia would eventually have to choose one definite role? Did your children?

Sophia's parents obviously had an impact on Sophia's personality and she relied on their reassurance? How important is the role of parents in developing their level of acceptance?

Do you feel that the fact that Sophia felt she needed to change depending on which cultural group she was with would mean that the cultural group would determine her level of acceptance? Did this happen to your children? Do you feel both sides fully accepted your children, or rather do you feel as your child belongs amongst each group? Would this differ depending on the "cultural groups"?

Do you think Sophia is confused? Do you think her situation is of a positive nature?

Do your children tend to associate, make friends, identify with each other more often/easily/deeply than with those of unitary ethnicity? Do you feel your children act as a intermediary or go-between the two or should I say four groups?

Do your children feel the need to help other confluent youth? Have any confluents helped your children?

What image do imagine when you hear "Mixed Marriages" and children from "Mixed Marriages"?

Do you know any confluent public/ historical/fictional media figures? What's your impression of them?

(Give out Khalil Gibran's poem)

And a woman who held a babe against her bosom said, Speak to us of Children:

Your children are not your children

They are the sons and daughters of life's longing for itself.

They come through you but not from you,

And though they are with you yet they belong not to you.

You may give them your Love but not your thoughts,

For they have their own thoughts.

You may house their bodies but not their souls,

For their souls dwell in the house of to-morrow,

Which you cannot visit, not even in your dreams.

You may strive to be like them, but seek not to make them like you.

For life goes not backward nor tarries with yesterday.

You are the bows from which your children as living arrows are sent forth.

The archer sees the mark upon the path of the infinite, and He bends you with His might that His arrows may go swift and far.

Let your bending in the Archer's hand be for gladness,

For even as He loves the arrow that flies, so he loves also the bow that is stable. **(Khalil Gibran from 'The Prophet',pp. 20-23)**

Can you relate to this poem? Do you agree with the line "You may give them your love but not your thoughts"?

Tell me how you would interpret the following three lines:

"You may house their bodies but not their souls,

For their souls dwell in the house of tomorrow,

Which you cannot visit, not even in your dreams"

Can you relate to this? In what sense? Do you think you will ever understand your children? Do you think they will ever understand you?

Do you feel that this poem reflected how you perceive Unitaries? How do you perceive your children in relation to this poem?

Do you think Unitaries are "in-between" identities and thus never really belonging to either or do you think they hold two separate identities and belong to both equally. Or do you think they hold multiple identities?

How important is your culture and religion to you? What do you think makes a person a certain nationality? What makes a person Muslim? When you meet a person does their culture and religion matter to you? Does it matter for your children if they are thinking of a long term relationship?

Do you think this is the case for all Muslim youth? Does gender/nationality/state/class/education affect this?

Questions for Unitaries and Confluents that were asked:

Introductory questions the same for both groups:

What is your date of birth and place of birth?

If not born in Australia what age did you come to Australia?

What state are you currently living in? Have you always lived in this state? If you have changed states is their difference?

What is your present occupation?

What is your Education level?

What is your parents place of birth? If born overseas what year did they come to Australia? Your mother? Your father?

What is the nationality and religion of both your parents?

Were they raised this religion? If not what religion were they raised as?

Can you tell me about your parents background (Family, Education, Occupation)?

Can you tell me how your parents met? Did their parents approve?

What religion were you raised as? What religion do you see yourself as? Why?

Do you see yourself as a Muslim(or Christian etc) by chance or choice(meaning their parents had initially chosen their religion for them and whether they had adopted being Muslim as their own choice when older)? If by choice, why? If by chance why? If not sure, why? Has this feeling changed over the years?

How religious are you at this point of your life? Is this just a stage, do you think you will become more or less religious when you are older? If so why? If not why not?

Is your religiosity an informed choice?

Do you ever go to the Mosque/Church?

Have you ever looked into Sufism? If yes, has it helped you with your spirituality? What is it about Sufism that it appealed to you?

What nationality do you see yourself? Do you see yourself as Australian? If so why? If not why not?

How would you describe an Australian(Both physically and in character)? How

would you describe a Lebanese(Turkish etc whatever nationality one or both parents belong to)?

Do you see yourself integrated into Australian society? If so why? If not why not?

Do you think your physical appearance influences how well one can integrate into Australian society?

Can you separate yourself from your parent's culture? Do you want to?

In what ways would you say you differ (both culturally and religiously) from your parents?

How is your relationship with your parents? Does this have any affect on how you feel about your ethnicity or religion?

Which parent do you feel you can relate to more? Why? Is there a reason for this?

For Confluents: Which relatives do you see more? Which set of relatives do you feel closer too and relate too better?

For Unitaries: Do you have relatives in Australia? If so do you see your relatives much? If you have relatives in Australia and overseas which do you feel closer to and why?

What nationality and religion do your friends tend to be? Do you think there is a reason for this?

Do you have any Unitary friends? Do you have any Confluent friends?

Can you speak both your parent's languages? If not would you like to?

Do you think language is a key to a culture? Do you think you can either feel part of a culture without knowing the language?

Are you involved in any cultural or religious groups? If so why and which ones? If not why not?

Which do you think has more of an impact on your life, your ethnicity or your religion?

Which do you consider more important in selecting your spouse

a) Religion

b) Ethnicity

Why?

Would you marry somebody from a different cultural and or religious background?

How would you define arranged marriages? Do you agree with arranged marriages? Would you agree to an arranged marriage?

How important to you is love in a marriage?

In any stage of your life did you feel confused about your ethnicity or your religion?

Do you think Australians have a perception of what all Muslims are like, and why do you think this is so?

Do you think the Gulf War or any other world event influenced or altered people's perception of Arabs and Muslims?

For female Confluents and Unitaries wearing hijab and niqab: How long have you worn the hijab/niqab for? Does any body in your family/extended family wear it? Did your parents force you to wear it? How did your parent's feel about it when you started wearing it? How important is it to you? Has it been difficult for you? What sort of difficulties have you faced wearing it? Would you encourage someone else to wear it? Has your Austral ness been questioned for wearing it?

[Before asking this question explain Goffman's notion of "Stigma" give them the following paragraph to read]

Erving Goffman, in his book 'Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity' (1963, p. 3), argues that stigma – a powerful negative social label that radically changes a person's social identity and social concept, and is intimately associated with stereotype – is related to the unconscious expectations and norms that act as unseen arbitrators in all social encounters. He also argues that smooth interaction depends upon the participants having a socially accredited identity that is acceptable to others. Whether it is a blind man, the dwarf, or, as in my research, a member of a religious minority, all share some decisive characteristics; they are all socially "abnormal" and, therefore, in danger of being considered less than human. Thus, stigma is a study of situations where normal and abnormal meet (Goffman 1963, ch. 1).

Do you feel that there is or was a Goffman's notion of "stigma" attached to Muslim and or Arab youth? Do you feel this "stigma" was negative?

Do you feel there were any indirect positive effects from these 'Stigma's'?

Do you feel any or all areas of Media (Television, Radio, Newspapers, the Internet and books both fictional and non fictional written about Muslims) play a role in creating stigma and fear amongst people and society in general? If so can you give me some examples?

Are these negative stereotypes and stigma's worse for Muslim Women?

Do you think education that education is important for the next generation of Muslims. Do you view educated Muslims in a different category as non educated Muslims? Do you think they share different problems and thus share different interests. Do you think their level of understanding is thus any different?

Do you think that it is important for the youth of both groups to educate themselves and others in order for misunderstandings to disappear.

Have you ever had issues with confidence or your self-worth?

Explain 'Front door syndrome': The experience one life in front of your parents and one life when not at home. Do you feel you have experienced/or are experiencing a 'front door' syndrome? If yes has it caused a conflict for you?

Do you think you are more open-minded than your parents?

When/if you have children how would you bring them up differently to how you were raised?

How important is it you that your child is made to feel Australian?

Unitary Questions Only:

How do you think the wider community view Unitaries?

Do you think you are perceived correctly? If not how are you perceived?

Are you perceived by others (wider community in general) as “Australian”? If no, why do you think this?

Have you experienced any prejudice for your ethnicity or religion?

If yes have you experienced more prejudice for your ethnicity or your religion? Can you please give me some examples?

How has this prejudice affected you? Has it affected you feeling ‘Australian’?

Has there been any indirect positive outcomes from this prejudice?

Do you feel that Unitaries (with an Arab background) are doubly disadvantaged growing up in Australia for being Muslim and Arab?

Do you think your local ethnic or religious communities need to do more to help with these negative perceptions of Muslims and Arabs?

Do your ethnic communities see you as ‘Australian’?

Have you visited your parent’s country of birth? Did they see you as ‘Australian’? How did you feel about that?

Did your ethnic or “non-Australian” culture interfere with your “Australian” culture? Can you combine the two? If so how? If not why not?

Do you feel you are in-between, hold two separate or have multiple identities? Are you comfortable with this? Do you feel this is just a stage?

When you are referring to “Culture” are you referring to your “Ethnic Culture” or your “Australian Culture”? Do you feel you are expected to live up to both? Can you? If not why not?

Do you feel religion is part of your culture or vise versa? Should they be separate? If so why? If not why not?

Did your “Ethnic Culture” play any part in forming their “Muslim Identity”?

For female Unitaries does culture play a part in their behavior?

Do you feel your parents are experiencing a “Cultural freeze”: holding onto the culture of their home country as it was at the time when they left?

Do you feel you have two homelands? Do you think ‘multiple homes’ to be an advantage? Do you feel lucky or in conflict to have two homes?

Do you ever feel alienated? What are the reasons for this?

Do you feel integrated into Australian society?

Do you think certain factors influence the extent of whether or not you feel integrated or not? These factors include:

a) Name

b) Physical appearance

c) Language

d) Relationship with parents

e) Place of residence

f) Gender.

Explain the notion of coach.

Do you feel the need to act as a “coach” to fellow younger Confluents or Unitaries (say which ever one you are with).

Do you feel more open-minded than your parents about the Australian way of life?

What is your view about intermarriage? What advice would you give to anyone contemplating an inter cultural and inter religious intermarriage?

(I explain to Unitaries again the term Confluent).

Do you know any Confluent public/historical/fictional media figures? If so what was your impression of them?

Hand out Sophia's story and explain a little about the story.

Sophia's story

"Where's my foundation?" screamed Sophia from the bathroom, her voice echoed across the house in a deafening tone. She was going through her ritual of preparing herself as she always does prior to an engagement. This ritual drove the family into a frenzy, only the lucky few escaped. Sophia was incredibly self-conscious, unless she felt she looked perfect, her night would be ruined for not only her but her friends as well. Despite reassuring comments from her best friends, Sophia strongly felt the need to be accepted. She was not fully Lebanese nor fully Australian, Muslim but still felt a connection to Catholicism, neither cultural group accepted her as one of their own. Her only means to acceptance was her physical appearance and her mental ability to swap very quickly into her prescribed role/identity. Sophia was a Chameleon, who changed her appearance (and name) in relation to the environment she was in. She looked Lebanese at a Lebanese function, Australian at an Australian do, and Muslim in a religious function. Sophia would become Sophie.

Despite the appearance change and her three different characters she conducted herself in, she was Sophia in her own right, which only her parents accepted her as. Sophia's personality reflected her inner self's fight for acceptance. Not a day went by in Sophia's life where she did not argue - a reflection of her struggle. Her struggle for acceptance and belonging did not bring out a submissive nature in Sophia but rather a dominant nature

determined to succeed.

What's your impression of Sophia? Do you think she is confused?

Do you think she possesses multiple identities? Do you think Sophia's situation is a positive one?

Do you think Sophia is just going through a "stage"? If yes do you think Sophia's age has something to do with this "stage"? Do you think Sophia would eventually have to choose one definite role?

Do you think all Confluent children act like Sophia?

Do you perform differently depending on which cultural setting you are within?

Can you relate to Sophia in anyway?

What role do/did your parents play in your identity development? What would you do differently with your children?

Did either the wider or your cultural or religious community have an impact on your identity formation?

Do you feel the need to help other youth from a similar background? Would you help them from a religious or cultural level? Are you doing/or have done anything to help these youth?

What image do you have when you hear of "Mixed Marriages" and children from such marriages?

(Give out Khalil Gibran's poem)

And a woman who held a babe against her bosom said, Speak to us of Children:

Your children are not your children

They are the sons and daughters of life's longing for itself.

They come through you but not from you,

And though they are with you yet they belong not to you.

You may give them your Love but not your thoughts,

For they have their own thoughts.

You may house their bodies but not their souls,

For their souls dwell in the house of to-morrow,

Which you cannot visit, not even in your dreams.

You may strive to be like them, but seek not to make them like you.

For life goes not backward nor tarries with yesterday.

You are the bows from which your children as living arrows are sent forth.

The archer sees the mark upon the path of the infinite, and He bends you with His might that His arrows may go swift and far.

Let your bending in the Archer's hand be for gladness,

For even as He loves the arrow that flies, so he loves also the bow that is stable

(Khalil Gibran from 'The Prophet',pp. 20-23)

Can you relate to this poem? Do you agree with the line "You may give them your love but not your thoughts"?

Tell me how you would interpret the following three lines:

"You may house their bodies but not their souls,

For their souls dwell in the house of tomorrow,

Which you cannot visit, not even in your dreams"

Can you relate to this? In what sense? Do you feel your parents will ever understand you?

Do you think Unitaries are "in-between" identities and thus never really belonging to either or do you think they hold two separate identities and belong to both equally. Or do you think they hold multiple identities?

How important is your culture and religion to you? What do you think makes a person a certain nationality? What makes a person Muslim? When you meet a person does their culture and religion matter to you if you were thinking of a long term relationship?

Do you think this is the case for all Muslim youth? Does gender/nationality/state/class/education affect this?

Do you have anything else you would like to add?

Overall, would you like to make any other comment about growing up as a Unitary in Australia?

Confluent questions only:

See Introductory questions for both Unitaries and Confluents

How do you think the wider community view Confluents? Are you happy with this view?

Do you think there is a stigma attached to Intermarriage and children from Intermarriages?

Do you think you are perceived correctly? If not how are you perceived?

Are you perceived by others (wider community in general) as "Australian"?

Have you experienced any prejudice?

If yes, what for? Can you please give me some examples?

How has this prejudice affected you? Has it affected you feeling 'Australian'?

Has there been any indirect positive outcomes from this prejudice?

Do you feel that Unitaries (with an Arab background) are doubly disadvantaged growing up in Australia for being Muslim and Arab? Are confluents disadvantaged for this in any way?

Do you think your local ethnic or religious communities need to do more to help with these negative perceptions of Muslims and Arabs?

Do your ethnic communities see you as 'Australian'?

Have you visited your parent's country of birth (the parent not born in Australia)? Did they see you as 'Australian'? How did you feel about that?

Did your ethnic or "non-Australian" culture interfere with your "Australian" culture? Can you combine the two? If so how? If not, why not?

Do you feel you are in-between, hold two separate or have multiple identities? Are you comfortable with this? Do you feel this is just a stage?

Did you go through different stages in order to reach where you are in regards to your identity?

Do you think the stages you went through were a result of being a Confluent?

Do you think there are advantages and disadvantages going through these stages?

Do you feel you possess an identity to suit whoever you are with? Do you think you have "Multiple Selves"?

When you are referring to "Culture" are you referring to your "Ethnic Culture" or your "Australian Culture"? Do you feel you are expected to live up to both? Can you? If not why not?

Do you feel religion is part of your culture or vise versa? Should they be separate? If so why? If not why not?

Did Culture play any part in forming your religious identity?

Do you feel your father (or mother in one case) is experiencing a “Cultural freeze”: holding onto the culture of their home country as it was at the time when they left?

For female Confluents does culture play a part in their behavior?

Do you ever feel alienated? What are the reasons for this?

Do you feel integrated into Australian society?

Do you think certain factors influence the extent of whether or not you feel integrated or not? These factors include:

a) Name

b) Physical appearance

c) Language

d) Relationship with parents

e) Place of residence

f) Gender.

Explain the notion of coach.

Do you feel the need to act as a “coach” to fellow younger Confluents?

Do you feel more open-minded than your parents?

Did your parents decide before you were born what religion and or culture you would follow or was the choice left up to you?

Were you happy with the choice your parents made?

What terms have you been referred to as in the past? Did you like these terms? What do you think of terms such as half, mixed etc?

Do you think there is a need for a more positive term? Do you like the term Confluent?

Do you think there is a need for Confluents to have a collective identity? Do they need more representation in the media and in literature etc?

Do you think Confluents create their own culture? If so how?

Do you think being a Confluent is an advantage? Has being a Confluent been negative in anyway?

Do you think being of a mixed religious and cultural background has made you more open-minded in regards to different cultures and religions?

Do you feel you have two homelands? Do you think 'multiple homes' to be an advantage? Do you feel lucky or in conflict to have two homes?

What is your view about intermarriage? What advice would you give to anyone contemplating an inter cultural and inter religious intermarriage?

Would you choose your own children's religion or culture?

(See introductory questions first)

Hand out Sophia's story and explain a little about the story.

Sophia's story

"Where's my foundation?" screamed Sophia from the bathroom, her voice echoed across the house in a deafening tone. She was going through her ritual of preparing herself as she always does prior to an engagement. This ritual drove the family into a frenzy, only the lucky few escaped. Sophia was incredibly self-conscious, unless she felt she looked perfect, her night would be ruined for not only her but her friends as well. Despite reassuring comments from her best friends, Sophia strongly felt the need to be accepted. She was not fully Lebanese nor fully Australian, Muslim but still felt a connection to Catholicism, neither cultural group accepted her as one of their own. Her only means to acceptance was her physical appearance and her mental ability to swap very quickly into her prescribed role/identity. Sophia was a Chameleon, who changed her appearance (and name) in relation to the environment she was in. She looked Lebanese at a Lebanese function, Australian at an Australian do, and Muslim in a religious function. Sophia

would become Sophie.

Despite the appearance change and her three different characters she conducted herself in, she was Sophia in her own right, which only her parents accepted her as. Sophia's personality reflected her inner self's fight for acceptance. Not a day went by in Sophia's life where she did not argue - a reflection of her struggle. Her struggle for acceptance and belonging did not bring out a submissive nature in Sophia but rather a dominant nature determined to succeed.

What do you think of Sophia's situation? Do you see any similarity between her and yourself? Do you behave differently depending on who you are with?

Do you think Sophia is just going through a "stage"? If yes do you think Sophia's age has something to do with this "stage"? Do you think Sophia would eventually have to choose one definite role? Did you?

Sophia's parents obviously had an impact on Sophia's personality and she relied on their reassurance? How important where your parents in developing your level of acceptance?

Do you feel that the fact that Sophia felt she needed to change depending on which cultural group she was with would mean that the cultural group would determine her level of acceptance? Did this happen to you? Do you feel both sides fully accept you, or rather do you feel as you belong amongst each group? Would this differ depending on the "cultural groups"?

Do you think Sophia is confused? Do you think her situation is of a positive nature?

Do you tend to associate, make friends, identify with each other more often/easily/deeply than with those of unitary ethnicity? Do you feel you act as a intermediary or go-between the two or should I say four groups?

Do you feel the need to help other confluent youth? Have any confluents helped you?

What image do you imagine when you hear "Mixed Marriages" and children from "Mixed Marriages"?

Do you know any confluent public/ historical/fictional media figures? What's your impression of them?

(Give out Khalil Gibran's poem)

And a woman who held a babe against her bosom said, Speak to us of Children:

Your children are not your children

They are the sons and daughters of life's longing for itself.

They come through you but not from you,

And though they are with you yet they belong not to you.

You may give them your Love but not your thoughts,

For they have their own thoughts.

You may house their bodies but not their souls,

For their souls dwell in the house of to-morrow,

Which you cannot visit, not even in your dreams.

You may strive to be like them, but seek not to make them like you.

For life goes not backward nor tarries with yesterday.

You are the bows from which your children as living arrows are sent forth.

The archer sees the mark upon the path of the infinite, and He bends you with His might that His arrows may go swift and far.

Let your bending in the Archer's hand be for gladness,

For even as He loves the arrow that flies, so he loves also the bow that is stable

(Khalil Gibran from 'The Prophet',pp. 20-23)

Can you relate to this poem? Do you agree with the line "You may give them your love but not your thoughts"?

Tell me how you would interpret the following three lines:

"You may house their bodies but not their souls,

For their souls dwell in the house of tomorrow,

Which you cannot visit, not even in your dreams"

Can you relate to this? In what sense? Do you feel your parents will ever understand you?

Do you feel that this poem reflected how you perceive Unitaries? How do you perceive yourself in relation to this poem?

Do you think Unitaries are "in-between" identities and thus never really belonging to either or do you think they hold two separate identities and belong to both equally. Or do you think they hold multiple identities?

How important is your culture and religion to you? What do you think makes a person a certain nationality? What makes a person Muslim? When you meet a person does their culture and religion matter to you if you were thinking of a long term relationship?

Do you think this is the case for all Muslim youth? Does gender/nationality/state/class/education affect this?

Do you have anything else you would like to add?

Overall, do you see your culturally and religiously-mixed background as a positive or negative aspect in your life?

Appendix Four: Parents' Re-interview Questions

A longitudinal study was performed by re-interviewing some of the parents of Confluents and Unitaries using the same method as was used in my other interviews.

Re-interview questions:

Questions for parents of Confluents:

1. Over the last couple of years what do you feel your child/children has/have changed? Why do you feel this to be the case?

2. Have they changed culturally or religiously? If so in what way?

3. How and in what way have the following events affected you and your children?

A) The rapes in Sydney

B) September 11th

C) The aftermath of September 11th in Australia for example Mosques being burnt, Women wearing the headscarf being spat on etc

D) The Anti-terrorist Bill that is to be passed in Australia.

E) The rapist in Sydney being sentenced 55 years.

F) Australia's support in the war against terror.

H) The bombs in Bali

I) The aftermath of these bombs, once again the mosques being burnt, women wearing the headscarf being abused.

J) The refugee issue. Do you feel that this has anything to do with the majority of refugees being Muslim?

K) The terrorist threat to Australia. How does this affect you?

L) The raids of Australian Muslim homes

4. Have these events or any other event or events lead your child/children to associate with one side as opposed to the other? How do you feel about this? How does your children feel about this?

5. Do you think your children's "Australianness" has been questioned? Are they feeling like it has?

6. If your child/children are Muslim do they still feel like they are an "Australian Muslim"?

7. Do you feel anything has changed with people's attitude to you in general? What about to your children? Have they said anything about this?

8. Do you feel anything has changed with your(or your partners) Australian side? (For example their attitude to you and thus yours to them) what about towards your children?

9. Do you still feel that intermarriage is advisable especially with Muslims and non-Muslims considering recent events? Do your children still feel intermarriage is advisable?

10. Do you still feel it is advantageous for your child to be a Confluent? Does your child/children still feel this way?

11. If you have grandchildren or you wish to, do you think you would advise your children to bring them up the same way that you had previously anticipated or has your view changed now? If so what made you change? Have your children changed their minds on this?

12. Is there anything else you would like to add about being in an intermarriage (between Christians and Muslims) or your child being a Confluent at this time?

Questions for Parents of Unitaries:

1. Over the last couple of years what do you feel has changed? Why do you feel this to be the case?

2. Have your children changed culturally or religiously? If so in what way?

3. How and in what way have the following events affected you or your children:

A) The rapes in Sydney

B) September 11th

C)The aftermath of September 11th in Australia for example Mosques being burnt, Women wearing the headscarf being spat on etc

D) The Anti-terrorist Bill that is to be passed in Australia.

E) The rapist in Sydney being sentenced 55 years.

F) Australia's support in the war against terror.

H) The bombs in Bali

I) The aftermath of these bombs, once again the mosques being burnt, women wearing the headscarf being abused.

J) The refugee issue. Do you feel that this has anything to do with the majority of refugees being Muslim?

K) The terrorist threat to Australia. How does this affect you?

L) The raids of Australian Muslim homes

4. Have these events or any other event or events lead your children to associate with a certain group of people as opposed to another. Do you still attend Muslim functions, do your children still attend Muslim functions, youth groups etc?

5. Have you felt that your children's "Australianness" is or has been questioned?

6. Do your children still feel they are an "Australian Muslim?

7. Do you feel they are treated as an "Australian Muslim"? Do they feel they are

treated as Australian Muslims?

8. Do you feel anything has changed with how people treat you in general? (For example their attitude to you and thus yours to them) What about to your children, are they treated differently? If so, by who?

9. Do you feel that intermarriage is advisable especially with Muslims and non-Muslims considering recent events?

10. If you have grandchildren or you wish to, do you think you would advise your children to bring them up the same way that you had previously anticipated or has your view changed now? If so what made you change? Do your children still feel the same way about raising their children?

11. Is there anything else you would like to add about you or your children being Australian Muslims at this time?