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ON BEING LEBANESE IN AUSTRALIA

Identity, Racism and the Ethnic Field



INSTITUTE FOR
MIGRATION STUDIES
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TO OUR SONS AND DAUGHTERS

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CONTENTS

Acknowledgments	9
Introduction	10
Chapter 1	20
`Ashura in Sydney: the transformation of a religious ceremony as an act of migrant belonging	
Chapter 2	40
The <i>dabki</i> : negotiating otherness in contemporary Australia	
Chapter 3	57
The formation of the field of ethnicity and the problematic of community leadership	
Chapter 4	81
“ <i>Habiibs</i> ” in Australia: “like saying mate, but in Lebanese”	
Chapter 5	96
Hyper-sexuality, youth and ethnicity	
Chapter 6	111
The ‘lost’ girls	
Chapter 7	122
Wogs and Bulldogs	
Chapter 8	133
The logics of respect: integration and the politics of reputation	
Chapter 9	147
Everyday racism and the uncivil regulation of ethnic capital	
Conclusion	166
The torment of the ethnic habitus	
Endnotes	174
Bibliography	179



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INTRODUCTION

This book examines diverse aspects of the social experiences and cultural practices of Lebanese migrants and their descendants in Australia. Except for a relatively small number of studies (see Batrouney and Batrouney, 1985; Humphrey, 1998; Hage, 2002), writing on Lebanese migrants in Australia has generally placed relatively little emphasis on these immigrants' cultural practice and its articulation with dominant social and power relations. This book, drawing on joint research which spanned over a decade and included surveys, open-ended interviews and participant observation, contributes to the understanding of their dynamic experience of settlement and habitation in Australia by examining their cultural practice while critiquing the essentialist and celebratory notion of culture implied by some versions of Australian multiculturalism¹. But we also want to reshape the theoretical debates by drawing on the work of Pierre Bourdieu to develop an argument about ethnicity as a form of symbolic capital in the wider field of social belonging.

In the chapters that follow, we attempt to capture the commonalities and complexities of the experiences of what is often assumed to be a coherent ethnic community. We try to extend this singular view by considering the complications of class, gender, faith, politics and generation, among other things. A more conventional book on “the Lebanese community” would begin with a mapping exercise, which documents the size of such a community, pointing out that almost 75,000 Australians were born in Lebanon, and over 180,000 Australians claim a Lebanese ancestry, about 75% of which live in Sydney. It would also point out that just over half identify as Christian, while 40% are Muslim (ABS, 2008). It would also recount the history of Lebanese migration and settlement, the divisions within the community (such as faith), its political organisation and leadership, key socio-economic features and so on. But this has been done (Jupp, 2001) and, while this information is important, it tends to treat the ethnic community as a given social and historical category (and often implies some degree of coherence). In this regard, we want to distinguish our task from the task of writing the history and sociology of a diasporic community per se.

Central to our task is what flows from the recognition that ethnicity, of course, is not a given, but a socially constructed form of identification fashioned through the drawing of boundaries. The crucial thing about ethnicity in this regard is that it is defined largely in terms of the country of origin of the migrant generation. In other words, when people

migrate, their nationality “becomes” an ethnicity, especially in the context of societies like Australia based on high migrant intakes. In this process, someone’s “Lebaneseness” takes on a more pathological character, implying some deeper essence of cultural character when, in the homeland, it is primarily a category of citizenship in which divisions of faith, class, region, city and village, and so on are more readily seen. In this book, we will continue to use terms such as “the Lebanese community” simply because they have popular purchase and because any other form of definition is cumbersome – but it is always marked as problematic. In this book, we are much more concerned with the practices through which immigrants and their children insert themselves, or are inserted, into the wider national polity, and by doing this participate in their construction as an “ethnic community” within the wider domain of “ethnic politics”.

We examine, for example, the significance of cultural practices such as the `Ashura and the dabki (which have regrettably been neglected by researchers in migration studies²) and aspects of second-generation Lebanese youth sub-culture to consider the ways Lebanese Australians refashion themselves as both distinct because of their ancestry, but still part of “Australian society”.³ We offer here an account of a “reinvented” Lebanese ethnicity in Australia but one not framed just by the context of the settlement and the (waning) policies of multiculturalism. The book addresses the transformations of migrant practices in the context of an increasingly complex, globalised and ethnically interconnected society. Identity and belonging are, therefore, interrogated in terms of the modes in which the Lebanese Australians attempt to make themselves at home in this society.

Identity: being and becoming

Identity has become a key term in popular and scholarly discourse, but it is often used in flat, one-dimensional ways, as a product rather than a process. We will continue to use it, because of its purchase in these discourses, but for us it is always understood as a process of identification which is dynamic and plural. Hall (1996, p.4) argues convincingly that identity is not a state of being but a state of becoming. Perhaps it is truer to say that identity is an attempt to stabilise a sense of being as a moment in the process of its constant becoming. Such attempts at stabilisation may involve claims to some essence of identity, whether it be ethnic, gender, or whatever. This is often the case when identity is transformed at a certain historical and political conjuncture into a discursive and political strategy aimed at protecting its bearers. This kind of strategic essentialism is well developed in contemporary social and cultural theory (Spivak, 1988), But identity as a process also involves crossing borders, intersections, selective remembering, forgetting and innovation. In other words, identity is a continuous process of construction and deconstruction, adaptation and augmentation: its hybridity is as strategic as its forms of essentialism (Noble, Poynting and Tabar, 1999).

Even when identity is fixed or is perceived to be so, it is subjected to different interpretations by the social actors who are engaged in its reproduction and who have different capacities to affect the forms of identity. As identity is reproduced, it is transformed continuously according to circumstances and the interests and powers of agents interacting with it. Identities are not the result of simple dialogic relations of self and other, or even dominant and dominated, but complex networks of social actors in diverse sites drawing on different

resources and capacities. Therefore, identities are not simply symbolic entities through which we represent ourselves and others, but embodied practices of identification and adaptation deploying particular kinds of resources with which we position ourselves in diverse social domains. This is, of course, no simple act of will, for those resources are shaped by our histories, which are classed, gendered and racialised, and those processes of positioning are met by the acts of others who often have greater power to reject, validate, or reshape those practices.

Moreover, in this age of globalisation, those domains in which identities are located are no longer confined to the local and the nation-state, but are inextricably connected to global scales of contemporary life. Of the many factors that need to be examined when analysing identity, we concentrate in this book on the experience of Lebanese migrants and their descendants in the context of a multicultural society suffering at times from social tensions, and a nation-state undergoing a critical transformation under the pressure of neo-liberalism and globalisation.

Globalisation and identity

With the emergence of globalisation, identity has entered a new stage in the process of its formation. Time and space, which are the two basic coordinates that determine its character, are no any longer confined to local and even national boundaries. They are becoming increasingly shaped by transnational, global social processes. This is a crucial development for the analysis of identity, whether it is national, ethnic or even parochial. Identity in this changing context is being made and re-made and new identities are being forged in response to the new (local and global) coordinates that determine its points of reference.

In an attempt to capture the determining feature of globalisation, Giddens argues that in a global world: “the ‘invisible form’ of the locale conceals the distanced relations which determine its nature” (Giddens, 1990, p.18). This is further elaborated by Hall when he states that: “Places remain fixed; they are where we have ‘roots’.”⁴ Yet space can be “crossed” in the twinkling of an eye – by jet, email or satellite. Harvey calls this “the annihilation of space through time” (1992, p.302).

Annihilation of space by time means that identity is not only influenced by the immediate place in which it is immersed, but also by relations that are far away from where the bearers of identity are physically located. This, in turn, will reshape the “local” and the way it is experienced by its inhabitants. Also, by transposing the distant relations into a new context, these relations will be transformed because of the new reality in which they are re-embedded.

Before the 1970s, space was seemingly regulated by well-bounded national identities which overrode global time and firmly placed our identities in an “imaginary geography” characterised by a rigid system of independent nation-states. “Our placings in time”, as Hall puts it, were primarily placings in national, sovereign time presumably immunised from outside foreign interference. People, whether migrants or indigenous populations, were put under considerable pressure to assimilate into the homogeneous identity of

their nation-state. Following Anderson (1983), Hall notes that they had to belong to an “imagined community” characterised by common invented traditions, a shared myth of origin and a narrative of the nation which connect them to “larger, more significant national historic events” (Hall, 1993, p.301). The White Australia policy that was pursued by Australian governments until the beginning of the 1970s provides a clear case in support of this assimilationist trend (Tavan, 2005; Poynting and Mason, 2008). This situation was fundamentally reversed with the emergence of globalisation after the 1970s.

The reality of “time-space compression” poses a radically new challenge to the identity of the state and to the traditional reliance on cultural homogeneity for the maintenance of its unity. Confronted with an emerging plurality of identities and their resilience in the face of its traditional assimilationist policy, the state is under constant pressure to redefine its national identity and preserve, at the same time, its ability to regulate the cultural diversity of its population. At the same time, its citizens experience competing pressures to fashion a meaningful sense of selfhood which draws on what could be contradictory local, national and international affiliations, meanings, networks and resources.

Identity and the crisis in the nation-state

The transformation in the spatial and temporal coordinates of the nation-state has undermined its cultural and political identity (McGrew, 1993, pp.86-96; Castles et al., 1988). Neither the temporal nor the spatial dimensions of the national political community are any longer restrictively ordered and regulated by a central authority represented by the nation-state. This is leading to a paradoxical and contradictory development of the territorial state; at a time when the state is increasingly losing its control over its national economy, politics, and security, it also uses every opportunity to assert its autonomy and defend its so-called “specific way of life”. Although the latter development contradicts the former, it remains true to say that it is a compensatory act to conceal the real loss in national sovereignty.

On the other hand, the erosion of the authority of the nation-state and the gradual dismantling of its welfare apparatuses are exposing an increasing number of people, especially racial and ethnic minorities, to the harsh realities of an unbridled global capitalism (Hage, 2003; Kundnani, 2007). This new development is rejuvenating particularistic identities for opposite purposes. For the sake of protecting the nation-state, particularistic identities are summoned up by the central authority in the context of ethnicising its social, economic and even security problems. For migrants and their children, ethnically defined communities are not simply residues of past histories and geographies, backward-looking attempts to maintain traditional forms of belonging. These identities are produced and invoked to protect themselves against discrimination, inequality and the economic insecurity (i.e., unemployment and job insecurity) emanating from neo-liberal policies and the turbulence of global relations. The diminishing of the welfare role traditionally performed by the modern state in the Western world is giving more impetus to ethnic minorities to revert to their sub-national or supra-national identities in search for an alternative source of security.

This pattern in the development of the nation-state has been and is being repeated in more than one country in advanced capitalist societies (Kundnani, 2007). It is also readily

disseminated across the globe because of the increasing globalisation of media production. As a result, sub-national ethnic identities are articulating with similar ethnic or religious identities existing in different parts of the world and are converging to form cross-national diasporic identities. What has been hitherto considered to be a local conflict is now subsumed under broader conflict between different supranational identities: “a clash of civilisations”, a battle between the Christian and the Muslim worlds, or even the “forces of Evil” and the “forces of Good”. National identities are not simply imploding into particularistic identities; the latter are also subsumed under the banner of global conflicts cutting across national boundaries. In this context, an older language of national identity and ethnic community no longer seems capable of capturing the complex forms of insertion into local, national and global space. Examining the practices through which Lebanese Australians make themselves a home in Australia seems a much more productive way to explore these questions than beginning with pre-ordained categories of belonging.

The outline of the book

This book begins with examinations of two ritualised cultural practices within Lebanese communities in Australia, i.e., the `Ashura commemoration and the dabki dance. At first glance, these practices seem to fit within a logic of cultural maintenance, fostered by the open-ness of Australian multiculturalism but which seem to point ‘backwards’ to the homeland. What these practices reveal, however, are complex modes of insertion into Australian social life, forms of home-making which reference the past but which articulate with the present, and navigate between scales of the local, the national and the global. These chapters develop an argument about the resourcefulness of such cultural practices, a resourcefulness which we will frame as forms of symbolic capital that negotiate competing demands of ethnic identification and national belonging. The third chapter, which interrogates community leadership and its engagement in ethnic politics within the parameters of Australian multiculturalism, makes one of the central arguments of this book by positing what we have called the field of ethnicity and using this to consider these competing demands.

The middle section of the book explores the ways Lebanese migrants and their descendants respond to these experiences of social exclusion, refracted through relations of gender, ethnicity and social class. These responses, centred around questions of sexuality, age and linguistic expression, entail identificatory processes attempting to construct a sense of national belonging as well as ethnic community. These responses, moreover, defy the perception of being “lost between two cultures” that commonly characterises the plight of Australians from some ethnic minorities.

The final chapters of the book tackle more specifically the forms of racism encountered in the public spaces of contemporary Australian society. We show how these modes of racism serve to regulate the location of Lebanese Australians in the wider national field by controlling and defining the terms with which ethnic identity is recognized, validated and valued (or not). These forms of racism shape the attempts by Lebanese Australians to garner forms of social respect often denied them in the wider society. These three parts of the book share an emphasis on the dynamic and dialectical nature of the cultural practices

of Lebanese migrants and their descendants within the wider field of ethnicity. This focus gives a different shape to how we conceptualise their social existence.

From ethnic community to the field of ethnicity

The cultural practices examined in this book, we propose, pertain not simply to the formation of an ethnic community nor to an assimilated national identity but to what we call an “ethnic field”. Drawing on the work of Bourdieu, we use the term “ethnic field” to refer to the specific and distinct ensemble of relations that regulate and define so-called ethnic communities. This will be a useful concept for two key reasons. First, and as we’ve already begun to suggest, an “ethnic community” is in fact a sometimes loose (and sometimes tight) network of networks based on complex migration and settlement histories, in which both a high degree of overlap exists between categories and the ways they are translated into practices, identities and institutions (Lebanese, Arab and Arabic-speaking entities) and also a degree or demarcation (such as those along religious lines – such as the division between Christian and Muslim – and the divisions within Islam – such as those between Sunni and Shi’i). Second, in the context of migration, ethnicity itself is a relational category, defined largely in terms of the national origins of the migrant generation in relation to the nationality of the country of settlement. Despite popular perceptions, ethnicity is not defined by internally shared characteristics per se. In other words, ethnicity sits within a larger field of national belonging, but in complex relation to it and to other ethnicities alongside which it sits.

In some ways we are writing alongside the path-breaking work of Ghassan Hage (1998), who also uses a framework drawn from Bourdieu to examine Whiteness⁵ – not simply as the dominant racial identity of “Anglo” Australia, but as a form of symbolic capital which citizens attempt to accumulate to attain a place in the field of governmental belonging in multicultural Australia. As Hage points out, however, Whiteness only means something in relation to Blackness and Brownness. These do not simply signify a lack of Whiteness, but different forms of symbolic and physical resources, particularly in a nation which has, by and large, promoted cultural diversity as a key principle of social policy. We argue that the concept of symbolic capital can be made more useful when used not only in the study of dominant but also subordinate groups and the social networks in which they operate. This allows us to avoid the structuralist pitfalls implied in Bourdieu’s theory of “field” by focusing not only the reproductive aspect of social practice but also on its contested nature and transformative power. Such an approach is also beneficial insofar as it takes us away from simple and sometimes romanticised conceptions of community often lurking in studies of ethnicity and diasporic identities. We suggest here that migrant groups engage in practices of cultural maintenance and governmental belonging which produce not simply an “ethnic community” but a position in an ethnic field which has a curious and ambiguous relationship to the field of Whiteness, and work across a number of dimensions of social scale – the local, the national and the global.

In contrast to the field of Whiteness, we argue that an “ethnic field” emerges in Australia in the 1970s and more specifically after the Galbally Report (1978), the landmark review of services for migrants and ethnic minorities which was commissioned by the then Liberal

government of Malcolm Fraser (see chapter three). By using the term “ethnic field” we hope to avoid the analytical reductionism of much research into “ethnic communities” because it enables us to examine the specificity of ethnic practice and ethnic relations while also maintaining a strong sense of their links to broader social, cultural, political and economic contexts. Accordingly, an ethnic field is a structured and a structuring reality which refers to a designated ensemble of relations. There is, however, an analytically useful “problem” in the category of the ethnic field: when people migrate to Australia they come as migrants, but the process of settlement means that they undergo a transformation in the public imaginary to the status not of Australian but of ethnic. Despite decades of scholars pointing out that all people have an ethnicity, it is primarily migrants of particular origins and their children who are construed as having an ethnicity. This is captured in the contradiction in the way we use “ethnic”: it is used to refer both to a specific culturally defined community (ie, the Lebanese) and to those who are not of the dominant, “Anglo” background generally (the colloquial notion of “ethnics”). This is a production of the field fashioned in the wake of multicultural policies, both because of funding structures and because of the formation of organised representation through a “community” starts to appear; processes which only relate to those of non-“Anglo” ancestry. The reference for this “community” then is not simply a culture transplanted from the homeland, but a field of relations, positions and organisations shaped by the ethnic field, in which the ethnically defined “community” sits also in relation to the dominant culture and to other ethnically defined communities. This defines the “legitimate problematic” of the field, the structuring but contradictory logics that underline the relationships within and between “ethnic communities”, and between them and the dominant culture and the state. One of these contradictory logics is that the “ethnic identity” of the migrant is both an ethnically specific identity (say Lebanese) and an identity as an “ethnic”, each of which are in ambiguous relationship with a national identity.

This field generates “ethnic capital” – the resources and capacities available to and developed by the migrant and their children as they settle in Australia; resources and capacities which are validated by the state according to specific terms of definition. Again, this capital is not simply that which the migrant has brought from the homeland and circulates within a specific set of ethnically defined organisations, but includes the resources developed here through the experience of settlement which shapes their relations with other communities and the dominant culture.

The ethnic field also reshapes the embodied experience of the migrant and their children. Bourdieu uses the term *habitus* to refer to the embodied dispositions which exist as a form of internalised history, but which also structure the possibility of future practices. Popular understandings of the process of settlement assume a relatively straightforward choice, in which the migrant either assimilates the folkways of the country of settlement or hangs on to their ancestral ways. We suggest here that the experience of migrant settlement and the emergence of the “second generation” in Australia have a fundamental impact on the migrant’s *habitus* but not in ways that are simply integrationist or forms of cultural maintenance (see Swartz, 1997). Being a concept which also refers to the agency of ethnic communities especially in their reaction to state ethnic policies, the “ethnic field” enables us to analyse the power relations that traverse it and the impact that these relations will

have on re-defining its validated “capital” reflecting the outcome of the struggle and negotiations that take place within it between its protagonists (e.g., the state representatives versus ethnic leaders, some media figures versus ethnic minority youth). We argue that the local-global challenges encountered by Lebanese migrants and their various responses result in the contestation of the Lebanese “ethnic capital” through the mediation of an “ethnic habitus” that does not necessarily reproduce the “ethnic field” and its “legitimate problematic”, but also generates instances of resistance and forms of agency in which participants reshape aspects of the field.

Many of the chapters in this book examine the ways in which Lebanese migrants may seem to attempt to recreate practices which sustain a sense of an ancestral identity, but which display a more adaptive dimension to the experience of settlement. It aims to show that living in a globalised, multicultural society produces transformations in the argot of “second-generation” Lebanese youths, their relations of sexuality and gender, their appropriation of the “Aussie” institution of rugby league, and the ways in which they shape and reshape their desire for respect as they grow into adulthood. At each point, attempts to insert oneself into social space through these changing identities are met by contrasting responses from those with the cultural power to validate or demonise those identities. At stake in these changes is the value of augmented symbolic capital which positions them not just in relation to a field of “Whiteness” but in a field of ethnicity which is structured both by their attachments to their “ethnic community” and to the wider field of ethnic relations. Much like their elders who participate in forms of political representation, there is a double bind to their acts of self-presentation because they are caught in competing logics of recognition. But the dialogical nature of processes of identity formation are often more insidious than these examples might suggest: in chapter nine, we examine the forms of everyday racism which shape in a very practical way the capacities (the habitus) of those of Lebanese (and also Muslim) background – their access to and movement through public spaces.

Across all these examples, the cultural capital that attaches to being “Lebanese” in Australia is caught up in wider relations of belonging in Australia both because it problematises their relationship to “Whiteness” but also because it positions them within a specific field of ethnicity. We explore the ways that the symbolic value of “ethnic capital” is not solely determined by institutions of power but also by the “nation-ed existence” of civil society.

An ethnic habitus?

The book’s conclusion draws out some of these theoretical points and argues more specifically for the introduction of the concept of “ethnic habitus” while engaging with the empirical findings of the previous chapters and the issues they raise. We argue that habitus, as a system of predispositions acquired through the process of socialisation, is a useful Bourdieusian concept which could be used to further examine the impact on identity of globalisation, as manifested by migration and racism. What is distinctly interesting about this concept is the fact that in using it Bourdieu not only overcomes the classical dichotomy in social sciences between objective and subjective realities, but he also manages to show the organic link between the subjective, or rather the experiential/practical and structural aspects of social reality. In doing so, he shows how human practice is inextricably connected

with power relations that assume different shapes and forms throughout the whole of society. In this context, however, the important dimension of habitus for the purpose of our analysis (one which Bourdieu also emphasises) “is the adjustment of aspirations and expectations to what he [...] calls the ‘causality of the probable.’ Habitus adjusts aspirations and expectations according to the objective probabilities for success or failure common to the members of the same class for a particular behaviour.” (Swartz, 1997, p.105). Bourdieu (1984, p.471) writes that:

Objective limits become a sense of limits, a practical anticipation of objective limits acquired by experience of objective limits, a “sense of one’s place” which leads one to exclude oneself from the goods, persons, place and so forth from which one is excluded.

More importantly, in this age of the politicisation of identities and the revival of racist politics triggered by effects of capitalist globalisation, the “objective probabilities of success and failure” are not only determined by class membership, status group and gender. They are also determined by race and ethnic identity. In the process of migration and settlement, the physical and cultural capital of the person shifts from its location in a specific national field, through its recasting as “migrant” and then, for some, to a relatively settled position as a specific ethnicity amongst a wider field of ethnicities. In this process the capacities of the body change in their efficacy and appropriateness because the field in which they operate is transformed (and thus its existing capital is re-valourised) and because the body has to acquire new competencies. This is why it is crucial to pose the problem of the habitus in studies of ethnicity.

Considerable insights are gained by deploying the concept of habitus in our analysis of the way ethnicity is lived by the Lebanese in Australia. In this way, what may have once been experienced as national (or gendered or classed) capacities and self-images are now “ethnicised” – just as unemployment among Lebanese migrants was ethnicised in the 1980s (Humphrey, 1984), crime and violence in the 1990s (Collins et al., 2000) and terrorism in the last decade (Poynting et al., 2004). These actions of the state, supported by extensive media campaigns, resulted in reshaping the structure of “expectations and aspirations” among Lebanese migrants and their children in a way which helped in the re-production of their marginal position in Australian society.

Bourdieu (1977, p.82) is clear on the question of one’s position in society when he argues that the differentiating dimension of habitus can be seen:

in the form of dispositions which are so many marks of social position and hence of the social distance between objective positions ... and correlatively, so many reminders of this distance and of the conduct required in order to “keep one’s distance” or to manipulate it strategically, whether symbolically or actually, to reduce it (easier for the dominant than for the dominated), increase it, or simply maintain it (by not “letting oneself go”, not “becoming familiar,” in short, “standing on one’s dignity,” or on the other hand, refusing to “take liberties” and “put oneself forward,” in short “knowing one’s place” and staying there).

The marginality and social exclusion resulting from ethnic discrimination are therefore reproduced and made legitimate “at the heart of the functioning and structure of habitus, since habitus involves an unconscious calculation of what is possible, impossible, and probable for individuals in their specific locations in a stratified social order” (Swartz, 1997, pp.106-107). A sense of the appropriate place for Lebanese migrants is then embodied in the structure of their habitus, which ultimately leads to the reproduction of inequality based on their ethnicity. Many statements made recently by Lebanese migrants about their presence in Australia would lend support to this argument: “We are wogs”, “Muslims don’t stand a chance in this country”, “they hate us, they don’t respect our culture”, etc. Even the self-racialising statements made recently by Lebanese leaders during the rising tension between the Australian government and Lebanese youths (Poynting et al., 2004), could be better understood if seen as effects of the “structure of expectations and aspirations” of Lebanese migrants, which have been shaped by the Australian authorities and mainstream media in the last few decades.

In these circumstances, it is no wonder that the “ethnic habitus” is experienced problematically, in terms of a sense of victimhood, a search for respect, a fantasised sense of sexual power, an essentialist and a hybrid sense of identity. A detailed discussion of this concept, however, is deferred to the conclusion where we examine how the “tortured” habitus captures the contradiction (i.e., the dynamic and the patterned, the structuring and the structured moments) experienced by Lebanese migrants.

The Lebanese-Australian community is involved in many other cultural practices that are not examined in this book and we don’t claim this to be an exhaustive discussion. These include several religious (Christian and Muslim) ceremonies, rites of passage, literary writings and popular music and singing. These practices are produced in both English and Arabic languages (note for instance the growing number of novels written in English by Lebanese-Australian writers such as Lubna Haikal and Nada Jarrar). The examination of all these practices lies beyond the limits of this book. However, studying them in the future is indispensable to further understanding of the complex and rich reality of being a migrant – or their child – in an increasingly multicultural and globalised world.

CHAPTER 1

`Ashura in Sydney: the transformation of a religious ceremony as an act of migrant belonging

What does it mean to belong to “the Lebanese community” in Australia? What does it mean to belong to any ethnically defined community? As we suggested in the introduction, a typical place to start would usually be to give the broad contours of the “Lebanese community” in Australia, noting its size, its history of emigration, its internal divisions (in terms of faith, for example), its representation and leadership (in terms of major political and community organisations), its socio-economic characteristics, and so on. While this information is useful and necessary, it begs the question, for such “communities” don’t exist, they are made through the practices by which such categories – of identification, religion, leadership, etc are constituted. Moreover, such categories may not be the key way in to studying the shape of the migrant experience. We want to start somewhere else in this book, amidst the messy array of practices through which migrants and their children insert themselves into Australian society, find themselves a place in it and make sense of that place, engaging in forms of self-definition and social explanation.

In this opening chapter, we explore the phenomenon of the *`Ashura* ceremony. Although this is a *Shi`i* ceremony, we want to suggest that there is something beyond its status as a Muslim event. This chapter will argue that such events, far from being simple mechanisms for the reproduction of transplanted custom and tradition, are complex, situated processes of interpretation and adaptation through which participants make sense of the new world around them and articulate conventional modes of social explanation to the issues they face in this new world. Migrants and their children are typically seen as caught in the tension between the old and the new, between the logic of cultural maintenance and the requirement that they integrate as quickly as possible, but much more typically they fashion ways of articulating divergent experiences and demands. This articulation is not simply cognitive, providing a means to verbalise the problems they face, but corporeal, because it engages the body of the migrant. The connective tissue provided by the embodied relationing of the old and the new is fundamental to the transformation of the habitus of the migrant and their children. But first, some background.

***`Ashura*: a historical background**

Twelver *Shi`is* (the second largest Muslim community in the world after the Sunnis) believe that the successor to the prophet Mohammad should have been `Ali, his first

cousin and companion since the early days of Islam. `Ali was also the Prophet's son-in-law who married Fatima, (the Prophet's daughter by his first wife Khadija) and produced two sons, Hassan and Hussein. These two sons are the only male descendants of the Prophet Mohammad (Richard, 1995, p.16).

After Mohammad's death, `Ali could not immediately succeed him in the leadership of the Muslim community. He had to wait 25 years before he could become the fourth caliph ruling the young Muslim Empire. During this period, the Twelver *Shi`i* tradition tells that the three caliphs who preceded him as Islamic rulers, `Abu Bakr, `Omar and `Othman, usurped from `Ali the right to rule the Muslim *'Umma* (community of believers). Instead of opposing them by force, `Ali preferred to wait patiently until the death of the third caliph, `Othman. Afterwards, he became the fourth caliph having, according to the *Shi`i* tradition, wisely chosen to wait all this time instead of shedding the blood of Muslims in the battle for his legitimate claim to rule.

The prevention of `Ali from becoming the first successor of the Prophet Mohammad and his assassination in the fifth year of his rule present the first major events in the history of Islam which caused the development of a sense of injustice felt by `Ali's followers. This sense of being treated unjustly reached its peak with the events leading to the killing of `Ali's son, Hussein.

A few years after the assassination of `Ali, Hussein chose to lead a rebellion against Yazid, the new Omayyad caliph in Damascus, instead of accepting the peace pact which his brother Hassan had concluded earlier on with the Omayyads. The rebellion was planned to start from Kufa, a town in the south of present day Iraq where `Ali is buried. On the way from Medina to Kufa, Yazid's troops intercepted Hussein and his 72 companions and forced them to camp at Karbala, a tiny spot in the desert. The troops cut off the water supply from Hussein and his companions, and asked the former to do homage to Yazid, who had become caliph after the death of his father, Mo`awiya. Hussein refused Yazid's demand and subsequently died in battle defending his principled stand rather than surrendering to the supremacy of the Omayyads.

The battle that resulted in the killing of Hussein occurred on the tenth day of *Muharram*, the first month in the year according to the Islamic calendar. Most of Hussein's companions, including his son `Ali, his nephew Kasim and his step-brother al-`Abbas, were also slaughtered during the ten day battle at Karbala. Hussein himself was decapitated and his head was taken to Yazid in Damascus. His body was buried in Karbala where the battle took place. Hussein's tomb became a mausoleum for his commemoration. He is considered to be "The Prince of Martyrs".

Every year during the ten days of *Muharram*, Twelver *Shi`is* all over the world celebrate this event of *Ashura*. During the celebration, which can be held in a mosque, a public square, a public hall called *husseiniyya*, or a private house, participants listen to a dramatised or even a mythologically exaggerated rendering of the death of Hussein and his companions. While attending, the participants mourn the tragic deaths of all those who fell in battle,

particularly the cruel death of Hussein, and offer “votive meals and refreshments at the conclusion of each day of the celebration” (Richard, 1995, p.32).

This brief narrative about the death of Hussein is important to set the scene for the analysis of *‘Ashura* as it is practiced in Sydney.

The *‘Ashura* ceremony in Sydney

At the two places where the fieldwork was conducted for this study, the scenes almost replicated one another. At around 7 p.m., *Shi`i* migrants of both sexes and of different ages started to flow into a hall designed for the *‘Ashura* ceremony, *majlis t`azya*. Male and female participants went to separate areas. In the hall of the Australian Islamic Shi`ite Association, the female participants were hidden in an area parallel to the one in which male *Shi`is* were located. At *‘Amal*’s hall (*‘Amal* in Sydney is a branch of *‘Amal* in Lebanon, a *Shi`i* political movement founded by Imam Moussa Sadr in 1969), both sexes were housed in the same area, but males were seated on one side of the hall and females on the other. In the middle there was a space wide enough to let people walk in and out. This walking space was designed to divide the audience into two separate gender areas.

When people walked into the *majlis* (a meeting place to mourn Hussein), they either sat on a carpeted floor by squatting or on plastic chairs organised in rows, depending on which *majlis* they were in. Broad black sheets covered the walls and pillars of the hall. These sheets were decorated with colorful Kor’anic verses and slogans. The Kor’anic verses were mostly stitched with golden threads onto black cloth and framed in glass and wood. The slogans were written on similar pieces of cloth using green, white and red paint (red is commonly used to represent death and martyrdom). The slogans were extracted from sayings of the Prophet and *Shi`i* imams and most praised Hussein’s heroism. In the *majlis*, participants also dressed in dark colors to convey their sadness at what happened in the battle of Karbala. Through the wearing of these outfits, the state of sadness becomes a public symbol of the sadness of the whole community of *Shi`is*.

While the participants were flowing into the *majlis*, the recitation of the Kor’an was continuously heard from a cassette player. After approximately one hour, the cassette player was stopped and the ceremony officially started. Each night, during the ten days of *‘Ashura*, a sequence of events unfolded. First, a chosen person was given up to ten minutes to recite Kor’anic verses. Then, a leading figure (a sheikh or a lay person) from the religious association organising the event, delivered a speech. This speech normally focused on the significance of *‘Ashura* events and the different characters involved in them. Most of the time, the speech also linked *‘Ashura* events to present day events concerning the *Shi`i* community. Thirdly, a sheikh (*muqri`*) who normally came from Lebanon or another Arab country, recounted an episode from the story of Karbala. The *muqri`* had to be a specialist in the art of recounting the passion of Hussein and his companions. It should be noted that this person had to be brought especially from overseas for the performance of this task because no *Shi`i* in Sydney possessed the special skill to recount the tragedy. The *muqri`* must have a good voice and, at the same time, be capable of moving the audience to cry over the suffering of Hussein and his companions. The greater the audience’s cries, the

better the *muqri*' was considered at doing his job. In the ceremonies that one of the authors attended, the recitation of the *muqri*' was mostly accompanied by groans and tears on the part of the participants. In the fourth and culminating part of the ceremony, the audience would start beating their chests (*latmiyyah*), while repeating verses about the suffering of Hussein and his heroism. Some of the verses expressed the willingness of the *Shi`is* to sacrifice themselves for the sake of Hussein. At the conclusion of the *latmiyyah*, the sheikh would proceed with a prayer consisting of petitions raised to God and his Prophets. Normally, these petitions called upon God and the Prophets to be merciful on them, while delivering retribution to their enemies.

At the end of this final phase, the ceremony would be declared finished. Participants would drink tea and eat Arab sweets while friends talked to each other about a range of topics relating to community news, work, politics and other issues.

'Ashura: core themes and cultural transformation

In the analysis of the origins of what he called "the religions of lament", Canetti (1984, p.168) points out that "the legend around which [religions of lament] form is that of a man or a god who perishes unjustly".

According to the *Shi`i* tradition, Hussein died unjustly. He died in a battle in which his forces were greatly outnumbered by those of his enemy (the *Shi`i* narrative tells us that Hussein had 72 companions who had to fight several hundreds, even thousands of Yazid's army). More importantly, his enemy, Yazid, embodied the forces of evil; he carelessly transgressed Islamic moral codes by lavishly spending the tax (*zukat*) of the Muslim Empire on women and throwing outrageous parties in his palace in which alcohol was consumed (in Islam adultery and drinking alcohol are considered evil acts). In addition, Yazid lacked the essential quality that would entitle him to rule the Muslim '*Umma*'; he was not a member of the Prophet's family who, according to the *Shi`i* tradition, is exclusively endowed with a supernatural power to interpret the Kor'an and lead the '*Umma* onto the right path (*sarat mustakim*) of Islam. The *Shi`i* community believe that in the act of killing Hussein, Yazid deprived him from his divine right to rule the Muslim '*Umma* which was assigned to him (and his descendants) by God through the Prophet Mohammad.

The unjust circumstances surrounding the death of Hussein do not exhaust the complexity of the images through which the *Shi`is* perceive this tragic event. It is true that Hussein died at Karbala. But for his followers, the Imam (i.e., the leader of the '*Umma*) is too precious to simply consider his martyrdom to be the end point of his life. Hussein's descendant, Mohammad al-Mahdi, will reappear from the *ghayba* (occultation) on the day of judgement to restore the rule of the Imamate over the Muslim community. Until then, the *Shi`is* believe that Hussein is alive in heaven where the Prophet Mohammad has entrusted him with the key to paradise and God has made him the mediator for all in their afterlife (Corbin, 1971, pp.304-305).

The strong feeling of loss produced by the tragic death of Hussein has the effect of making lamentation one of the most distinguishing aspects of Twelver *Shi`ism*. Lamentation in

Shi`ism, “is the highest religious duty, and many times more meritorious than any other good work” (Canetti, 1984, pp.179-180). During the celebration of `Ashura, the more the Shi`i participants weep, the greater the heavenly reward will be and the quicker the release of the “hidden” Imam, the descendant of Hussein and the saviour of the Shi`is, will be. However, for the purpose of our study, it will be shown that the act of lamenting Hussein during the `Ashura ceremony in Sydney is partly transformed into lamenting the harsh realities of Shi`i migrants in Sydney.

Hussein was and still is the ideal father for the Shi`i community. He stood for the principles of “true” Islam and died for it. However, it will be clear from our analysis that the interpretation of Hussein’s death takes a different direction depending on the context in which it is carried out. In Lebanon, for instance, Hussein’s death is interpreted to have mobilised the Shi`is in the battle against the Israeli soldiers who were occupying south Lebanon until 2000. In Sydney, on the other hand, the Islamic values for which Hussein gave his life are overemphasised to encourage young migrant Shi`is to adopt these values in an attempt to protect them against the threat of losing their identity in the broader Australian society.

The legendary heroism of Hussein, his tragic death, his defiance of injustice, his willingness to resist evil and endure hardship and his embodiment of “true” Islam, are core themes of the `Ashura ritual. However, `Ashura yields, like any other cultural practice and belief, to a differentiated process of interpretation and alteration depending on the context in which the ritual is enacted.¹ This process may involve the suppression of some core themes, the foregrounding of others and their articulation with new ones. This chapter will show the way in which `Ashura undergoes a transformation – how the meanings ascribed to it are modified by Shi`i participants in the context of living in an urban migrant society. Given the global and local conditions of living in Sydney, many factors contribute to the reconstruction of the `Ashura ritual. These include parental control over children born and raised in Australia, the experience of marginality and racism by Shi`i migrants as well as the impact of media stereotyping on them. Effects of globalisation on the construction of the Shi`i identity within the context of `Ashura are also discussed. It is the argument of this chapter that the transformation of `Ashura in the context of migrancy is mainly effected to address current problems faced by the Shi`i migrants in the city of Sydney. Shi`i immigrants who participate in the `Ashura ceremony come mainly from a low socio-economic background. As we will see below, their work experience is fraught with incidents of exploitation, unemployment and industrial injury. This chapter shows that all these concerns are translated into the `Ashura ceremony to enable the participants to negotiate their adaptation to the new circumstances of the host society. Finally, we also argue that the participation in `Ashura will provides the venue through which the identity of Shi`i migrants is expressed in bodily terms.

It is important, however, to emphasise at this point that in the act of reconstructing their identity, Shi`i participants are not conceived as “passive, unconscious and isolated” individuals. Their reconstruction and modification of the meaning of `Ashura supports a view of Shi`i immigrants as actively involved in the reproduction of their ethnic identity.

We argue in this chapter that their ethnicity is not an ossified set of values and traditions passed down from one generation to another independently of them. *Shi`i* immigrants take part in the reproduction of their ethnic identity and, at the same time, modify its meaning to come to terms with the conditions of living in a new society.

Research methodology

This study was conducted using participant observation methods. For three successive years (1996, 1997, 1998), one of the authors attended the ceremonies of *`Ashura* organised by two *Shi`i* organizations, the *'Amal* Association and the Australian Islamic Shi`ite Association, in southwestern Sydney. In the first two years, he observed the ceremony which was organised by the Australian Islamic Shi`ite Association. In the third year (1998), he attended *'Amal's* ceremony. In 1997, a research assistant attended *'Amal's* ceremony for five nights and recorded his observations. Material collected on these occasions forms an important source of information used for the present study.

For the purpose of this study, the same author also conducted semi-structured and open-ended interviews with 14 participants, 12 males and two females. Of the sample, two were unemployed (one male and one female), another two were pensioners, one 15 year-old boy was still at school, and the rest were employed. All the interviews were recorded and, later on, transcribed by the same research assistant. Information collected in these interviews constitutes a second major source of information upon which this study is based. Unfortunately, it was unfeasible to select a sample of interviewees which would reflect the economic, age and gender composition of all the participants in the *`Ashura* ceremonies during the three successive years in which the research was conducted. For this reason, we were content to choose a number of participants representing a variety of voices. Although male parents were over-represented, we interviewed four young participants to make sure that the youth perspective on *`Ashura* is also discussed. Two of these young people were female and one of them was born in Australia. As indicated above, ten out of the 14 respondents were employed, two were aged pensioners and the remaining two were unemployed. All the interviews were conducted in Arabic and translated into English by the author, except for two interviews in English.

At this point, it is appropriate to state that the majority of *Shi`i* Lebanese migrants live in the area in which the *`Ashura* ceremonies were held. According to Michael Humphrey (2001), the majority of Muslim Lebanese who migrated to Australia are Sunni. A third of them are *Shi`i* and the rest are Druze and *'Alawi*. Census figures from 1996 show that the number of Lebanese-born Muslims was 27,125 (the number had increased to 30,290 in the 2006 census), representing 38.6% of all Lebanese migrants and 13.3 % of all Muslims in Australia. Nearly all Lebanese-born Muslims living in New South Wales (74%) reside in Sydney. The bulk of *Shi`i* migrants arrived in Sydney after 1975 and settled in the southern Sydney suburbs around Arncliffe. The 1996 census reveals that 11.9% of the residents living in these suburbs (i.e., the local government areas of Hurstville, Kogarah and Rockdale) were Muslims, and most of them were working-class. Between 1975 and 1977, around 14,000 Lebanese Muslims arrived in Australia under relaxed humanitarian criteria initiated by the federal government because of the civil war in Lebanon. In contrast

to the early migration of Christian Lebanese to Australia, the late coming of *Shi`i* Lebanese to Australia meant that they faced the tribulations of settlement in a new country primarily as family units and members of friendship networks. In the late seventies, *Shi`i* migrants formed their first community organisation, the South Lebanese Association, to look after their settlement and welfare needs. In the early 1980s the association disappeared and *'Amal* and *Hezbollah* became the prominent *Shi`i* organisations. A *Shi`i* mosque (*Al-Zahra*) was built in the suburb of Arncliffe in 1983. Currently, it is under the leadership of a pro-*Hezbollah* religious sheikh.

“Away from evil activities”

The majority of the respondents in our sample believe that participation in *`Ashura* is important to inculcate in the young generation the moral codes derived from the religious ideals cherished by Imam Hussein. Youths in Australia, they argue, are faced with serious social problems, particularly the problems of drug addiction, theft, alcohol and early school dropout. Eventually, experiencing these problems will lead young *Shi`i* migrants to lose their cultural identity. Parents and religious leaders put it to us that by attending *`Ashura* *Shi`i* young people can preserve their identity and develop appropriate moral attitudes.

Fathers expressed their concern about many social problems in Sydney and their potential effects on their sons and daughters. `Ali, aged 51 and the father of two sons and one daughter, pointed out that in Australia, there are problems of drug abuse, moral corruption and a high crime rate. Basim, aged 67 and the father of two sons and three daughters and Haytham (aged 52 with three boys and three girls) reminded us of the importance of religion in immunising the family against “disintegration”. For Basim, who was particularly concerned about the effect of drug use on young *Shi`i* migrants, “*Ashura* reminds people to take the *sarat mustakim*, the straight path in life”. In relation to Haytham, the preventive effect of *`Ashura* on young people is expressed in clearer terms, “*Ashura* enlightens the person who lives in Australia. It guides him [in how to] conduct his life, his faith and his moral behaviour properly. [*Ashura* guides the person] into the proper way of dealing with other people”.

'Ahmad, a 46 year-old father of five children, the president of the *'Amal* Association, listed a number of problems faced by the young *Shi`is* in Sydney: drug use, the generation gap, early school dropout, marital problems and divorce. For this reason, 'Ahmad argued that *`Ashura* provides the opportunity for the sheikhs to discuss these problems and propose solutions from an Islamic point of view.

Mahdi raises his concern about how the law in Australia supports kids' autonomy. He is 55 years old and the father of three boys and one girl. In the interview, he remembered “the good old days” when he was a young man in Lebanon. When he was young he would not dare smoke a cigarette in front of his parents. Today, he assured us, that when one's son becomes 18 years old, “We can't force him” (these words were spoken in English indicating that the inability of the father to control his son is associated with the English language). The state makes him responsible for himself and parents have no power to prevent him from any wrongdoing. He then concluded, “If my kids participate in *`Ashura*...

they will have to learn [virtue] and it will help them shape a solid personality according to its principles...away from evil activities”.

The above quotations show how many *Shi`i* parents are worried about losing control over their kids. They seek to secure this control by persuading their kids to attend *`Ashura* ceremonies to acquire *Shi`i* moral codes. This concern over the loss of parental authority is also reflected in the sermons delivered by the sheikhs during *`Ashura*.

On each *`Ashura* ceremony observed, the sheikhs delivered speeches on the various youth problems associated with growing up in Australia. One of the issues raised was related to the negative impact of TV programs on the behaviour of migrant *Shi`i* youths. They also included talks about the lack of religious education amongst the *Shi`i* youths, the corruption of their morality, the need for proper family upbringing and the danger of sexual liberty of young *Shi`i* girls in Australia (they were delivered on September 5, 1996, May 22, 1996). Apart from calling upon *Shi`i* youths and parents to comply with Islamic norms and values, these sermons raise the more important theme of *Shi`i* migrant loss. In most of the sermons the sheikhs were greatly worried about the potential erosion of the religious and cultural identity of young *Shi`i* migrants. More often than not, they referred to the erosive effects of “Western culture” and emphasised the duty of parents to raise their sons and daughters as proper *Shi`i*. In this context, emphasising the attendance of the *`Ashura* ceremony every year becomes essential in the process of becoming a *Shi`i*.

In Australia, therefore, the *`Ashura* ceremony is not only an occasion in which *Shi`i* fathers and sheikhs express their fear about the actual or potential social problems that the *Shi`i* youths face. More significantly, they also use this opportunity to voice their concern about the loss of their religious-cum-ethnic identity. *Shi`i* migrants indemnify their identity in the ceremony of *`Ashura*. In this way, *`Ashura* becomes a religious event designed to enable *Shi`i* fathers and religious leaders to pass on their identity to the next generation. In the context of an urban environment dominated by a liberal “Anglo” Australian culture, *`Ashura* has been transformed into a prime site for preserving cultural identity and restoring parental authority over the kids. More remarkably, the identity threat posed by the experience of migration leads to accentuating the migrant’s concern about his/her cultural identity.

Omayyad oppression, Australian racism

The transformation of the meaning of *`Ashura* is not only related to the fear of identity loss and the moral conduct of migrant youths. It is also effected by experiences of racism, media globalisation, alienation and the need to form a unified identity to face the difficulties associated with migrancy.

As shown in the beginning of this chapter, *`Ashura* leads its participants to focus on the oppression experienced by Imam Hussein, his relatives and companions. Many respondents mentioned that listening to the narrative on the oppression of Hussein’s family and his cruel assassination called to their minds their personal experiences of discrimination and racism in Sydney. This association between Hussein’s suffering and the respondents’ experiences of racism is far from being caused by a similarity between the degree of suffering involved

in both cases. However, the fact that *Shi`i* migrants believe that Hussein was the victim of Ommayyad oppression leads them by association to muse upon their own experience of being victimised in Australia.

Ibrahim, a community worker and an active member of the 'Amal Association, stated that while listening to the reciter (*muqri*) relating the painful experience of Hussein and his family, he remembered his own experiences of injustice and discrimination in Sydney. Often, he expounded, the *Ashura* ceremony led him to think about the "oppression" which the Muslims and especially *Shi`is* faced in Australia. This oppression is "caused by the fact that we belonged to a different culture. You feel that you can't integrate in this country one hundred percent. This is one type of oppression that one experiences. It constitutes an obstacle [to one's right to practice freely] one's beliefs". Ibrahim added, "a Muslim woman who puts [on] a headcover is exposed to intimidation by the public while walking on the street". He then blamed the government for not "organising an awareness campaign against racism,...which is not the product of the present moment, but rather the product of hundreds of years....Racism was not "only exercised against veiled Muslim women but also against male Muslims who grow a beard or pray in a particular place or a particular mosque" [sic].

Ibrahim also relayed to us his personal experience of discrimination. He said that a government department in the capital, Canberra, refused to employ him because he was seen in a demonstration organised against the Israeli shelling of Lebanese territories in 1993.

Another participant named Khalil was also a community worker and had recently married; he had no kids. He arrived in Sydney in 1986 at the age of 19 and studied electrical engineering but "did not like" to work in this area. He told us that *Ashura* creates the atmosphere to reflect on his experience of racism in Australia. In the *Ashura* ceremony, Khalil would think about the contrast between the physical pain inflicted on Hussein and his companions and the "psychological" oppression of Lebanese migrants, and Muslims in particular, "psychological oppression is harsher [in its effects on the person]... oppression [in Australia] is inscribed in the language used by the media, in the workplace and in everyday activities". To prove his point, Khalil mentioned the term "Lebanese, born in Australia" which is used by the radio in Australia in reference to criminal incidents in which Australian youths of Lebanese background are involved. To him, this term implied that the mainstream media in Australia did not accept the full membership of these youths in Australian society because of their Lebanese (and *Shi`i*) background. Khalil also mentioned that if a migrant of Lebanese background spoke grammatically correct English but his accent was not typically Australian, it would be reason enough for the Anglo to consider him/her as being non-Australian. In these brief examples, we can see how the category of "Muslim" in fact overlaps with the categories of "Lebanese" and "Arab" (or Arabic-speaking), a point we've made elsewhere, adding the category of "Middle Eastern" (Poynting et al., 2004).

Zahi, who was a car builder at the State Rail Authority at the time of the interview, spoke

about recalling in *`Ashura* the many occasions when he was called a “wog” or told to “go back home”. He also mentioned that attending *`Ashura* would bring to his mind the instances when workers of non-Arab background in the railway used to tell him that the Prophet Mohammad “is your God” and that “[Muslims] worship him”. “When I was asked about my religion, I told them I was a Muslim. Then, they would tell me that Muslims worshipped camels”. At another point in the interview, Zahi told us about an incident that occurred during the (first) Gulf War resulting from Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait in 1990. “At the time I was in my house sitting on the balcony with my wife, sons and daughters... on many occasions people driving by swore at us using rude words.... They used to poke their heads out of the car’s window and tell us to ‘go back home, you camel driver’. Later on, my wife stopped sitting on the balcony during [the Gulf War] period to avoid these problems”. During the same period, he continued, “my wife was scared to go to the shopping centre, too”. This incident is often brought to Zahi’s memory while attending the *`Ashura* ceremony.

Zahi also recalled that he remembered in the atmosphere created by *`Ashura* the instances when students at his daughters’ high school made rude remarks to female Muslim students wearing headcovers. Finally, he spoke about his fear of Pauline Hanson and the One Nation party. He described her as “the key to evil in this society especially to new and old migrants...her ideas are racist....This creature produced fear in our hearts and made us suspicious of [our] future [in Australia]....”²

Another significant part in the interviews with both Ibrahim and Zahi is the fact that part of their remembered experience of discrimination and racism took place within the context of events happening in the Middle East (the Israeli wars against Lebanon in 1993 and 1996, and the Gulf War in 1991). This indicates the growing significance of globalisation in the construction of migrant identities. Globalised media made these events at the time influential in the process of interpreting *`Ashura* and the shaping of the identity of the Lebanese Muslim migrants. In the case of the above two respondents, globalised media facilitated the expression of their sympathy with people sharing the same cultural background (more will be said about the effects of globalisation on *`Ashura* and the related question of the identity of the *Shi`is* in Sydney).

Reflecting upon experiences of racism and social exclusion during *`Ashura* was not restricted to the adults who participated in the ceremony. Young participants also related to us that it was the recounting of the passion of Hussein and his companions that often brought to their minds their own experiences of racism, social exclusion and misunderstanding by the White Australian society.

Wasif, a 15 year-old schoolboy born in Australia, recounted that *`Ashura* induces him to think about the existence of racism and sexism in Australia directed against Muslim women wearing headcover. He also said that the *`Ashura* ceremony calls to his mind Australian racism against Aboriginal and Chinese people. Jamal, aged 21, worked in a jewellery shop. He normally attended *`Ashura* ceremonies with his father. He claimed that the issue that most often came to his mind while at an *`Ashura* ceremony was equating Islam with

terrorism by some Australians. “They believe that you are a terrorist because you are a Muslim”. At another point, he indicated that the media in Australia would not specify the religion of a wrongdoer unless he/she was a Muslim. In this case, “[the media] always mention his religion first”. On many occasions Jamal had to defend the image of “real” Islam in response to the accusation made by a girlfriend charging Islam with disrespectful treatment of women.

Fatima is 18 years old. She was studying accounting and working full-time when we spoke with her. She argued that Muslims are “*mazlumean*” (oppressed) in Australia. She related to us that while she was waiting for the bus one morning a car passed by and the people in it “beeped their horn at me and stuck their finger up... We [note her use of the pronoun ‘we’ referring to all the *Shi`is* in Australia] are not doing anything wrong. All we’re doing is following our religion [the respondent wears a headscarf] and we wouldn’t say anything to them if they were following theirs. We get a lot of *haki* [negative comments] about our religion....” Fatima complained about the lack of understanding that the broader community showed Muslims. At school, she continued, “We used to sit down as a group, Aussies and different religions. We used to explain our religion. They wouldn’t understand... especially the [white] Australian [sic], because of our traditions and things like that. They think it’s something weird”. In the interview, Fatima pointed out that she could not forget the oppressive reality surrounding her in Sydney whether she was attending an *Ashura* ceremony or not.

The *Ashura* ceremony, therefore, provides the appropriate context for the above respondents to recall their feelings of victimisation and their experiences of racism and social exclusion. In doing so, *Ashura* takes on the function of uniting the *Shi`i* migrants around their sense of victimisation, and consequently their sense of solidarity is heightened. An accentuated sense of being a victim and possessing a threatened identity seem to clearly emerge as a constitutive element of the transformed identity of a *Shi`i* in Sydney.

“Every day in Lebanon is similar to the days of Karbala...”

The parents in our sample expressed their worries about the *Shi`i* youths in their community by articulating these in the context of the moral aspects of the *Ashura* ceremony and the (re) interpretation of some of its meanings. In addition, they, along with younger respondents, experienced the ceremony as an allegory through which to express their distress – venting their feeling of bitterness that came from their experience of discrimination and other racist acts. This feeling of anger and distress is made even stronger by the subjugation of *Ashura* participants to the effects of globalisation on media and the flow of cultural images. Media globalisation makes the migrants readily aware of events happening abroad. The fast and constant flow of images by the globalised media, enables the *Shi`i* migrants to follow up the news affecting Muslims in the world and more particularly the *Shi`i* community in Lebanon. News about the Israeli occupation of South Lebanon between 1978 and 2000 and media attacks on Islam as a “terrorist” religion make the identification of the *Shi`is* with Hussein’s oppression even stronger.

While attending an *Ashura* ceremony and reflecting on the oppression suffered by Hussein,

Mahdi stated, “the Kana massacre comes to my mind and other international [incidents] in which the powerful nations are pitted against the weak ones”. “When I’m in a state of mourning I focus on the [sufferings] of the family of the Prophet and other collective tragedies such as the incident of Kana, the Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon...”³

`Ali mentioned that among the *Shi`is* in Lebanon, an increasing number of them were imitating Hussein’s behaviour in Karbala by carrying suicidal bomb attacks against Israeli soldiers in southern Lebanon. Obviously, `Ali implied that inasmuch as Imam Hussein was prepared to sacrifice himself and his family for the sake of fighting an enemy of Islam, *Shi`is* in Lebanon are also prepared to do the same thing in relation to the Israeli soldiers in South Lebanon. More accurately, *Hezbollah* fighters were carrying their suicidal attacks against Israeli targets using Imam Hussein as an example of utmost courage and martyrdom.

Ibrahim made a similar point and argued that while attending an *Ashura* ceremony, he remembers “many places in the world where oppression is exercised”. Khalil, on the other hand, said that *Ashura* themes of injustice has made him think that the media in Australia is extremely biased when covering events in the Middle East. In his view, the media favoured the Israelis.⁴ When Khalil attended an *Ashura* ceremony and listened to the unfolding of events in Karbala, he remembered the Israeli siege of Beirut in 1982; in both cases a minority was overrun by a militarily superior and oppressive power. Furthermore, he mentioned other incidents “crossing” his mind during the *Ashura* ceremony, in particular, the killing of people in his village since 1967: “From time to time we hear the news about someone who got killed or wounded or became a prisoner [of the Israeli occupiers in the south of Lebanon]”.

Tarek stated that while mourning Hussein’s death, “I remember my extended family [*Ahli*] in southern Lebanon... how they were intimidated by collaborators with Israel... the killing of innocent people by Israeli air raids”. Basim also associated Hussein’s oppression with events that happened during the 1975-1990 Civil War in Lebanon. “They killed people on the basis of their religious affiliation....Every day in the south of Lebanon is similar to the days of Karbala.... Everywhere oppression makes us mournful”. Hussein’s oppression and tragedy highlighted in the *Ashura* ceremony reminded Zahi of many injustices around the world: media bias against the Arabs, the Israeli invasion of Lebanon and the expulsion of his family and other villagers from Kawnine, a village in the south of Lebanon. When Jamal attended an *Ashura* ceremony, he associated the cruelties suffered by Hussein with the manner in which Islam is treated by the media in the West: that Islam and Muslims are always associated with terrorist acts.

The speed with which news and images travel throughout the world –a process captured by defining globalisation as time-space compression (Harvey, 1989) and time-space distanciation (Giddens, 1990) –enables migrants to keep in touch with events and happenings around the world and in particular in their original homeland. This is clearly reflected in the interviews quoted above, when *Ashura* ceremony participants spoke about events and incidents that were happening in Lebanon and their home villages. Thus, through the deterritorialisation of culture, the breaking of links between culture and a particular place,

the identity of an ethnic group is no longer exclusively shaped by images and experiences that are produced in the place where the group is physically situated.

The globalisation of media enables migrants in Australia to consume more media and other cultural products – and more quickly – from their country of origin. Reflecting on the passion of Hussein and his heroism during `Ashura ceremonies in Australia invokes in the Shi`i migrants images of events in Lebanon communicated through processes of globalisation.. In this way, `Ashura itself is being globalised. Globalisation creates the opportunity for migrants to appropriate the `Ashura ceremony differently and readily define their identity with reference to events happening in their country of origin, and not exclusively in terms of their experiences in Australia. After the forces of globalisation disembed the images of these events, the Shi`i migrants would re-embed them in the process of recreating their ethnic identity. Distanciated events are articulated with local experiences under the impact of globalisation which further transform aspects of the `Ashura ceremony and make it a glocal event.

`Ashura attendance: *ghurbah*, liminality and homeliness

Interviewees revealed the important role assumed by `Ashura in overcoming their sense of *ghurbah* and in the construction of their sense of group belonging. Overcoming the feeling of *ghurbah* (being uprooted in a foreign country, away from home, relatives, community and traditions and experiencing problems associated with living in a foreign society) and producing a sense of belonging are two interrelated processes. By attending the `Ashura ceremony, Shi`i migrants re-construct their communal identity through their joint enactment of common beliefs and shared values. They also find in the `Ashura ceremony a “homely” environment where they can temporarily overcome their feeling of *ghurbah* derived from living in a highly urbanised city where capitalist relations of exploitation, individualism and secularisation are dominant.

In contrast to house-building, home-building involves the production of a “homely”, comfortable “space”. It is “an affective edifice constructed out of affective building blocks” (Hage, 1997, p.102). These so-called “affective building blocks” could include listening to a song coming from the country of origin, participating in a community festival and even producing and consuming meals characteristic of the migrant’s country of origin.⁵

In our case study, the celebration of `Ashura by Shi`i migrants in Sydney can be viewed as an act of creating and enjoying an environment in which Shi`i participants would feel at home. This “homely” feeling generated by the participation in `Ashura is necessitated not simply by experiencing the harsh realities of an urban capitalist society but also by encountering ethnic stereotyping and discrimination. Home-building in `Ashura is not a nostalgic practice directed at restoring the past but rather a compensatory act, “here and now”, for losing a sense of “homeliness” in the broader society in which the Shi`i migrant is located.

Furthermore, the `Ashura ceremony has many aspects of a liminal experience as defined by anthropologists.⁶ Firstly, it is a religious ritual that is enacted by Shi`is once every year.

Although there is no age limit on people attending the ceremony, *ʿAshura* can be conceived as a *rite de passage* for young and old *Shiʿis* whose religious identity will remain lacking unless they celebrate the martyrdom of Hussein each year in the month of *Muharram*. So attending an *ʿAshura* ceremony is for every *Shiʿi* an opportunity to rejuvenate his/her belonging to the *Shiʿi* identity. Before the *ʿAshura* celebration, *Shiʿis* feel something lacking in their identity that can only be fulfilled (temporarily) in the act of participating in *ʿAshura*. At the end of the ceremony, the participant feels that his/her *Shiʿi* identity is realised and he/she can only maintain this status by attending *majlis tʿazia* (the council for expressing consolation) for Hussein every year.

The liminal aspect of *ʿAshura* is also revealed in the temporary break it makes with the outside world of inequalities and conflicts and the leveling effect it has on its participants. Like any liminal experience, the *ʿAshura* ceremony strips its participants of their (often inferior) status in the broader society and subjugates them to a homogeneous state created by shared values and beliefs. In other words, *ʿAshura* generates among its participants what Turner would call a sense of “communitas”, “a sense of comradeship and communion” (Turner, 1974, p.259). The dispersed and differentiated character of migrant presence in the broader society is strongly negated in the context of the *ʿAshura* ceremony. Much of what has been dispersed and fragmented in the interstices of the broader community is now combined and united or cathected in the actual event of *ʿAshura*. The *ʿAshura* ceremony is an intense binding force for the *Shiʿi* migrants whose experience in the outside world is riddled with dispersal, alienation and angst.⁷

Mahdi was a factory worker. He injured himself and believed that he didn’t get “fair” workers’ compensation awarded by the court for his injury. At the time of the interview, he was already a pensioner. Mahdi declared that he attended the *ʿAshura* ceremony in Sydney because first and foremost he was a *Shiʿi*. In an environment which can be unjust and hostile to his cultural identity, the assertion of the *Shiʿi* identity for Mahdi appears to be the main driving force for attending the *ʿAshura* ceremony. ʿAli, who was a teacher in Lebanon and has been unemployed since his arrival in Sydney in 1989, was more elaborate on this point. “When I came to Australia I started to attend the *ʿAshura* ceremony [because in this country] we are a minority.... In Lebanon, we are a large community. All of Lebanon is ours.... It’s all the same if somebody attends or not. Nobody will notice you”. ʿAli argued that he attended the *ʿAshura* ceremony in Australia because “I want to be close to my community.... Being close to your community you feel that you exist.... If I don’t take part in my community and live with it, I’ll be an isolated person. So the question is where I would find myself? I’ll find it in my community.... Those who participate in *ʿAshura* do so to find themselves instead of remaining isolated and self enclosed”. “*Ghurbah* makes me go to *ʿAshura* to find myself. People in the ceremony understand me and I understand them. Their traditions are my traditions”. For ʿAli, therefore, participation in the *ʿAshura* ceremony is an act to overcome alienation in the outside world. In *ʿAshura*, he experiences *ʿilfa* (feeling homely).

Like ʿAli, Haytham, a part-time cleaner with six children, did not feel the need to participate in *ʿAshura* when he was in Lebanon, “I started to participate now because we [the *Shiʿi*

migrants] are in a foreign country, a country which differs from Lebanon. It's non-Arabic, non-Muslim. It's a foreign state..., I'm glad it's happening”.

In response to why he participated in *ʿAshura* in Australia, Ibrahim (the community worker mentioned before), said, “Coming to this country [the *Shiʿis*] found themselves in a new situation. They have to maintain their identity, their sense of belonging... I'm a *Shiʿi* [and] I have my own traditions and customs which differ from those of other Muslims and non-Muslims. *ʿAshura* itself is a *Shiʿi* movement... Looking at the matter from this angle, it's our duty to maintain [the] *ʿAshura* [tradition]. For me, first and foremost, *ʿAshura* is an identity, a [sense of] belonging”. Khalil (another community worker) argued that he had many reasons for participating in the *ʿAshura* ceremony. The reasons included religious motivation, and the need to keep up with the social news of his community. Keeping in touch with the social news in this way enables Khalil to partially overcome the sense of isolation which he feels in the broader society. This theme of *Shiʿi* unity is emphasised by Tarek and Leila. For Tarek, a mechanic who runs his own car repair shop, “*ʿAshura* helps the Muslims to be [united]... This year”, he added with a sense of pride, “the *Shiʿis* attending *ʿAshura* were greater in number than they were during the past years”. Leila, an unemployed high school graduate, made a similar point observing that the *Shiʿis* became united through their participation in the *ʿAshura* ceremony.

Zahi (the railway worker) highlighted the fact that during the ceremony he felt proud of his “masters” (i.e., Hussein and his descendants) “to whom he will always pay homage”. Jamal (a trainee worker in a jewellery shop) claimed that when he attended an *ʿAshura* ceremony in Sydney, he increasingly felt a return to Islam. Participating in the *ʿAshura* ceremony made him more faithful and restored Islam in him. Finally, *ʿAbbas* (the taxi driver) claimed that he was motivated by his cultural heritage to attend the *ʿAshura* ceremony, “If I forget Hussein's voice”, he added, “I'll forget something important from my religion. Forgetting Hussein is tantamount to forgetting praying and fasting. We will lose our identity”.

Attending an *ʿAshura* ceremony, therefore, is an opportunity for the *Shiʿi* migrants to reconstruct their identity and create a “homely” environment (*ʿilfa*) in which they overcome their feeling of *ghurbah* that results from being migrants of lower socio-economic class living on the margin in an environment dominated by an Anglo culture.

A person attending an *ʿAshura* ceremony in Australia is transformed from a state of being immersed in the harsh realities of daily life into a “homely” state of communal life shared with other participants. Through this act, *Shiʿis* undergo a process of going through a liminoid; once in *ʿAshura*, they renew their symbolic identity and transform its meanings at the same time. In attending the *ʿAshura* ceremony, *Shiʿi* participants manage to cross over the threshold separating the *ghurbah* condition in the broader society from the homely condition generated by the enactment of the *ʿAshura* ceremony. In the broader society, the *Shiʿi* migrant experiences cultural alienation and erosion, class exploitation and ethnic discrimination. If he is a father he perceives that his authority over his family is threatened continuously. In contrast to this situation, the *Shiʿi* migrant finds himself in a radically different environment when attending the *ʿAshura* ceremony. During the ceremony, he

restores unity with his community and experiences *'ilfa* which enables him to mitigate the effects of alienation, discrimination and class exploitation. Finally, *'Ashura* leads the male participant to believe that his authority over his family and the reproduction of his religious identity are secured.

Karbala and pride among *Shi'i* migrants in Sydney

During the interviews, participants in the *'Ashura* ceremonies were asked about their views on the supernatural attributes of Hussein as recounted during the ceremony of *'Ashura*. None of them was prepared to cast doubt on these attributes let alone criticise them. One respondent, however, was of the opinion that the number of Omayyad soldiers that Hussein killed was exaggerated a little (the narrative tells that Hussein killed many thousands before he was overpowered and killed by the enemy). Despite this comment, he never doubted other super attributes enjoyed by Hussein. According to the Karbala narrative, Hussein was infallible. He possessed superhuman physical strength, unique piousness, an exclusive knowledge of the Kor'an and many other qualities. These qualities attributed to Hussein make the Karbala narrative a typical legend. In our case study, however, we focus on a specific significance assumed by the Karbala narrative due to its appropriation by an ethnic minority in a migrant society.

For *Shi'i* migrants, the legendary qualities of Hussein serve to “instruct and inspire or bolster pride” in their community.⁸ It is my argument that the *Shi'i* migrants in Sydney insist on the validity of the exaggerated version of Karbala narrative taking pride in Hussein's deeds and qualities to compensate for the absence of community pride in the broader white-Australian society. In their living experience in the city of Sydney, *Shi'i* migrants, as shown by our analysis of the interviews, encounter different forms of racism and feel that their religious identity is stigmatised and threatened with erosion.⁹ The celebration of *'Ashura*, on the other hand, makes the *Shi'i* migrant feel better about his/her identity because of the legendary qualities it entails. Apart from the personal attributes mentioned above, the *Shi'is* believe that Hussein was a legendary hero who decided to fight the “enemies” of Islam despite his prior knowledge of his imminent death at the hands of the Omayyad forces. All these attributes and many more contained in a large number of incidental tales about Hussein's life generate among the *Shi'i* migrants a strong sense of cultural pride which they most certainly need in an environment that degrades their culture.¹⁰ This alternative source of pride provides “a kind of ontological security against the experience of marginalisation, and the hidden injuries of class and racism, making strength out of their very marginality” (Collins et. al., 2000, p.167).

***Latmiyyah*: rhythm, density, equality and group cohesion**

The analysis of *'Ashura* up to this point clearly shows the various ways in which this ceremony is transformed in the context of a migrant society. In the process of this transformation, *Shi'i* participants are not simply “passive, unconscious and isolated” individuals, but rather immigrants who are “actively involved in decision-making and collectively aware of their position in society” (Baldassar, 1992, pp.209-210).

The active role assumed by the *Shi'i* participants is also manifested by their involvement

in the ritual of weeping over the passion of Hussein and the act of beating their chests (*latmiyyah*). The liminal overcoming of *ghurbah*, the construction of the “homely” feeling of *'ilfa* and the development of a sense of belonging are all achieved through the act of attending the *`Ashura* ceremony and its articulation with the realities of migrancy. However, the feeling of belonging and unity among the participants is also generated through the physical acts performed throughout the ceremony. Liminality and the feeling of “homeliness” create the symbolic conditions for the formation of group-belonging and, in addition, physical acts performed in *`Ashura* constitute the bodily source for the creation of communal unity.

The crowd “loves” density and creates a sense of “equality” by suppressing the differences between the individuals who make up the crowd (Canetti, 1984, pp.32-33). Density and equality, therefore, are fundamental elements in the creation of a crowd feeling. In the section below, our analysis of the crowd formed in the process of celebrating *`Ashura* and the physical acts associated with it show that the crowd feeling is not simply generated by density and equality but also by the “extra” need to create a sense of belonging and solidarity to “stand up” against the difficulties of living in a hostile and a culturally alienating society.

In the *`Ashura* ceremony, people form a crowd and perform specific acts. Overall, these acts constitute physical processes which generate a sense of oneness and conjure up a feeling among the participants of being larger in number than their real number is.

From the moment when the ceremony started, whether at the centre of the ‘Amal Association or that of the Australian Islamic Shi`ite Association, the density of the crowd increased along with the number of participants (towards the last three days of the ceremony, the number of participants reached 120, excluding children). The more people came into the *majlis*, the stronger the pressure of the crowd became; legs and feet had nowhere to move. People sat on chairs close to each other or on the floor crouching. As the number of participants increased, “... only heads remain free to see and hear”. Every movement and each voice could pass from one person to another. “Each individual knows that there must be a number of people there, but because they are so closely jammed together, they are felt to be one”. The density of the crowd then reached its highest point and a crowd of believers was really formed. However, this state of waiting had its limits. The crowd “must discharge” as Canetti would put it.

In our case, the *`Ashura* crowd discharged in two distinct stages. During the first stage, a majority of participants burst out in tears over the suffering of Hussein and his companions. In the second stage, all the participants completely overcame their passivity and became involved in the *latmiyyah*, a highly rhythmic ritual.

In the first stage, as the *muqri'* groaned out the sad and tragic story of Hussein, the lights in the *majlis* were made dim. All the participants leaned their heads on their hands looking down at the floor. A large number of them burst out crying. They were deeply affected by what the *muqri'* was saying. The observer could easily hear their cries of “O, Hussein,

O, Hussein!”, which were “accompanied by groans and tears”. These outcries were spontaneous and unpredictable. What had been lost in terms of physical space (i.e., the cramped atmosphere of the *majlis*) had been gained in terms of imaginary space engendered by these spontaneous outbursts. More importantly, when the participants in `Ashura burst out in tears, their feeling of belonging to one whole compressed group became intensified at its highest level. In this act of mourning, the `Ashura crowd solidified its sense of belonging to one unitary group. All were made equal in their sorrow over the passion of Hussein.

As mentioned earlier, when the *muqri*’ finished the recounting of an episode of the battle of Karbala, all the participants stood up, ready for the *latmiyyah*. A lead “singer” stoked up this new stage in the ceremony by chanting the first two verses in a long list of verses chosen for the occasion. The crowd, standing behind him, repeated the verses after the lead “singer” to the rhythm that everybody produced by beating the left side of their chests with their clinched right hands. The verses were about the passion and heroism of Hussein and the readiness of the *Shi`is* to sacrifice their lives for the sake of the Imam.

Undoubtedly, the fact that all the participants joined in the *latmiyyah*, crammed in a small hall and forming a block of “chest-beaters”, created a heightened feeling of density similar to that which was referred to above. Furthermore, the fact that everyone was beating his/her chest simultaneously and making the same movement repeatedly, engendered an overwhelming sense of equality among all the participants. Making the same movement of chest beating in which everybody took part reinforced the sense of equality that had already been produced by shared sorrow among the participants. The movements were all parallel and regularised by a rhythm produced by the act of beating itself. The simultaneous beating of the chest produced a hollow sound that could be heard from the outside of the *majlis*. “Sometimes the blows [were] heavy and slow, and produce[d] a dragging rhythm; sometimes they [were] quick and urgent”. This change in the intensity of the beating depended on the content of the chanted verses. The themes of heroism and sacrifice were always associated with the higher intensity in the beating of the chest and the accompanied excitement of the participants. The rhythmic sound of chest beating gave the impression that the number of the participants was greater than it really was. What the *Shi`i* participants lacked in numbers they made up in intensity.¹¹

More interestingly, during the *latmiyyah*, it appeared to the observer that a single creature was beating itself, a creature with 120 heads and 120 arms, “all performing in exactly the same way and with the same purpose”. The *Shi`i* participants felt as one homogeneous group of equals due to the dominance of the rhythm produced by the *latmiyyah*. They appeared as one body in front of the threatening Anglo “other”. The enactment of the *latmiyyah* as a whole, engendered a crowd feeling among the participants in the `Ashura ceremony, mostly needed to compensate for their “weakness” and marginalisation in the broader society in which they lived.

At the conclusion of the *latmiyyah*, the participants dispersed. Some went back home and others stayed behind chatting with each other. Even though the crowd feeling immediately disintegrated, the sense of unity and belonging among the participants remained strong in their collective memory.

The acts of weeping and chest beating involved in the *latmiyyah* can also be perceived as a physical and affective expression of guilt over the killing of Hussein (the Father) which is an essential moment in the process of forming the identity of the *Shi`i* community. Guilt in this context derives from the fact that the original *Shi`i* community deserted Hussein in Karbala and left him to face his death with his family and a small number of adherents. The tradition relates that initially the inhabitants of Kufa (south of present-day Iraq) promised to lend their support to his cause and then when he was besieged, none of them came to save him from the deadly attack of the Omayyads. This incident created a deep sense of guilt among the *Shi`is*, which is passed down from one *Shi`i* generation to another.

From a psychoanalytical perspective, the killing of Hussein is equivalent to the symbolic killing of the Father. This killing makes the identification with the (ideal) Father a complex and contradictory process. In Lacanian terms, Hussein's killing is equivalent to the killing of the "real" (with a small "r"). Through the act of his killing (i.e., the total repression of the "real") Hussein becomes sublimated into an ideal ego (the "Real" with a capital "R") in relation to which the *Shi`i* identity (subjectivity) is constructed. So lamentation, which is clearly associated with guilt over the death of Hussein, becomes a desired object for the *Shi`is* necessary for the construction of their identity. In this sense, the formation of identity among the *Shi`is* is imbued with an overwhelming sense of guilt which constitutes the very condition for the construction of their subjectivity. Also, lamentation and chest beating are physical acts that reinforce symbolically the ability of the *Shi`is* to endure the difficulties encountered in life including the problems of the *ghurbah*. As mentioned earlier, the "Real" Hussein who is believed to have sustained extreme forms of suffering in his lifetime, sets the example for the *Shi`i* migrants to patiently undergo the hardship associated with living in a migrant and racist society.

Concluding remarks

In this chapter, we have shown that the *Shi`i* identity is constructed around a modified version of *`Ashura* which negotiates the specific conditions of the *Shi`is* who live in the city of Sydney. But the first point to note is that this *Shi`i* identity is not easily abstracted from a broader identity of being Muslim, nor from being Lebanese, Middle Eastern, Arab or Arabic-speaking. These forms of identity are plastic, capable of overlapping and flowing into each other, or of being quite hard and antagonistic. The interaction of our interviewees with Sunni Muslims, for example, is minimal. Their interaction with *Shi`is* from non-Lebanese background is restricted to Ulamas and religious clerics from Iran or Iraq who are considered to be more knowledgeable about the *Shi`i* theology. Hence they are invited to lead the *`Ashura* ceremony occasionally. Yet as we have seen, the ceremony involves a clear articulation to a sense of Lebaneseness (for some), and an clear articulation to the experience of living in Australia. It is this process of articulation that we need to think through in much more detail. But suffice it to say here that neither a nationally defined ethnicity nor a religious one alone can explain the complex articulations of forms of identification, marginalisation and belonging voiced here.

Second, articulation in the *`Ashura* ceremony enables those who attend to make sense of their experiences of *ghurbah* on one the hand, and on the other, to protect their (transformed)

cultural identity and produce a sense of control over it. For these reasons, it is argued in this paper that *`Ashura* cannot be considered a religious ritual pertaining to the past and immunised against the concerns of the present. The enactment of the *`Ashura* ceremony in Sydney leads to a (re)configuration of its meaning to accommodate the changing realities of *Shi`i* migrants living in that city. In this vein, it can be concluded, therefore, that the *`Ashura* ceremony is a “metasocial commentary” on the glocal environment in which the *Shi`i* migrants are situated, and as such, it is a key factor to understanding the construction of the imaginary ethnic identity of the *Shi`i* migrants in Sydney (Geertz, 1973).

Third, this process does not operate simply at the level of consciousness; the bodies of participants are drawn into and work through this transformation because without a deep affective and physical involvement neither “community” nor transformation can be said to be lived. This strong sense of the embodied nature of the migrant experience will be explored elsewhere in this book, but suffice it to say here that the habitus of the migrant, as we’ve conceptualised it in the introduction drawing on the work of Bourdieu, functions both in terms of its internalisation of history and its generative capacity. It literally carries the resourcefulness of the migrant, but those embodied resources don’t simply condemn them to the logic of cultural maintenance. They become the basis of an engagement with a new world, a use of the corporeal to make political and cultural statements about the experience of being a Lebanese migrant in Australia. Yet this engagement also allows for the reconfiguration of those very resources. We turn now to another cultural form, the Lebanese dance known as the *dabki*, to elaborate this argument.

The *dabki*: negotiating otherness in contemporary Australia

In this chapter we examine a folkloric dance called the *dabki*, which is performed by Lebanese Australians at most of their communal festivities and family celebrations in Australia. We intend to go beyond a commonly held view about the significance of the *dabki* which argues that it is an essential marker of Lebaneseness which is assumed to be an unproblematic and continuous category of ethnicity. Such a reified notion of ethnicity is central to the dominant philosophy of multiculturalism in Australia, a “multicultural imaginary” which views Australia’s cultural diversity as constituted by a series of relatively discrete ethnically defined communities with coherent, shared cultures “tolerated” by mainstream Australians (Hage, 1998, p.139). Such an imaginary has less to do with the cultural complexity of contemporary Australia and more to do with maintaining both the self-perception of the decency of White Australian and racialised and classed relations of power, what Povinelli (2002) calls the “cunning of recognition”. Both the official definers of multiculturalism and the “leaders” of the Lebanese community share this understanding of the *dabki*. They reduce the *dabki* to a metaphor for the cultural identity of Lebanese migrants in multicultural Australia. For the host society, the *dabki* is one more spectacle that can be consumed in the increasingly expanding market for cultural products in Australia, and for the official “representatives” of the Lebanese community it is an icon of Lebanese culture and traditions.

These popular understandings of the *dabki* in Australia are not simply essentialist and reified, but also represent an attempt to silence Lebanese migrants in Australia by propagating an understanding of the *dabki* that disregards its rich and oppositional character, especially as it is transformed within the context of a migrant society. As we saw with the *Ashura*, the *dabki* is a rather more complex strategy for negotiating a meaningful place in Australian society.

However, as a dance, the *dabki* engages its participants physically and not just symbolically, and reminds us again of the embodied nature of migrant belonging, for this dance entails not just a degree of individual skill in performing it, but brings participants into an embodied relation with others. The habitus of the migrant becomes both a resource to negotiate a sense of continuity with the past and one to locate them in a present and future. In this vein, Frank’s (1991) sociological discussion of the “body” provides us with an interesting point of departure in our analysis of the *dabki* in Australia. Frank suggests four ideal types of body usage: the disciplined, the mirroring, the dominating and the communicative. While all these

are significant for understanding any embodied practice, it is the idea of the “communicative body” that is most pertinent to our discussion here. He arrives at this framework through his analysis of how the body deals with four dimensions of activity: control, desire, relation to others and self-relatedness. Dancing, he argues, is one model of the “communicative body” which is defined as a “dyadic [as opposed to monadic] relation with others who join in the dance and it implies an connectedness which goes beyond one’s own body and extends to the body of the other(s)” (1990, p.80). Our discussion of the *dabki* reveals the significance of this dyadic relatedness as it is expressed not only among the dancers but also in the context of the relationship between the dancers and their broader community.

In Australia, Bottomley uses a culturalist approach when she examines the Greek circular dances (the *Hassapiko* and the *Zembekiko*) in Greece and Australia. In her attempt to explain this approach, she declares: “I am treating dance itself as a muted mode that may convey some knowledge not articulated in available representations of the social world” (1992, p.71). It is the argument of this chapter that the *dabki* is primarily an embodied, communicative practice and, as such, one should “listen” to it very carefully when it is acted out, and try to decode its movements. In other words, we aim at revealing the meanings that are communicated in and through the dancing moves of the body when involved in the *dabki*. We argue that, as a “muted mode” of cultural practice, the *dabki* needs to be read so that its complex and multilayered reality is brought into the open. But the corporeal nature of the dance suggests that it is not just the reproduction of a cultural past which is at stake here, but the capacity of an embodied form to participate in cultural transformation. We argue that the nature of the *dabki* changed in Australia not simply because of the fact of migration, but because the multicultural imaginary of Australian society required a different purpose to the dance. Moreover, we show that what makes the *dabki* in Australia particularly interesting is the fact that as a cultural practice it is traversed by relations of ethnicity, class, gender and age.

The *dabki* in Australia: the struggle over its ownership

Lebanese migrants have brought the *dabki* to Australia since the early days of their arrival. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the *dabki* was even performed on board of ships carrying early Lebanese passengers on their way to Australia. In addition, early migrants sometimes celebrated the arrival of their relatives or fellow villagers to this land by performing the *dabki*.¹

In the 1950s and the 1960s when the *dabki* began to make its appearance in Australia at Lebanese community functions and ceremonies, most of the migrants were directly involved in its performance. This is not surprising given that the vast majority of early migrants coming to Australia were villagers, and the *dabki* has its origin in rural communities in Lebanon. In times of festivities, family and religious rituals, migrants would normally get together and perform the *dabki* in a space, be it a family backyard, a community or a church hall, where events took place. People of different age groups and of both sexes would take part in the dance, and the act of joining the dancing group or leaving it after a while would occur without strict formalities to regulate these movements. In this sense, the *dabki* was entirely the affair of the migrants who participated in its performance. The Lebanese community had complete ownership and control over the dance. Although the dancing skill

of the participants varied, there was no separation between them whereby skilled dancers would perform on a stage were removed from the audience. The hard and fast distinction between *dabki* dancers and spectators did not exist.

As multiculturalism emerged in Australia in the early seventies, the community ownership of the *dabki* began to be challenged. Cultural producers in the community were encouraged by the official representatives of multiculturalism to form separate dance groups to be called upon whenever there was need for a performance representing the “Lebanese” culture. In the eyes of the multiculturalists, the staging of folklore belonging to various ethnic communities was essential for building a multicultural image of Australia. Accordingly, the *dabki* was transformed into a spectacle expressing the cultural identity of the Lebanese migrants. This is best exemplified during the Arabic Carnivale which has been organised annually since 1983 in the city of Sydney. During this event, community organisations are invited to participate in the Carnivale by booking a space in which their activities and various objects are put on display for endless lines of spectators. In addition, a centre stage is installed, and designated skilled *dabki* dance groups are invited to perform the *dabki* on it in front of thousands of onlookers who normally include politicians, bureaucrats and community workers. For these people, the enactment of the *dabki* on stage is nothing less than a clear example of what “real” Lebanese culture is about. In this context, the *dabki* is not only reified, but is also taken away from its owners and transformed into a fetishised spectacle for the audience to consume and intrusively gaze upon. During the 2004 Carnivale, a media release was issued (April 15, 2004) in which the Australian Arabic Communities Council [AACC] – now called Arab Council Australia – set itself the target of “setting a new world record for the longest line dance by performing” the *dabki* in the Sydney Olympic Park Athletic Centre.

In other words, the relocation of the *dabki* into a world structured by the Australian multicultural imaginary alters fundamentally the meaning, relations and the embodied performance of dance. The multiculturalists sought to move the dance into what Attali (1985) calls a “mode of representation” whereby those who have been represented have been essentialised and denied the right to take part in the process of producing and defining their own acts. Similarly, when community organisations hold their annual balls and invite politicians and bureaucrats to impress them with the extent of their communal representation, the *dabki* is often performed on stage and is represented, alongside Lebanese food, as a metaphor for Lebanese culture. This categorisation of the *dabki* is also shared by many cultural producers within the Lebanese migrant community and by Lebanese community leaders because it offers a strategic rationale for their existence and status in Australian society (as opposed to being simply members of a specific community). We want to make two important conceptual points here: the embodied expertise of the performers and also of the community leaders represents instances of what we will call “ethnic capital”, and the performance of this ethnic capital points to the existence of what we shall call the “field of ethnicity” in Australia.

As we explained in the introduction, we are elaborating upon Hage’s (1998) analysis of Whiteness in Australia – conceived not simply as the dominant racial identity, but as a form

of *symbolic capital* which citizens accumulate and deploy in order to attain a place in the field of governmental belonging in multicultural Australia. We argue here, however, that the concept of symbolic capital can be made more useful when used not only in the study of dominant but also subordinate groups and the social networks in which they operate. “Ethnic capital” then refers to the resources and capacities available to and developed by the migrant and their children as they settle in Australia; resources and capacities which are validated by the state according to specific terms of definition. This capital is not simply that which the migrant has brought from the homeland and circulates within the community or a set of ethnically defined organisations, but includes the resources deployed here in terms of migrants’ relations with other communities and the dominant culture. The reconfiguration of the *dabki* as a dance performed for and in relation to the dominant culture defines it precisely as a form of ethnic capital. But this capital isn’t just defined in the relation between the Lebanese and White politicians, it exists amidst a broader array of networks and their specific formulations of ethnic capital (as their transformation of homeland resources into symbolic resources deployed within Australia). Such an array of networks constitutes the field of ethnicity in Australia, a sub-set of the field of national belonging, as Hage describes it, and in which migrants and their children are defined in relation to the multicultural nation in terms of their ethnic capital. Here ethnic capital is not the negation of the symbolic capital of national belonging, but a discrete form of capital which defines belonging as ethnic.

The conception of the *dabki* fashioned in the negotiation between White politicians, cultural producers and community leaders becomes an integral part of the ethnic capital generated in the field of ethnicity and needed for the legitimisation of their expertise and leadership. Each community does not comprise its own ethnic-specific field; rather, the diverse ethnicities participate in a broader networking of difference. The multicultural festival exhibits both the nature of this field, and its legitimating principle as an entity to be enjoyed by the dominant. We will take up this argument about the field of ethnicity in the following chapter in relation to community leaders, but in this chapter we want to use a critical reading of the *dabki*, grounded in the complex character of the Lebanese migrant cultural experience in Australia, to examine some of the ways the field of ethnicity is constituted.

It is important to stress here that, over the years, the *dabki* has been a contested cultural performance and has never been totally appropriated by the official definers of multiculturalism in Australia. The struggle over the definition of the *dabki*, could be seen as an instance in the broader struggle between the hegemonic culture of White Australian society and the attempts by members of the Lebanese community to find a place in, but not simply be subordinated to, that society. By attempting to retain the right to define and perform the *dabki*, the majority of Lebanese migrants resist and challenge the “multicultural” mode of representing the Lebanese community even as they accommodate themselves to it. They resist being defined by the state guardians of multiculturalism, refusing to give up the practice of the *dabki* by the community and to give it up to a “special” group of dancers. This is confirmed by the views expressed by the interviewees when we asked about whether they prefer to see the *dabki* performed by a professional group of dancers:

“It’s nice to watch a professional group dancing the *dabki*. But it’s much better for people to participate in the dance” (Executive Director of AACC, personal communication, May 15, 2004). The President of AACC commented that, “the beautiful aspect of the dance is that every one takes part in it. You’re not a spectator anymore. You’re taking part in making the dance successful. I like to be part of the whole scene. It’s best when people in the hall participate in it” (Ibid, May 15, 2004). Generally speaking, the community has by and large rejected the separation between the audience and the *dabki* dancers and has continuously insisted on freely participating in its enactment. The social processes underpinning this perseverance and intensity in the performing of the *dabki* by the Lebanese community will be examined in the following section.

Group solidarity and the *dabki*

Like *Ashura*, the *dabki* is, by definition, a group activity. As a dance, it is performed by a group of people whose number can be increased or decreased depending on the context in which it is enacted. The number of *dabki* dancers performing on stage, for instance, is normally less than that which partakes in it in community events. In both cases, however, dancing the *dabki* in groups is a defining characteristic of this folkloric dance. When performing the *dabki*, people have to cross their arms and hold each other with their hands by tightly interlocking their fingers (as a sign of modesty, a female dancer, when interlocking her fingers with those of a male dancer, does not clasp her fingers against his). This physical link between the dancers suppresses their individuality and generates instead a heightened feeling of group identity. This feeling is further exacerbated by another requirement that each dancer should keep his or her shoulder closely attached to that of the next dancer so that the repeated movements performed by the dancers are totally synchronized.² As a result, the movement of one becomes totally integrated in the movements of others. Furthermore, like most types of dancing, the *dabki* is a rhythmic dance based on a set (or sets) of steps,³ which is repeatedly followed by the dancers and is accompanied by sharp and irresistible shouts thrown out intermittently by mostly male dancers. The physical bonding of the dancers, their synchronised and repeated movements and their occasional shouting, all create a sense of solidarity intensely experienced by the migrants who participate in the *dabki*. The heightened sense of solidarity generated by the dance is literally embodied in the round or semi-circle shape of the *dabki*. The anti-clockwise direction of the *dabki* evokes the feeling of a closed unity which is difficult to break down.

In her study of Greek dance, Bottomley (1992, p.77) writes that “the large circle dances offered participants psychic and physical communication, shared pleasure, perhaps a relief of tension and an expression of joy”. We argue that the *dabki* does not only offer its participants a shared feeling of “pleasure”, it also creates a sense of “communitas”, the spontaneous, intense feelings of social togetherness produced in certain circumstances. “Communitas”, according to Turner, involves rituals “in which egalitarian and cooperative behavior [sic] is characteristic, and in which secular distinctions of rank, office, and status are temporarily in abeyance or regarded as irrelevant” (Turner, 1974, p.238). The people whom we interviewed variously expressed this sense of “communitas” generated by the *dabki*. A female librarian who migrated to Australia in 1982 and is married with two kids, pointed to this sense of “communitas” in the following words: “The spirit of participating

with others is expressed in the *dabki*. All the dancers make the same movement. It [the *dabki*] makes us united, and unity gives us a nice feeling, a bigger momentum” (Personal communication, May 7, 2004). The president of AACCC, who arrived in Australia in 1977, stated: “The nice thing about the *dabki* is its communal aspect; all the people equally participate in it regardless of their dancing skill. People become comfortable in a group environment. Social boundaries are broken down...the boundaries between the young and the old...the rich and the poor. All are equal” (Personal communication, May 15, 2004). A third interviewee (a middle-aged male public servant who had come to Australia in 1980) declared: “It [the *dabki*] reflects an inner feeling. It’s an act of meeting with one another. It gives a feeling of happiness”. At another point in the interview, he mentioned that the *dabki* “introduces [Australian] people to the positive things in our culture in contrast to the stereotypical images of a camel driver or a gangster” (Personal communication, May 15, 2004). In another interview conducted with a second public servant of Lebanese background (who had arrived in Australia in the early seventies and was then currently in his mid-fifties), the respondent related that he personally liked the *dabki* because it provided him with the opportunity to spontaneously express his joy and happiness. More importantly, he added that the *dabki* generated in him a feeling of belonging to Lebanese culture. It offered him the venue “to express his belonging to a group, and participate in a group action” (Personal communication, March 31, 2004). During an interview with a high school student, the theme of belonging and the drive to preserve “the Lebanese heritage and traditions” featured very prominently. George, a 17 year-old youth, was born in Australia, but his parents came from Lebanon. At the time when the interview took place, George told us that a “big fight” between Asian and Lebanese students had occurred at his school. This incident made him even more motivated to learn the *dabki*. When we visited George at home to conduct the interview (Personal communication, October 20, 1998), we found him even wrapping himself with the Lebanese flag. “It’s Lebanese heritage and traditions, mate. We have to preserve them”. This was George’s rationale for learning the *dabki*. As a matter of fact, he asked his uncle to teach him the dance and, more particularly, the leading role (*al-qaydeh*) in the *dabki*. For George, learning the *dabki* enabled him to participate in its performance when attending community celebrations. This act of participation allegorised the unity of his community, which he strongly needed, to protect himself from the threat of the non-Lebanese “other”.

More importantly, the sense of “*communitas*” generated by the *dabki* assumes an additional significance for the Lebanese migrants because of their particular experience of living in an Australian environment characterised by urban, capitalist relations and at times racist treatment of the migrants. In his insightful study about the difference between rural and urban sensibilities, Simmel claims “that urban life demanded an attitude of reserve and insensitivity to feeling because of the multiplicity and diversity of stimuli in the metropolis” (O’Connor, 1997, p.162). A similar conclusion is reached by Brian Turner (1986, p.39) who suggests that industrial societies emphasise ‘closed bodies’, where emotions and intimacy are defined in terms of privacy, and the ‘public’ is defined by formality (see also Bottomley, 1992, p.142). The *dabki* as an act of spatial inscription disrupts the “formality” of the “public” space by generating a feeling of solidarity, connectedness and egalitarianism. Although these attributes reveal the reification of the *dabki* at the hands of the “aggrieved Lebanese

other”, they remain needed to resist the mounting racism that Lebanese migrants have been experiencing since the 1990s (Collins et al., 2000; Poynting et al., 2004). Accordingly, the Lebanese dancers transform the *dabki* into an act of “strategically essentialising” Lebanese ethnicity; this sense of belonging only arises in the context of being elsewhere than the homeland and, fashioned out of the combination of resources once distributed regionally in the homeland, entail the strategic task of collectively finding a shared place as a form of cultural survival. It is thus not just about belonging to the Lebanese community but specifically being located in a wider field of ethnicity in multicultural Australia.

It is this urge to generate a sense of group belonging⁴ and obtain symbolic power in an otherwise alienating environment which explains the changes that we observe in the way the *dabki* is performed in Australia. During the many times in which *dabki* was observed, we noticed Lebanese migrants attending the community event showed an unusual interest in the performance of the dance. Almost every one in the hall where a community event had been organised would take part in the *dabki*; many were charged with affective intensity and remarkable enthusiasm. Male and female migrants of various ages, class backgrounds and generations of migration showed a keen interest in learning the *dabki* and participating in its performance. During this fieldwork, we also observed people remarkably spending most of the time at the community or family event dancing the *dabki*. Even when the music or the song was not suitable for the *dabki*, people continued dancing the *dabki*, hoping that the next song would be rhythmic enough for their preferred dance. At many weddings and community functions we noticed that when the band kept ignoring the wish for *dabki* music by a persisting crowd, many people refused to leave the dance floor unless their request was met. The drive to achieve symbolic unity via the *dabki* seemed far stronger than the desire to listen to non-dancing songs and music. By comparison, this situation is not encountered in Lebanon where dancing the *dabki* at festivals and ceremonies makes up only a part of the event’s program. The other part may consist of listening to *tarab* songs and music (i.e., slow-pace music that would require careful listening) and watching performances of belly dancing.

The drive to create group solidarity is further illustrated by the fact that Lebanese migrants tend to participate in all types of *dabki* dances regardless of regional differences. Despite the small size of the country, each region in Lebanon is known for a specific way of dancing *dabki*, and people who live in a particular area normally perform the type of *dabki* which characterises their own region (and sometimes a particular village, such as *Ehden* in northeast Lebanon, has developed a particular way of dancing the *dabki* that is used to reinforce its distinctive identity vis-à-vis other villages. The *dabki*, in this instance, becomes a defining element of an in-group). Usually, the name of the region is given to the dance in order to distinguish between the various types of *dabki*. So in the northern part of Lebanon, people dance the so-called northern *dabki*, whereas in the south and the *Beqaa* Valley they dance the southern and the *dabki biqua’ya* respectively.⁵

In Sydney, on the other hand, Lebanese migrants coming from different regions in Lebanon join in the *dabki* regardless of its regional character when attending a community event or celebrating a festival. People who are unfamiliar with the *dabki* quickly acquire the skills

needed to join other dancers. Even the migrants (including one of the authors) who come from cities in Lebanon where people normally look at *dabki* dancing as a sign of social backwardness, do not hesitate in learning this new dancing skill and becoming an active participant in its performance. The inner drive to belong to a group, felt by alienated and “aggrieved” migrants, overcomes all other divisive factors emanating from their country of origin. This is not only encountered among first-generation migrants, but also among second-generation migrant youths, as exemplified by the case of George who, as previously mentioned, showed remarkable interest in learning and dancing the *dabki*. Accordingly, the *dabki* is being re-negotiated within the context of a host society characterised by individualism and ethnic discrimination. Dancing the *dabki* becomes a public statement of Lebanese ethnicity, delineating it as an “imagined community” (Bottomley, 1992, p.76).

Symbolic power and the *dabki*: “I feel a kind of pride and glory”

At this point, it is significant to describe the performance of the *dabki* in the presence of the Anglo Australian “other” who represents the dominant culture. In the course of observing various celebrations by the Lebanese community, we noticed on many occasions the presence of Anglos, typically politicians or acquaintances of Lebanese migrants, who often get invited to dance the *dabki* while attending community events organised by Lebanese associations. The most interesting part in this encounter, however, is the perseverance shown by the Lebanese dancer to make sure that the Australian “other” accepts his/her invitation to dance the *dabki*, and the passion and eagerness which he/she shows while teaching his/her guest the steps required by the dance.

On May 14, 2004, during the annual party of the Australian Arabic Communities Council (AACC), there were a number of invitees from an Anglo background, including state and federal members of parliament. When the people began to dance the *dabki*, most of the Anglos joined in. The Executive Director of the Council insisted on inviting her Anglo guests to dance the *dabki*. On more than one occasion, she literally pulled them by their arms toward the dancing floor. Two days later, when she was asked: “Why did you feel so strongly about inviting your Australian guests to dance the *dabki*?” she replied: “It’s my party, to sit and watch was not enough. I didn’t want them to leave early. I wanted them to enjoy themselves”. A closer look at what she said later in the interview and what other respondents related to us reveals that the issue was not simply trying to be nice to the Anglo Australian guest and make sure that he/she enjoyed himself/herself. The director of AACC added these words: “It’s simply to make them [Australian guests] participate...they are merging with us...they learn the interaction between cultures...it’s happening. It’s nice to teach them something about our culture. If people start to hear your music or language, they become closer to you, otherwise they remain distant. It makes me happy when I see everybody participating – no difference in class between politicians and non-politicians.” We also asked the same question to another Lebanese migrant (a man in his late forties employed in the public service) who was involved in teaching the *dabki* to a number of Anglo guests at the same occasion. He first said to us that the guests were interested in learning the *dabki*. “More generally”, he added,

The Australians participate in the dance in most parties organised by our

community. And when they do, I feel that they are somehow participating in our culture and they are acquainting themselves with part of our culture. It's nice when they take part in the dance. When they ask to learn the *dabki*, it means that they are willing to get familiar with our culture, and consequently, I feel a kind of pride and glory. When I teach them and they start to dance some of the steps, I feel pleased because they acquire something from our civilisation.

In response to a similar question, the president of AACC stated: "When the Australian guest dances the *dabki*, I feel happy because the social boundaries between us are broken down. I am glad because of his participation and because he's acquainting himself with our culture...he's mixing up [sic] with us...the boundaries are pulled down despite the fact that it's a symbolic act" (Personal communication, May 15, 2004).

The same views were expressed by another interviewee who was commenting on his feelings regarding the participation of Anglo Australians in the *dabki* on other occasions: "The participation of Australians in the *dabki* is most welcome and positive. We welcome their acceptance of our art [i.e., the *dabki*] and our food, and especially, their open mind towards the culture of a minority group like us. It shows that they accept and appreciate us" (Personal communication, May 15, 2004). A second female respondent had this to say: "When I go with Australian fellow workers [the respondent is a librarian in the city of Parramatta] to a Lebanese restaurant and we listen to Lebanese music, I find that a selected number of them are eager to learn the *dabki* dance. It's maybe out of curiosity or what have you. They say things like, 'It's lovely, it's nice'. May be they want to please me, but in any case, I feel proud when I teach them the *dabki*" (Personal communication, May 7, 2004). A solicitor, who was 16 years old when he migrated to Australia with his family, mentioned to us: "I was happy to see them happily dancing the *dabki*. It goes to show that they are happy to participate in part of our culture. It shows that they learned and accepted a positive aspect of our culture" (Personal communication, May 20, 2004). The solicitor (35 years old) was commenting on dancing the *dabki* at a get-together with his Anglo friends at a Lebanese club.

It is clear from the above quotes that the sense of pleasure expressed by the Lebanese migrants when the Anglo guest joins with them in the *dabki* partly derives from their realisation that in dancing the *dabki* the otherwise dominant Australian is temporarily on equal par with them. In the act of dancing the *dabki*, the inequality characterising the relationship between the White Australian and the Lebanese migrant in broader society is abolished. Moreover, when the dominant "other" takes part in the *dabki*, it effectively valorises Lebanese culture and recognises its positive character. In doing so, it makes the Lebanese migrant community feel more accepted by the host culture. This is so despite the fact that this appreciation implies robbing the *dabki* of its oppositional meanings by transforming it into a mark of identity and an object of celebration and fetishisation. In Bourdieu's terminology, this is an act of "symbolic violence" based on perceiving the *dabki* (and Lebanese food) as a metaphor for Lebanese culture, and merely reducing it to its leisure aspect. It also makes this perception of the *dabki* legitimate in the eyes of the Lebanese migrants.

There is another reason for the heightened pleasure felt by the Lebanese *dabki* dancers when getting the Anglo guest to dance with them. This is clearly manifested by the following remarks: “There is more appreciation [of us] when there is interaction with, and understanding of, our culture”, said the Executive Director of AACC. The public servant who attended the AACC annual party made very similar comments to the ones expressed by the interviewee last quoted in the above section. “When they began dancing the *dabki*, I felt joyful because I finally [had] taught them something out of our civilisation” (Personal communication, May 15, 2004). Clearly, the overriding concern of these dancers was to assimilate the Anglo guests into “their way if life”, as if they were saying to them “enough instructions on ‘the Australian way of life’”. Now it’s time that you learn about our way of life”. The librarian’s additional comment was most revealing in this regard: “This time I’m teaching them rather than been taught by them. When they speak to you, they raise their voice thinking that you’re deaf and they speak to you with a sense of superiority. On this occasion, it’s my turn to teach them. I teach them something other than how to cook Lebanese food, I teach them a valuable thing from our culture” (Personal communication, May 7, 2004). In this instance, the Australian “other” is not only made equal to the migrant, but the relations of dependency favouring the Australian “other” in broader society is reversed, though temporarily, in the act of performing the *dabki*.

On many occasions, we have observed that the euphoria associated with going through this experience is also manifested in the way the migrant dancers physically react to seeing the Anglo invitees dance the *dabki*. In this instance, Lebanese dancers were observed cheering, clapping their hands and jumping up and down upon the successful completion of teaching the dance to their guests. This is suggestive of victory in the “battle” between their own culture and that of the dominant “other”. This turning of the tables represents a renegotiation of the status of otherness, at least in this domain within Australian society.

The participation of the Australian guest in the *dabki* offers the migrant a new power setting in which the latter can assert his superiority (which, we will see, is gendered) by showing his outstanding skills in the performance of the dance. No matter how skilled the guest becomes in the *dabki* dance, he would never be able to surpass the migrant in its performance. The feeling of superiority experienced by the Lebanese migrant dancer during the *dabki* is exacerbated to compensate for the harsh experience of inferiority in broader society. More remarkably, the *dabki* contains certain steps which can be read as acts of challenge when performed in the face an opponent. In the context of Australian society, and especially in the presence of Anglos during the performance of the *dabki*, these challenging steps assume a specific meaning. They provide the migrant dancer with cultural tools to challenge symbolically his opponent, the Australian “other”. As mentioned earlier, part of performing the *dabki* involves the uttering of sharp cries that are released in the face of the dancer’s opponent. The opponent in the context of our analysis is not a romantic competitor or unwelcome dancer from a neighbouring village, as the case might be in rural communities in Lebanon. Rather he is an Anglo guest who reminds the Lebanese dancer of his subordinate status in broader society. In addition to this shouting, there are other steps involved in the *dabki* that can further be seen as expressions challenging the opposed “other” and as acts of symbolically subjugating him to the will of the migrant dancer. These

involve the acts of leaping in the air and pounding the earth. They also involve spinning and swirling and moving the group in the shape of a circle. The consecutive enactment of these moves and their repetition produce a heightened state of mind whereby the dancers feel the “opponent” is under their control, subdued and besieged in the space where the dance is inscribed.

During this whole process, the “opponent” is placed in a position of linguistic and practical deficiency in relation to the vocabulary and art of the dance, a situation that translates itself into “subjugating” the “opponent” to the performance of the migrant dancer.

Memory, home-building and the *dabki*

This feeling of enthusiasm when teaching the *dabki* to the Anglo guest indicates that the intense implication of the dancer in his dancing act is not only associated with the symbolic act of assimilating the dominant “other” into the culture of an ethnic minority and achieving a symbolic dominance over him/her. It is also related to the process of building an “imaginary home” that the Lebanese migrants desire in the context of an alienating society. The intensity of this feeling is mostly revealed by the firm moves of the dancers and their intermittent shouts, as well as by the degree of sweating that occurs during the dance. Our field observation of the *dabki* showed that hardly any dancer would stop dancing before his body was covered with sweat. As our analysis will show below, this affective intensity, as described by Hage in a different context⁶, is also closely related with migrant memories and feelings of guilt about their homeland.

Studies of identity have shown that time and space are essential components in its construction, and, if either of these two components changes, identity changes too (Hall, 1996, pp.274-314). Migration as a process of displacement involves radical transformation of people’s identity because it results in the replacement of their sense of space and time simultaneously. This in turn makes the use of memory an important tool for the migrant to combat the negative effects of displacement and desolation. The settlement of migrants in Australia involves the suppression and/or intensification of their memories about their homeland. This is not due only to the total change of the space and time of their original location, but also to the harsh realities they encounter while living in a new country.

It is interesting to note that our informant, the librarian, talks about her experience with the *dabki* in sensory terms. She claims that the *dabki* changes her mood, activates her memory and her visual, olfactory and tactile senses. In other words, the *dabki* seems to have the effect of making our informant acutely aware of her bodily existence through the activation of her senses. This is all the more important when we learn from other researchers (Thomas, 2004) that the dislocating experience of migration has the impact of turning migrants into petrified, floating and insignificant bodies. Contrary to this, the *dabki* for our informant is an act in which migrants are animated through the transposition of their imaginary homeland to the sensory domain. Despite the liminal character of the dance, the *dabki* enables the migrants to transform the *homeland* into a *hereland* and consequently to put an end to their bodily (dis)engagement in the host society, over whose external forces they have very little or no control. In other words, the imaginary

and practical evocation of the homeland is always ultimately about finding a place within the new society.

Within this context, the *dabki* creates a liminal space where the uncanny of the present moment is bracketed and memories of the migrants' country of origin are activated with high intensity. The music, the rhythm, the lyrics, the singing voice and the dance are elements which evoke memories about the migrants' past experiences in their country of origin. In his discussion of "universals of performance", Turner defines the liminal phase as "being dominantly in the 'subjunctive mood' of culture, the mood of may be, might-be, as if, hypothesis, fantasy, conjecture, desire, depending on which of the trinity, cognition, affect, and conation (thought, feeling, or intention) is situationally dominant" (Turner, 1990, pp.11-12). This "mood" is articulated in the words of the solicitor referred to previously, "the *dabki* reminds me of *lubnanyati* (my Lebaneseness), I feel as if I am speaking to them [the dancers] about Lebanon...as if I am communicating with them about Lebanon". "The *dabki* music motivates me to dance", said the librarian reflecting on the *dabki* when she danced it with her in-laws and their children in her backyard:

It makes me feel nostalgic, it moves me, I feel I heard it a long time ago. The [*dabki*] music takes me back to my childhood [in Lebanon]. The dancing happens in the backyard. We teach the kids the *dabki*. The [*dabki*] music changes our *mazaaj* (mood)...it makes us happy. It awakens my longing for Lebanon: *Besharri* [her village in north Lebanon], my childhood, *riht ada'ya* [the smell of my village]. The dance makes you identify with them, *bitseer tehesson* [you get to feel them]. *Beseeru bil-khayal* [They come to live in your imagination] (Personal communication, May 7, 2004).

It is clear from the respondents' comments that the *dabki* induces a kind of communication between the dancers and the music "in a language that resonates with memory and habitus" (Bottomley, 1992, p.143). It is through these memories that the migrants manage to suspend Australian physical space and replace it with fragments of their imagined home. The *dabki* works metonymically to bridge the distance between "Lebanon" as an "imagined" entity and the migrant. In other words, the immersion of the migrants in this mode of communication results in their positioning in a comfort space generated by the construction of their imaginary homeland. In dancing the *dabki*, the migrant does not dance to a music coming from Lebanon, he/she *dances Lebanon* itself. The *dabki* becomes a cultural practice which helps the migrant to cope with his feeling of homesickness and desolation. However, it is interesting to note that the constructed homeland of migrants is generally idealised through a process of selective remembering based on suppressing the past negative experiences of the dancers. "When I listen to Fayruz singing, my tears drop because she takes me to the beautiful life in Lebanon: the moral values, generosity, chivalry that go with the *dabki*. All these things are awaken in me". In the act of remembering Lebanon while performing the *dabki*, the difficulties associated with past (e.g., the 1975-1989 civil war in Lebanon) and present living conditions (e.g., poor economic and political conditions) in Lebanon are totally elided and suppressed. So in contrast to the harsh realities experienced in the "homeland" and the new place of settlement, the migrant's invented home is made

comfortable and without any feelings of anguish, anxiety and pain. The cultural logic of the *dabki*, therefore, is not only determined by the present conditions of the dancers, but also by the reconstructed memories associated with their past.

Gender, migrancy and the *dabki*

The transformation in the logic of the *dabki* as a cultural practice is not only related to the realities of Australian multiculturalism and the experience of discrimination and marginality by the Lebanese migrants as a whole. It is also due to the change in the position and function of Lebanese migrant women in Australia, giving a further dimension to the corporeal nature of the dance.

The *dabki* is a highly gendered exercise. In rural Lebanon, it is one of the rare occasions in which “muted” contact between the two sexes can take place. When villagers celebrate a particular event (e.g., a wedding or a saint’s day) in their village, young males and females use the opportunity to meet in public and flirt with one another. In doing so, they make their relationship or the beginning of such a relationship known to the village community. These aspects of the relationship between the young males and females of a village, along with many other social processes, are manifested in a particular way in the enactment of the *dabki*.

To begin with, there are *dabki* dances that are exclusively performed by men. These are referred to as *dabkat al-douyouk* or “roosters’ dance” (Trabulsi, 1997, p.157). During these performances the dancers execute dancing steps characterised by skimming the ground followed by hearty leaps into the air, spinning and strong pounding of the ground. They show in their dancing an extreme form of agility accompanied by unsuppressible shouts. Overall, their movements are vertical and full of masculine pride, assuredness and self-confidence. In the face of women watching them, the male *dabki* unravels virility in its most dramatic form. In contrast, women in these instances are expected simply to watch the dancers with admiration and reveal their appreciation by clapping during the performance and more intensely upon its completion. More importantly, they in turn have their own dances (the so-called *dabkat al-ferakh* or “hens’ *dabki*”) which are characterised by softer leaping and earth-stamping, supple hand movements and a lot of hip-shaking and twisting. On the whole, they move horizontally in opposition to the vertical movements which are predominant during the male *dabki* dance. Stiffness, agility, shoutings, leaping and earth-pounding are all suggestive of pride and assured masculinity, whereas soft leaping, supple hand movement, breast and hip-shaking and twisting are indicative of sensual but controlled femininity.⁷

More importantly, the examination of the status of women in the practice of the *dabki* dancing reveals the contradictory character of men’s relationship to women’s sexuality: on one hand, female sexuality is a source of pleasure and, on the other, it should be kept under control. Already we have shown how the gendering of women’s sexuality is partly manifested in the opposite sets of dancing steps (vertical versus horizontal steps) performed by each sex group. However, there are more acts in a *dabki* dance that reflect men’s ambivalent relationship to women’s sexuality. This is best illustrated by examining

the *dabki* enacted by both men and women. On the whole, the *dabki* in this case gives both sex groups the opportunity to be in close physical contact: they hold hands together and they dance with their shoulders drawn close against each other. However, the leader of the dancing group is always a man who is one of the most skilled dancers in the community. In his leadership of the dancing group, he will perform all the “masculine” steps described above while the other male dancers are forced to subdue their movement to be in tune with the “feminine” moves of their female counterparts. In contrast, on the rare occasions when a woman leads the dance or breaks away from the group to dance separately in the middle of the semi-circle created by the remaining dancers, her solo dance will bring her “feminine” performance into sharper focus. Ideally, she should be a good dancer and someone who is physically attractive and a potential bride. In her solo dance, the female lead dancer exacerbates her sensual moves (the shaking of hips and breasts and other flirtatious moves) whereas other female dancers act demurely with modest steps and downcast eyes. On the whole, the community turns a blind eye to the leading female dancer, especially in the presence of her likely marriage partner, but they would never let the act go beyond the permissible. Ultimately, modesty is a must which should be respected by all members of the community.

The ambivalent aspect of men’s relationship to women’s sexuality can also be observed in another important movement that takes place during the *dabki* in which both sexes participate. This is the time when the female dancers part with their male counterparts and then join with them several times in the course of performing the dance. This contradictory act of parting and joining hands at different points during the dance could also be interpreted as an act seducing and repelling men at the same time. Once again, provocation has to be counterbalanced with self-control.

In Australia, the gender dimension of the *dabki* has been corporeally transformed as a result of re-negotiating the status of migrant Lebanese women. Notably, the *dabki* is rarely performed as a single-sex dance in Australia. In most community occasions, male and female Lebanese migrants participate in the *dabki*, irrespective of the type of dance that would require the exclusive performance of either group. Mixed *dabki* is the predominant, if not the only, form of *dabki* in Australia. In addition, our fieldwork revealed to us that women attending a community celebration take part in the *dabki* regardless of family and regional differences. Their participation in the dance and the sexuality associated with it is no longer restricted by the context of the extended family or the village to which they belong, as the case would be in rural Lebanon. Female dancers in Australia feel freer in joining the *dabki* dance group without being restrained by the regional and the family background of their dancing partners. Moreover, women can lead the dance group and their leading dance is increasingly characterised by sexual innuendo that does not necessarily abide by the stricter rules of conduct normally encountered in rural communities in Lebanon. This development of freer participation of female migrants in the *dabki* has on many occasions led to conflicts between the male “guardians” of the female dancer and those who are seduced by her dance. As a result, many community functions in Sydney have been interrupted by, or even ended with, a brawl. The increasingly independent and strong economic role played by migrant Lebanese women in Australia has led to a relative

improvement in their power relationship with men. This broader change has resulted in re-negotiating the terms and conditions under which migrant Lebanese women are participating in the *dabki*. Overall, it has certainly transformed the economy of seduction embedded in the *dabki*, and consequently created the conditions for occasional angry outbursts by male dancers aimed at containing the transgressive acts of migrant women. In other words, the changing status of migrant women in broader society has resulted in a double process of de-differentiating and re-differentiating the gender order embedded in the *dabki*, reflecting ultimately a new balance of power between male and female migrant dancers.

Class, ethnicity and the *dabki*

During our long-term observation of the *dabki* in Australia, we have found that broadly speaking, different class groups within the community deal with the *dabki* differently. Lebanese migrants with a working-class background showed extreme interest in the *dabki* and always insisted on taking part in its performance when the opportunity arose. At no point during our field observation did they show an interest in turning into an audience passively watching the performance of a designated group of dancers. Ethnic solidarity, with all its attendant messages analysed above, seem to be unshakable among the Lebanese migrant workers when dancing the *dabki*. It is cemented by gendered symbolic messages referring to group belonging and challenging the dominant “other” and integrating him into the migrant culture.

Community workers and other professionals such as lawyers, teachers, engineers and others coming from a Lebanese background, also expressed an interest in learning the *dabki* and partaking in its performance. However, their class interest pertaining to their specific work, especially in the Australian “multicultural industry” where many take an active part in the battle for the elimination of ethnic discrimination, leads them to deal with the *dabki* predominantly as a mark of identity and a site of resisting discrimination. The belonging to this identity and its invocation in public are utilised as symbolic (ethnic) capital (see chapter three) to enhance the pursuit of their middle-class interests. Valorising ethnic minority (Lebanese) background should, as far as basic principles of multiculturalism in Australia are concerned, discredit any form of discrimination against the Lebanese migrants. The invocation of one’s ethnic identity also provides the justification for the Lebanese middle class to create community leadership and work for the protection and interests of the Lebanese community. For this reason in particular, middle-class Lebanese migrants do not object to the idea of transforming the *dabki* into a reified spectacle performed by designated dancers apart from the participation of the community. Being a member of a *dabki* audience overtakes their interest in being a part of it as a communal activity. For them, when performed on stage, the *dabki* reflects no less than the epitome of Lebanese culture which they need to identify with as a distinctly protected ethnic identity.

It is interesting, moreover, to examine the way in which the *nouveau riches* within the Lebanese community appropriate the *dabki*. This group of people normally consists of first-generation Lebanese migrants who came from a poor rural background. After hard work over several years in Australia, combined with periods of general economic prosperity, they have been able to establish successful businesses which ultimately promoted them to

the class of rich people within their own community. Given their social capital (Lebanese ethnicity), they usually spend most of their leisure time in Lebanese dancing clubs. Our field observation of their behaviour in these clubs revealed the manner in which the cultural logic of the *dabki* was further transformed by their newly acquired class position.

Like any other clubs in Sydney, Lebanese clubs in Sydney provide their clients with food, drinks and entertainment. In general, the entertainment program involves the playing of live music, singing and dancing. At a time when most people in the club dance to *dabki* music, the *nouveau riches* take this opportunity to publicly display their newly acquired class position by lavishly spending money on the singer, the drummer and the flute player who make up the key figures in the performance. A similar situation is also noted by Bottomley in her analysis of what she calls “the interpersonal politics” of Greek dance: “Large social dances provide opportunities for public display, for lavish spending, for an exhibition of personal skill. High status men are expected to display their success, and there is some competition in payment for dances and monopolising the musicians” (1992, p.80). In addition, the Lebanese *nouveau riches* who are found in Lebanese clubs buy expensive bottles of champagne, wine and whisky and lay them open at the feet of the *dabki* singer. This is not done to simply mark their high economic status, but also to spread the word about their newly acquired wealth within their community through the gossip of those who frequent the club. Our fieldwork clearly shows that the *nouveau riches* among Lebanese migrants hardly show an interest in *dancing the dabki*, and if they do, their concern to reveal their wealth overrides other considerations characteristic of working-class and middle-class (mainly professional) migrants. As a result, the *nouveau riches* do not partake in the *dabki* and experience its liminality. For them the *dabki* is not an instance where nostalgic feelings towards Lebanon are activated or symbolic community power and unity are sought. The *dabki* is mainly a site to autograph the story of their economic success. For this reason, affective intensity is distinctly manifested when working-class and middle-class Lebanese migrants are seen dancing, whereas this intensity is hardly noticeable in the role played by the *nouveau riches* in the *dabki*.

Finally, second- and third-generation Lebanese migrants who belong to the upper class rarely attend community events, let alone dance the *dabki*. They have no need for such events, and the *dabki* had no symbolic value in the course of strategically serving their class interests. If they were to attend a community function and the *dabki* was presented on stage, they would merely show a passing interest in its performance out of courtesy. The *dabki* reminds them of a dying past and a folk tradition which has absolutely no value in their everyday activities. Their integration into the dominant white culture and their economic integration into the Australian upper class make the *dabki* insignificant to them, and they treat it with little regard.

Conclusion

Our cultural reading of the *dabki* shows that it is traversed with social processes reflecting several contradictory power relations pertaining to issues of ethnicity, racism, gender and class. This chapter examines these processes and shows that as a cultural practice, the *dabki*, like the *Ashura* ceremony, is continuously recreated by the agents (i.e., dancers

and spectators) who are involved in its enactment under the changing conditions of the context in which they are located, negotiating and renegotiating otherness in Australian society. In the age of migration, the liminality of the *dabki* assumes a specific character pertaining to the migrant experience of displacement and social exclusion. As a site of cultural production, the *dabki* is transformed not only to accommodate the new realities found in the host society, but also the reality of the migrants' persistent attachment to their home of origin. Its adaptiveness is such that it reveals resilience as a dance form and a capacity to be constructed and reconstructed for various purposes.

The performance of the *dabki*, like the *Ashura*, demonstrates the ways in which embodied practices which, at first glance, seem to be defined solely by a logic of cultural maintenance are, in fact, constituted by diverse logics: the reconfiguration of different regional identities and customs as an "ethnic" identity defined primarily in terms of the national homeland; the negotiation of a place the migrant and their children can inhabit in the new society (a negotiation that takes place in relation to the wider experience of national belonging and the field of ethnicity in the new society; and the reconfiguration of relations of class, ethnicity and gender. The examination of the *dabki* in Australia has revealed that it is an embodied practice invested with interests and power relations that disclose a great deal of the realities associated with the experience of Lebanese migrants living in multicultural Australia. It also illustrates the dual form nature of the habitus as something which carries an internalised history but has the capacity to renegotiate its relationship with a new context. It is one more cultural site in which the Lebanese migrants spatially inscribe their experience, using their bodies as means of communication and as a means to insert themselves into a place in Australian society. But such practices don't occur in isolation: they exist as part of the wider field of ethnicity in contemporary Australia to which we now turn.

The formation of the field of ethnicity and the problematic of community leadership

As we have seen in the previous chapters, the formation of Lebanese ancestry as a form of ethnic identity is a complex and contradictory process, tied up with the imperative for migrants and their children to find a place in Australian society. Such an imperative has, for the last four decades, been redefined away from an older, assimilationist logic, in which migrants were simply expected to adopt the folkways of the dominant, largely “Anglo” culture. Since the emergence of multiculturalism in Australia in the 1970s, however, (some) forms of homeland identity, organisation and custom have not only been tolerated, but celebrated as central to the multicultural imaginary of contemporary, liberal Australia. In this new context “ethnicity” has not only acquired cultural and social importance in a diverse society, but also has become something of political consequence as groups have mobilised around “ethnic communities” and as the state has increasingly structured social policy around cultural differences. The lines of political patronage and funding central to Australian multiculturalism led to the development of organisations and leaders whose task was seen to be not only to service the needs of specific ethnic communities but to represent them in the wider political field. Within this context, ethnicity as a symbolic value became essential in preserving the legitimacy of ethnic leadership *within* these perceived communities on the one hand, and *beyond* these communities in the wider public realm, on the other. The relationship of ethnic leaders to the state, as well as to their respective “communities”, became a crucial element in the overall strategy of the government to manage and make use of “ethnic politics”.

As we have suggested, then, the ways in which national origins becomes reconfigured as “ethnicity” tells us more of the new logic of inclusion of migrants and their children than it does about some primordial desire to retain cultural traditions. This is seen both in the homogenisation of often diverse forms of a tradition as “essentially” Lebanese. But it is also seen in the deployment of supposedly traditional practices as forms of symbolic capital that have value in the “field of ethnicity” as it has developed in Australia. In other words, Lebaneseness has significance in so far as it is located in a network of networks defined by the panoply of ethnicities that exist. As we argued in the Introduction, ethnicity refers both to a reconfigured specificity (Lebaneseness) and to the location of this specificity amidst a multitude of differences which are, generically, defined in contrast to an imaginary “Australian” mainstream (marked in the vernacular use of the term “ethnics” to denote anyone of non-Anglo ancestry).

In this chapter we begin to explore what we have called, following Bourdieu, the “field of ethnicity”, especially as it pertains to the playing out of ethnic politics. We suggest that crucial to the function of “community leaders” within this field is their accumulation of “ethnic capital”, in which the forms of capital which have value within perceived ethnic communities are converted into symbolic capital that is recognised by the state as the capacity of leaders to represent ethnic communities. We briefly examine the historical conditions that led to the formation of an ethnic field in Australia, and then analyse the specific processes that resulted in the emergence of a Lebanese community leadership. This field, like any field, is always contested and negotiated, and we consider the moral panics about “Lebanese youth gangs” in Sydney since 1998 to examine the reconstitution of the ethnic field and of ethnic capital. In the aftermath of this panic, the NSW state government participated in a populist law and order auction entailing the racialisation of crime. This secured them electoral victory in 1999 and again in 2003, but undermined the legitimacy of Lebanese community leadership, and led to a new direction in state politics which had the outcome of devalorising “ethnicity” and substituting it with “community relations”. More recently, the reaction of the federal government to the threat of terrorism, specifically after the participation of the Australian troops in the 2003 invasion of Iraq and after the London bombings in July 2005, has further resulted in the undermining of the symbolic value of multiculturalism. Our analysis of this recent development will clearly show the extent to which the focus in the federal government discourse has shifted from multiculturalism to the appraisal of the symbolic value of the “Australian way of life and its core values”.

Field, capital and political representation

Bourdieu deployed the concepts of “field” and “capital” to explore the constitution and operation of particular domains of life in complex societies. He defines a field as:

a network, or a configuration, of objective relations between positions. These positions are objectively defined, in their existence and in the determinations they impose upon their occupants, agents or institutions, by their present and potential situation (*situs*) in the structure of the distribution of species of power (or capital) whose possession commands access to the specific profits that are at stake in the field, as well as by their objective relation to other positions (domination, subordination, homology, etc.) (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, p.97)

Despite its abstract formulation, this definition refers to the basic elements that constitute a field: an objective set of unequal positions, occupants, institutions and capital. In his analysis of political representation, for example, Bourdieu (1991, p.190) discusses the formation of a political field in which professionals vie for control and support of non-professionals and the right to speak and act in their name. Capital in this context is a metaphor used to describe the varied and valued resources which occupants accumulate to succeed within the field, and over which they struggle for the control of the field. The capital of a specific field is produced, circulated and appropriated by actors occupying unequal positions within the field. We can also infer from the above quotation that each field in a particular society has its specific capital which can be economic, cultural, social, political, religious,

linguistic, etc., or a combination of such species of power. Crucial in Bourdieu's model is the emphasis he places on the broad categories of cultural and social capital, alongside the conventional recognition of the role of economic capital (1998, p.41). Cultural capital refers to the cultural knowledge, competencies and dispositions social agents embody, particularly through educational experience and qualifications, while social capital refers to the kinds of connections people develop and make use of. People constantly seek to have their capital recognised and validated as they position themselves within a field, and they also attempt to convert it into other forms of capital to gain profits in other fields.

Bourdieu (1998, p.102) uses the notion of "symbolic capital" to refer to the accumulated prestige that results from the recognition of the capital agents have accumulated. It refers to the ways agents attempt to achieve status or influence via the reputation they can claim on the basis of their accumulated economic, cultural and social capital. Political capital is thus a form of symbolic capital because it is a kind of "credit" based on recognition – from the group the politician represents and from the state (1991, p.192). Central to Bourdieu's argument is the role the state plays in recognising and validating all forms of capital (1998, p.51). The state plays a particularly important role because it confers a symbolic value on the type of capital that would be most compatible with its overall strategy for maintaining social cohesion and order. Bourdieu underlines the paradoxical nature of representational politics that results from this: in speaking for a group, the representative has to silence dissent; in deriving authority from a group, the representative has to exert authority over the group to ensure its cohesiveness (1991, p.212). This paradox has particular significance for so-called "ethnic community leaders".

While Bourdieu recognises that there are different forms of political capital (1991, p.194), he does not explore the kinds of political capital that underlie the role of "community" leaders in what we now refer to as "ethnic politics": the strategies parties engage in to secure the support of ethnic communities, and the politics that this produces within and between community organisations. Analysis of the function of ethnic leadership demonstrates the ways in which this paradox produces different kinds of positions within a field. Higham (1978, pp.1-15), for example, distinguishes between marginal and centre leaders in American ethnic politics – that is, leaders with orientations towards the dominant political field of the host society and leaders with stronger ties to the communities they represent. He also distinguishes between leaders of protest and of accommodation, a distinction Anwar also makes in his analysis of ethnic leaders in Britain and the contradictory strategies they employ that emanate from the intercalary position they occupy in the host society (1991, p.34). While neither of these approaches captures the complexity of a field or the process of capital accumulation that Bourdieu's model describes, they nevertheless point to key aspects of the contradictory forces ethnic leaders are faced with.

In this chapter we attempt to explore these issues in relation to the bind that ethnic leaders experience in Australian multiculturalism: the need to participate in the construction of a sense of an imagined, cohesive ethnic community as they struggle with each other, the complex differences that structure such "communities", and the paradox of beholdenness to political masters "above" whilst maintaining a claim to represent those "below" (Collins,

Noble, Poynting and Tabar, 2000). This analysis can be better elaborated by turning to an examination of the emergence of an ethnic field and ethnic capital in Australia.

Multiculturalism and the emergence of an ethnic field

Prior to the 1970s, the field of national power, as Hage (1998, p.57) argues, was fundamentally a “field of Whiteness” that dominated the governmental management of national space since federation in 1901. This was manifested through the White Australia policy, and then through policies of assimilationism and integrationism, which valorised the economic, social and cultural capital derived from European capitalist societies. A fantasy of cultural purity had sustained the dominance of Whiteness as symbolic capital until the end of the Second World War, defined in racial terms against an Aboriginal population and the ‘yellow peril’ (Castles, Kalantzis, Cope and Morrissey, 1995, pp.1-2). The White Australia policy also manifested itself in the selection criteria for immigrants, who were sorted according to their racial and cultural affinity with Anglo Australians (Lopez, 2000, p.43).

After the Second World War, the policy of assimilation allowed for the expansion of the base of Australia’s population while maintaining the perception of cultural homogeneity, after the government embarked on an ambitious immigration program under the new Department of Immigration to meet the shortages in the labour market and to provide a basis for defence against threats from Asia (Collins, 1988, pp.21-22). Despite the attention to migrant settlement and welfare, the emphasis was clearly on cultural assimilation, a view shared by the major parties (Lopez, 2000, pp.45-49). While the policy of assimilation was gradually replaced during the 1960s by the softer focus on “integration”, this too was a strategy to reconstitute the valorised capital of Whiteness, by abandoning the requirement that migrants immediately renounce their cultural baggage.

This shift reflected wider changes. Australia’s trading activities were becoming strongly linked with the economies of Japan and South-East Asia. The traditional source countries of migrants were less attracted to settling in Australia and so people from Southern Europe and the Middle East were the solution to labour market shortages. Integrationism provided the ideological justification for this new direction to allay the fears of a xenophobic population (Castles et al., 1995, pp.54-55). In 1968, the Liberal Minister for Immigration, Bill Snedden, made clear the objective of integration: “We ask particularly of migrants that they be substantially Australians in the first generation and completely Australian in the second” quoted in Jakubowicz, Morrissey and Palser, 1984, p.13).

By 1972, when the Whitlam Labor government came to power, a new social climate was emerging which led to the adoption of a policy of “multiculturalism”. Social workers, community activists and academics were devising alternative ways for looking into “the migrant presence” (Martin, 1978), and there was increasing pressure from ethnic organisations for political representation and access to mainstream political processes, and increasing awareness by political parties of the “migrant vote” (Collins, 1988, p. 133).

The social-democratic Labor government increasingly recognised “ethnic communities” within the “family of the nation”, but largely in relation to socio-economic inequalities.

Designated ethnic communities were perceived to be like other “disadvantaged” groups, needing state intervention to address the injustices that they suffered. In this process, migrants were increasingly transformed into a constituency that could be incorporated politically. In effect, between 1972 and 1975 the Australian Labor Party had begun to *ethnicise* migrants by transforming them into a valued “ethnic vote”. This process was completed by the Liberal-Country Party Coalition, when it returned to power in 1975, through the Galbally Report, which fashioned migrant political participation and cultural expression through policies and structures of community funding that systematically recognised these communities but drew them into a hierarchy of political patronage (Jakubowicz et al., 1984). The Report, which was to be the reference point for government policies from the late seventies onwards, put it very clearly: “The knowledge that people are identified with their cultural background and ethnic group enables them to take their place in their new society with confidence if their ethnicity has been accepted by the community”; it concluded that, “... the most significant and appropriate bodies to be involved in the fostering and preservation of cultures are the ethnic organisations themselves” (quoted in Castles et al., 1995, p.69). For immigrants to take their place in society, they have to be politically consulted and culturally respected and only thus could they gain state recognition and funding. With the adoption of this new policy, the state was empowered to incorporate ethnic leaders.

While the Labor ethnic affairs policy ethnicised the migrant presence through addressing their socio-economic and welfare problems, the Liberal-National Coalition led by Malcolm Fraser, ethnicised the migrants through their broader outlook on migrant rights in the political process and their entitlement to express their cultural identity. In combination, the policies had the effect of valorising ethnicity as new symbolic capital within a specific field of ethnic politics that articulated forms of community and cultural organisation with the structures and imperatives of mainstream political processes. Ethnicity was transformed into a valuable cultural element, and became the object of struggle by the occupants of the ethnic field.

Hage (1998) provides perhaps the most innovative exploration of the significance of multiculturalism in terms of an argument about national capital and Whiteness. What he calls “White multiculturalism”, while opening up a space for different cultural forms, is essentially a strategy of containment that maintains the centrality of White national managers while presenting itself as disinterested. It treats ethnicity as a source of enrichment to be savoured by “cosmopolitans”. It may be, however, that Hage overstates somewhat the incorporation of cultural difference into the project of a new breed of White nationalists. He construes (minority) ethnicity primarily as a negative capital (1998, p.61) – something that erodes the symbolic capital an immigrant hopes to accrue. To “bend the stick” the other way, we are attempting here to analyse how ethnicity becomes valorised as a distinct form of symbolic capital in the context of multiculturalism. The Labor and Liberal-Country/National governments of the 1970s and 1980s, we suggest, valorised an emergent ethnic capital without necessarily displacing the dominance of Whiteness.

Both governments incorporated ethnic communities by recruiting their representatives who, in turn, represented the “ethnic” voice articulating these policies. In other words,

this process of incorporation converted forms of capital specific to particular ethnic groups into a generalised symbolic, “ethnic capital”. In the case of the Labor policy, “ethnicity”, as symbolic capital, was valorised when it was acquired by individuals with the main task of redressing ethnic welfare problems. In relation to the Coalition policy, ethnicity was valorised when used to manifest itself in the process of consultation between government bodies and ethnic leaders, and when it was translated into cultural activities related to the lifestyles of the ethnic communities (such as cooking, dancing and music, religious worship, and so on).

It is important to stress this doubled nature of ethnicity: that we aren’t just talking about the formation of ethnic communities who represent their constituency to government. Nor are we simply replicating Gilroy’s (1993, pp.126-127) important elaboration of the idea of a ‘double consciousness’, the consequence of the attempt to live two, contrasting identities of race and nation, as influential as this is to our framework here. We want to suggest this doubleness is not just about competing identities, but the structure of the field in which ethnicity as a whole is located. A “Lebanese” identity and community has significance in so far as it is located in a network of networks defined by the multitude of differences which are, generically, defined in contrast to but within an imaginary “Australian” identity and community. This network of networks is built into organisational structures, such as the Federation of Ethnic Communities Councils of Australia (FECCA, 2009), the national peak body representing Australians from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, whose first congress is held in 1984. FECCA’s name captures this embedding of a specific ethnic difference within the network of non-Anglo differences within an Australia in which there is no need for White community councils.

Ethnic associations, whether religious or secular, existed before and after the formation of an ethnic field in Australia. However, the valorisation of ethnicity as symbolic capital was only made possible with the construction of an ethnic field and the institutionalisation of multiculturalism. In this process the state, whether at the federal or state level, played a decisive role. In fact, the state acted as a chief definer of valorised ethnicity against which all other contesting definitions were measured. Undoubtedly, the state definition of ethnicity was overdetermined by many factors, including the interests of the contestant groups within the field of ethnicity. The role of the media in identifying and legitimating ethnic leaders, their communities and organisations was also central. Yet ultimately, ethnicity, or for that matter any other symbolic capital circulating in society, is valorised according to the terms set out by the state to ensure the overall reproduction of social order and relations of power, even if that authority is contested.

Like other fields in society, the ethnic field is a site of power relations. In it, the occupants battle with each other over the acquisition of its specific capital and over the terms of its recognition. This is a struggle waged on two fronts: it is a struggle to accumulate the specific forms of economic, cultural and social capital that make it possible to exist *within* a socially constructed ethnic community and have them valorised within that community;

and the struggle to transform them into symbolic, ethnic capital which is recognised and validated by the state. The more the occupant of the field acquires the economic, cultural and social capital esteemed within a particular ethnic community, the more likely they are to be able to convert it into symbolic capital recognised “above”, bearing in mind that this recognition is also shaped by class and gender. Although there is no guarantee of this conversion, the amount of symbolic capital also indicates the degree to which the possessor of ethnicity is coopted by the state. The individual who is most coopted by the state would be the person who is most recognised within the terms specified by the state in its definition of the ethnic capital. Yet the definition of ethnic capital is a negotiated process. Despite the constant attempt by the state to valorise the terms of its definition of ethnicity in the ethnic field, other occupants will always seek to redefine the meaning of ethnicity to express views and interests that are excluded by the dominant occupants. As we shall see below, the state can at any time opt to ensure its political survival and the maintenance of the social order by de-valorising the symbolic capital of ethnicity, and consequently by replacing it with a different symbolic capital. It can also, as in the case of the federal government in the wake of the London bombings in July 2005, decide to redefine the terms of its recognition of multiculturalism in such a way as to make it readily interchangeable with the assimilationist outlook of protecting the “Australian way of life and its core values and attitudes”. This move will certainly undermine the legitimacy of community leaders who persist in accepting the shift in government policy despite its failure to reflect the views and interests of their constituencies.

As we have begun to show, the ethnic field emerged in the second half of the 1970s with its specific discourse, institutions and associations, power structure, symbolic capital, occupants and constituency. Yet the ability to occupy and maintain a key position in the ethnic field are no simple matters. To become a leader, one has to accumulate enough cultural, social or economic capital to convert into ethnic capital, a process which is also structured by gender and social class. Once in the field, the ethnic leader becomes caught between two conflicting imperatives. On one hand, they have to be perceived by members of the community as a guardian of their interests, and on the other, they have to articulate with the state to maintain their leadership role in the eyes of the State representatives. The legitimacy of ethnic leadership, therefore, hinges upon the ability of the community leader to strike a balance between these two imperatives. If the opposition between the interest of the ethnic community and that of the state becomes irreconcilable, the legitimacy of communal leadership enters into a crisis. The leadership crisis becomes even more acute when the state undermines the symbolic capital from which the legitimacy of this leadership is derived.

The following sections will then do two things: the first section will begin to analyse the processes of the accumulation and conversion of capital within a specific case study of Lebanese community leadership, and the final section will explore what happens when a crisis, such as that which ensued from the panic around “Lebanese gangs”, challenges the foundations and dynamics of communal leadership.

Lebanese ethnic leaders, *wajaha* and the accumulation of ethnic capital

In the 1950s and 1960s, there were mainly religious leaders of the Lebanese communities – Christian and Muslim – who, in addition to their religious duties, were also involved in looking after the settlement needs of recent arrivals. Their primary concern at the time revolved around securing accommodation and employment for newly arrived Lebanese immigrants. Alongside these religious leaders, there were also some prominent individuals who took the initiative in these communal activities and were mainly drawn from an older wave of immigrants. Early Lebanese immigrants sought the help of these community leaders because the latter had more knowledge and experience relevant to their settlement needs in the host society. In this process, social bonds on the basis of family, locality, religion and nationality, were activated to provide the networks for these services. Communal reputation and status (or *wajaha* in Arabic) were formed on the basis of delivering these services, and constituted the elements from which early forms of leadership were developed among Lebanese immigrants. This leadership quality, however, did not have a symbolic (and material) value beyond the social boundary of the Lebanese immigrant communities. In the broader society, neither the specific settlement needs of immigrants nor the work of community leaders and their associations were recognised as being of any significance. At this stage, the authorities and the community at large were concerned with assimilating migrants into the Anglo-Australian way of life to ensure cultural homogeneity.

It was only with the formation of an ethnic field in Australia that leadership based on *wajaha* acquired a new symbolic value as ethnic capital, based on the forms of capital accumulated in relation to a perceived community, but now convertible into a symbolic capital recognised by the state. While there is no easy or automatic interchange between capitals (Swartz, 1997, p.80), because the state largely controls the processes of conversion the same policies that recognised ethnic communities and their organisations and leaders also enabled the conversion of very specific types of capital into ethnic capital. With the establishment of multiculturalism as official state policy, ethnicity could be transformed into symbolic capital, which motivated potential ethnic leaders to seek its possession.

Ethnicity here is understood then as a complex of forms of capital that can be doubly valorised: both within a perceived community and in relation to mainstream political processes. These capitals include the explicit forms of cultural capital (community knowledge, education, and so on), social capital (forms of association and connection) and economic capital. There is an enormous amount of overlap between these forms of capital, and typically a leader cannot convert their capital unless they have some measure of each of them. Apart from the requisite cultural and social capital involved in the expressive identities of ethnicity (such as language, gestures and tastes on the one hand, and intimate and extensive relationships within the community on the other) there are several key modes that are fundamental to the ability to transform expressive ethnicity into ethnic capital. As we shall see, there also exists the possibility then of converting ethnic capital into mainstream political capital proper.

Of course, the possession of these capitals and their contribution to claims of leadership is shaped by social relations of class and gender as well as ethnicity per se (see Werbner and

Anwar, 1991). Ethnic leaders are conventionally male and either professionals or business leaders, and they are entering into a system of political representation in Australia that is also dominated by men. Class and gender shape both the accumulation of capitals, but also the process of conversion and deployment. Jakubowicz et al. (1984) have noted the patriarchal nature of multiculturalism, but it is important to stress that it is not simply the patriarchal nature of countries of origin that is the issue here, but the masculine nature of politics in Australia. We have already seen in previous chapters how gender shapes the performance of cultural events; the issue of gender will return in later discussions of young people.

The first mode is professional participation in the “ethnic affairs industry”. The adoption of multiculturalism as state policy, particularly under the model initiated by the Galbally Report, generated a process whereby servicing the welfare needs of migrants became increasingly professionalised (Jakubowicz et al., 1984). The creation of an ethnic affairs industry made possible not simply a degree of social mobility for some non-English-speaking background men and women, it also provided the basis for converting the cultural capital of a tertiary education, for example, into ethnic capital. Some individuals were able to enter the field of ethnicity in the capacity of social or community workers. As a result, the “ethnic industry” became the object of conservative attacks as an area of privileged treatment of minorities (Collins, 1988, p.238).

A second mode of entering the field of ethnicity was through the conversion of economic capital into ethnic capital. Some Lebanese immigrants achieved this entry by moving upward on the socio-economic scale and becoming members of the middle class or the capitalist class. At some point, these migrants decided to use their economic position to buy ethnic capital and assume a leading role in the ethnic field. Most of these people ended up cooperating with community organisations to defend the cause of their community (or a section thereof), or joined an existing association with a keen eye to becoming a leader. In buying an Arabic newspaper with a group of three Lebanese businessmen, Anwar Harb, for example, gained extra credentials in his claim to represent and, at the same time, exert some influence on his community. Harb’s building construction firm also has involved him in relations with local and state government agencies. As a consequence, this leader has shown some thought of converting his ethnic capital to political capital by considering running for state election, in return for his longstanding support for the Liberal Party (his political patron) in the editorial policy of his newspaper, *An-Nahar*.

Another mode of entry to the field of ethnicity is through the conversion of possessed political capital to ethnic capital. In this case, some ethnic leaders started their public life by joining one of the major political parties in Australia. At a later stage in their political career, they decided to champion the cause of their ethnic community by converting some of the political capital they had acquired while in the field of Australian politics into ethnic capital. These leaders, however, would always represent the ethnic affairs policy of their party (be it Liberal or Labor). In the aftermath of “Lebanese youths gangs” crisis that erupted in Sydney in October 1998, this category of ethnic leaders played a crucial role in disseminating the policy position of their party, and in the regulation of the community response to this crisis.

A person could be simultaneously the possessor of more than one capital derived from different fields without necessarily losing any in the process of converting one into the other. The conversion in this case would take the form of using the power and influence associated with the previous capital to buy a position in the new field, which would reflect to some degree the power position derived from the possession of his previous capital. To illustrate this point, we may consider the case of a prominent ethnic leader, New South Wales Member of the Legislative Council, Eddie Obeid. Obeid was the owner of the most popular Arabic newspaper in Australia (*el-Telegraph*) and the founder of a community association, the Australian Lebanese Christian Federation. Then, because of his business success, he became the owner of an important printing press and, later on, an investor in real estate and the building industry (McClymont, 2000, pp.29,37). While he was involved in these activities, he converted some of his ethnic capital into involvement in the Australian Labor Party, where he became renowned as a “numbers man”, and was ultimately appointed Minister for Fisheries and for Mineral Resources in the NSW government in 1999. With the possession of all these capitals, this person was in an ideal position to use any one capital to acquire more of the other two. In any event, his position in the state government enabled him to act as a “father figure” for many Lebanese associations, capable of dispensing favours to his community, recruiting more supporters to his party and drumming up political allegiance to the policy of his government (McClymont and Davies, 2002, p.1). In the final analysis, all these symbolic credentials can be used to further his political status within the party.

When possessors of any of the economic, political and cultural capital, or any combination of them, convert their capital into ethnic capital, they acquire in the process a specific symbolic capital that constitutes the basis of, in Weberian terms, the charismatic component of their authority (Goulbourne, 1991, p.204). This symbolic capital is referred to in Arabic as *wajaha*, and the person who has it is described as *wajih*. *Wajaha* refers to a social attribute that puts the person who possesses it in the forefront when dealing with problems experienced by his community (the term *wajaha* in Arabic is derived from the word *wajh*, meaning the face of a person or an object). As such, *wajaha* is initially acquired when possessors of a particular capital (be it political, economic, social or cultural, or any combination of these) convert it into an ability to be in a leading position in dealing with problems experienced by members of their community. Once possessed, a person can claim a degree of power and influence over his followers. Yet for the influence of the *wajih* over his followers to be functional in the field of ethnicity, and not just the basis for esteem in the local community, it has to be valorised by the state by making the objectives of the *wajaha* compatible with the state definition of ethnicity. In other words, *wajaha* has to be recognised by the state as expressing an ethnicity. Even though it has its origin in the social structure of Lebanon and other Mediterranean societies, state policy towards the migrants and the realities of migrants in Australia provides a new ground for its reactivation.

Wajaha constitutes an integral part of the symbolic capital associated with Lebanese leaders in the ethnic field in contemporary Australia. *Wajaha* helps to create the impression that ethnic leaders are simply working for the well-being of their community. However, the series of moral panics around “Lebanese gangs” since the mid-1990s has resulted in *wajaha*

being rendered ineffective, and has led to an attempt by the state to valorise a new form of symbolic capital to restore its symbolic domination over the Lebanese community. *Wajaha* further lost a considerable degree of its symbolic capital in the period following the Bali and London bombings. This was because of the gradual undermining of multiculturalism by the federal government as it increasingly reverted to an assimilationist outlook that is repeatedly expressed by the representatives of the federal government in their call for the protection of the “Australian way of life”. The re-adoption of an assimilationist outlook led the federal government of John Howard, the leader of the Australian Liberal Party, to change the name of the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs to the Department of Immigration and Citizenship. This designation has continued under the Rudd Labor Government, elected in November 2007, though this government did reintroduce the term ‘multiculturalism’ with the formation of the Multicultural Advisory Council in December 2008 (Australian Government, 2008).

Who represents what? The politics of ethnic representation

It is estimated that in the city of Sydney there are at least 100 Lebanese community organisations, and most of them were established between the late 1970s and the early 1990s, a period characterised by the consolidation of the field of ethnicity. Most of these organisations were formed around specific religious, regional and familial loyalties despite the widespread rhetoric about their representation of the broader Lebanese community. In the acts of forming such organisations, these loyalties were reconstructed in a context that was determined by local (i.e., Australian) and global (i.e., coming mainly from country of origin) factors. In the past, there had been attempts to create umbrella organisations such as the Lebanese Community Council (LCC) to represent the whole Lebanese community, but their claim to represent the whole community was constantly contested by rival organisations. Examples of this include when an affiliated member decides to take a position different to that of the umbrella organisation in relation to a particular community issue, or when it is realised that the membership of the majority of member organisations in the umbrella organisation is simply tokenistic. The significance of the struggle over organisational form lies not simply in the imperative to accurately represent the community, whatever that is, but to have a form that fits within the larger state-defined structure of ethnic representation; to have a place at the “ethnic” table the “Lebanese community” needs to have its own institutional entity, but one recognised within the network of networks. This, however, produces struggle within the so-called community.

Ever since its inception in 1983, the leaders of the LCC had many problems in claiming the right to represent the common position of the Lebanese community. Though membership in LCC has increased over the years, the number of “real” affiliates did not exceed 30 associations in 2000-2001, and the majority of them were regional and family associations. Some influential organisations, such as the Australian Lebanese Association (ALA) and the Maronite Catholic Society (MCS) never joined the LCC, and they have always refused to be present in the LCC. The leaders of the LCC and the ALA have had a lot of disagreements over the legitimacy of which one of them should represent the Lebanese community. The LCC leaders claim that they represent the Lebanese community because their council is

made up of a large number of community groupings. The leaders of ALA, on the other hand, make a counter-claim that their association is the sole legitimate representative of the Lebanese migrants because first, it is a branch of a worldwide organisation (i.e., the World Cultural Union – WCU) representing the Lebanese diaspora, and secondly, its mother organisation (WCU) was founded by the Lebanese government and has branches in different states in Australia. In addition, each party challenges the right of the other to community representation on the ground of the identity of its constituency (or constituencies). ALA states that LCC predominantly represents Muslim associations, and consequently, it has no right to claim that it represents all Lebanese migrants in Sydney. In contrast, LCC leaders confirm the cross-religious nature of its constituency and accuse ALA implicitly of being unable to represent all the Lebanese except for a section of the Lebanese Maronite Catholic community.

The settlement of the dispute about the legitimacy of representing the “Lebanese community” is crucial in determining the amount of ethnic capital that could be possessed by the Lebanese leaders in the field of ethnicity. The more representative a leader is, the more they obtain ethnic capital needed for improving the power of their position in the field of ethnicity.

The struggle over the representation of the community is certainly not confined to the above issue. The panics around “Lebanese gangs” from the mid-nineties onwards further reveal the contradictory and contested nature of ethnic leadership among the Lebanese community, and the impact of state policy on the politics of ethnic representation.

In October 1998, a 14-year-old boy of Korean background was stabbed to death in a footpath brawl in Sydney’s south-west. The media in Sydney immediately described the assailants as having “Middle Eastern appearance” and more specifically referred to them as “Lebanese” (see Collins et al., 2000). The then NSW Premier, Bob Carr, used the same ethnic descriptor one week later when describing the identity of a group who were suspected of shooting at a police station in the proximity of the first incident. On November 2, 1998, Premier Carr made the following remarks: “Police investigators have revealed that a Lebanese gang involved in drugs and car theft has been identified in relation to recent disturbances. You’re dealing here with a gang that is fully employed in criminal behaviour” (Humphries and Marsh, 1998, p.1). All major Lebanese organisations condemned this association of criminal acts with Lebanese ethnicity, especially at a time when nobody had yet been charged by the police, let alone tried.

However, their united position did not go beyond this condemnation. At first, the ALA President expressed his astonishment that even before any arrest was made the offenders were described as “Lebanese”. Then, the Australian Lebanese Joint Committee (ALJC), of which ALA and LCC were members, issued a press release in which they stated that “... all lawful means should be used to convince the Premier that all those comments [about the presumed involvement of “Lebanese gangs” in the stabbing and shooting incidents and other criminal acts] were in fact unjustified and should be retracted” (English and Trute, 1998, pp.1,4). No sooner had this press release been published, than the then ALA President

changed his position completely, and later defended Carr's "good and friendly relation" with the Lebanese community. He also ridiculed the consideration of taking the Premier to court because of the link he made between criminal acts and the Lebanese identity of the presumed perpetrators. During this time, when we were in the field observing the unfolding of events, it was alleged by the President of LMA that the President of ALA changed his position as a result of personal pressure applied on him by a well-known Lebanese-Australian member of the Upper House belonging to Carr's Labor Party. On the other hand, LCC leaders did not insist on adopting the above press release, but were primarily concerned about forging a community consensus on the matter. As usual, their strategy was to make the Council a leading party in creating a united and, consequently, a moderate position for all the Lebanese organisations. The care for "unity" and "moderation" is a necessity for the presumed role of the Council to represent all Lebanese organisations in Sydney.

A careful look at the responses of ALA and LCC to the crisis of "Lebanese gangs" reveals that the leader of the former was concerned, among other things, about dissociating his organisation from defending the reputation of criminals who were suspected of being Muslim youths. Two years later, in 2001, when a group of youngsters coming from a Lebanese Muslim background were charged with a supposedly racially motivated gang rape, this strategy of invoking the Muslim identity of the accused "gang" was used once again by Maronite Catholic leaders, including the ex-president of ALA (Poynting et al., 2004). As in the previous occasion, their aim was to exclude Muslim youths from the right to belong to Lebanese ethnicity and to associate them exclusively with criminal acts which had been publicly linked to the "Lebanese community". Ultimately, they wanted to abolish any link between Lebanese ethnicity and crime to preserve the value of their ethnic capital. On the other hand, the LCC leaders fought very hard to get all the major Lebanese organisations to adopt a common standpoint so that they could speak on their behalf and consolidate their image of representing the whole Lebanese community. This objective could best be served by defending an inclusive image of the Lebanese identity. Similar dynamics can be observed a fortiori in ethnic community responses to September 11 (Poynting et al., 2004).

The Australian Arabic Communities Council (AACC) is a second umbrella organisation that seeks to represent all Arabic-speaking communities including the Lebanese community. It had always competed with the LCC over the right to represent Lebanese organisations. The tension between LCC and AACC over the question of communal representation (an essential ingredient of ethnic capital) prevented their effective cooperation in addressing the "Lebanese gang" crisis and the racist slurring of the community. Indeed, independent community activists (one author of this book was present at the time of the meeting) approached the LCC to consider, along with other members of the ALJC (ALA, LMA and MCS), the establishment of a new and independent committee in which the largest possible number of community organisations and activists would be represented. The aim was to avoid the sensitive issue of working under the name of any existing body that may cause others to refuse cooperation on the ground of repressing their distinctive and leading roles. Two weeks after the initiative was proposed, the LCC rejected the proposal,

arguing that there was no need for a new committee because it already had a youth sub-committee which could be joined by any association and any individual willing to work under the LCC umbrella. The question of what body (or leader) should have the upper hand in leading the campaign to deal with the “gang” crisis and the vilification of the community led to the fragmentation of the community response. Each party was willing only to take steps that would promote its image of being the main, if not the sole, representative of the community. This promotion would certainly accumulate more social capital of *wajaha* for the leader concerned.

As Werbner (1991) suggests, around particular issues, ethnic leaders develop contradictory and competing strategies along a continuum of protest and accommodation. Generally speaking, three main positions were developed within the community in relation to the “Lebanese gang” crisis and the attendant racist campaign against the Lebanese community. One position, fed by anger at the vilification of the Lebanese community, argued that the crimes that were carried out by a group of youngsters should primarily be identified as acts of Muslim rather than Lebanese youths. The proponents of this position were interested in protecting the symbolic value of Lebanese ethnicity around which their leadership is structured, by underlining the Islamic identity of the accused. To be a leader of a criminalised ethnicity would certainly undermine the symbolic value of one’s leadership and, consequently, would weaken one’s power position in the field of ethnicity. The position taken by the abovementioned leaders is best characterised as “competitive ethnicity” because its representatives compete with each other over the definition of their constituency. By establishing the ability to represent the community that fits the description of the state, they hope to receive state recognition of their communal leadership and all the privileges that come along with this recognition.

The second position, characterised as “incorporated ethnicity”, expressed its dissatisfaction with the racist slandering of the community, but its representatives were not prepared to hold the NSW Premier responsible for abetting the racist campaign against the Lebanese community, let alone to force him “by any means” to retract his comments associating the “Lebanese” identity with criminal activity. This position was adopted by major Lebanese organisations that were members of ALJC and the AACC (for copies of the letters written by ALJC and AACC and addressed to the Premier, see *An-Nahar*, January 12, 1998). Each party in this general position was intent on pleasing the Premier by dropping the demand to take him to court for his racist remarks. Had they pressed this demand, and the second demand to make ‘ethnic’ descriptors illegal when referring to the identity of criminals or suspects, they would have lost the state recognition necessary for the maintenance of their community leadership in the field of ethnicity (Poynting et al., 2004). Furthermore, failing to obtain state recognition would also mean the loss of government funding necessary for the financial and institutional survival of their organisations. The AACC, for instance, made this point very clearly when it argued against the request of some its members to press on with a legal case against the Premier. At the same time, in taking this position, leaders of AACC encountered the other problem of maintaining the legitimacy of their leadership in the eyes of their constituency.

Finally, the third position – what we call “rebellious ethnicity” – was taken by a number of independent community activists who focused mainly on the need to fight the racist campaign against Lebanese (and Asian) youth. Without hesitation, they called for suing the Premier if he did not retract his “racist remarks”, and demanded that the use of the ‘ethnic’ descriptors be limited. They also urged the government to address youth crime in broad economic and social terms that would go beyond the simple solution of strictly enforcing law and order as proposed by the state government (Poynting et al., 2004).

According to the Premier, and those who shared his views (the Police Commissioner, prominent politicians and some media representatives), criminality and violence were somehow inherent to Lebanese culture. Representatives of rebellious ethnicity wanted to preserve the symbolic value of Lebanese ethnicity by arguing that youth crime was a general societal problem rather than one pertaining specifically to the Lebanese community. Moreover, they suggested that the solution to this problem lay in the working of the broader society rather than in “fixing” the Lebanese community and its culture. In contrast, the Premier argued that first, the community should acknowledge that the youth gang problem is primarily a Lebanese community problem, and that an immediate solution should be based on creating tougher laws and strictly applying them to the cohort of the primary suspects: Lebanese youth. Furthermore, the government argued that the role of Lebanese community leaders should be strictly confined to cooperating with the police to catch the members of the “Lebanese gangs”. Even when, in mid-2001, the government finally acknowledged the need to deal with “the causes of ethnic youth crime”, it insisted on arguing that the causes derived from circumstances specific to the Lebanese community and its culture. This was clearly reflected in the so-called “Partnership Plan to Prevent Violence and Crime among Arabic Speaking Young People” (Carr, 2001) which was proposed by the state government to address the problem of “Lebanese ethnic gangs”. Furthermore, the government policy of ethnicising criminality was reinforced by the Premier’s decision to give the Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research “a free rein to collect data on the possible link between ethnicity and crime”, and by calling for the use of “ethnic descriptors” to assist law enforcing agencies “in making arrests”. Premier Carr was clear on this point when he stated: “We should be blind if we ignored the fact that some groups will recruit gang members from a specific ethnicity” (Research Institute of the United Australian Lebanese, 2001, pp.2-11). Carr expressed similar views while discussing the issue of gang rape that occurred in western Sydney around August 2000. In this instance, too, Carr defended his naming of the rapists as “Lebanese” on the basis that the members of the gang define themselves as “Lebanese” (Jones, August 12, 2002).

A few years later, similar uses of “ethnicity” as social explanation emerged in response to the growing threat of terrorist attacks on Australia, but this time it was identified as “Muslim” rather than “Lebaneseness”. In both cases, however, a variety of identities came to be subsumed under a homogenised category. During the “gang crisis”, being a Christian or a Muslim Lebanese, a Syrian or a Palestinian were among the identities that were subsumed under the “Lebanese” identity. During the period following the declaration of “War on Terror”, on the other hand, “Islam” became the homogenised entity subsuming other identities such as being Lebanese, Syrian, Palestinian, Indian, Pakistani and others.

In the aftermath of the London bombings in July 2005, Islam acutely became the main marker of the Australian “other”. And in this process of “othering”, the federal government reinforced the devalorisation of multiculturalism that the state government of New South Wales had already started in its earlier campaign against “Lebanese gangs”. A few weeks after the bombings, the then Prime Minister of Australia, John Howard, called for a “terror summit” to be held in the national capital, Canberra. Howard defined the objectives of the summit very clearly in a media release few days before the conference:

I will meet with a small group of Islamic leaders in Canberra to discuss what more can be done to eradicate from our community inflammatory exhortations to violence and intolerance.

The Australian community has an important role to play in protecting our country and its people against terrorism and the London terrorist attacks have highlighted the need to remain vigilant. I was pleased to see many Islamic organisations immediately condemn those terrorist acts and call their communities to work together with the government to address extremism (Government of Australia, August 18, 2005).

In its comment on the purpose of this meeting, the national newspaper, the *Australian* made clear its opinion that the Muslim community must take ownership of the problem of extremism: “The purpose of this meeting is to underline to the leadership of the Muslim community that it has responsibilities” (Maiden, 2005a, p.1).

Immediately after Howard’s call for the summit, a number of Muslim organisations criticised the federal government for their not being on the list of invitees to meet with the Prime Minister. Obviously, their exclusion from this meeting would deny them the formal recognition needed for the symbolic value that the state could bestow upon their communal leadership. These organisations argued that the fourteen leaders who were invited to the summit were either unrepresentative of the Muslim community or, at best, were not large enough to represent the diversity of Muslim organisations in Australia.

Kaysar Trad, former spokesperson of the LMA and the founder of the Islamic Friendship Association of Australia (IFAA) said: “...a much broader cross-section of representatives should be going [to the summit], including imams who preached fundamentalism but condemned terrorism. ‘If they are the ones you are worried about, what’s the point of excluding them?’” (quoted in Allard, 2005, p.8).

Kuranda Seyit, the Director of the Forum on Australia’s Islamic Relations (FAIR) declared that the meeting was a “publicity stunt”. In addition, he criticised the summit for not having a proper representation of Muslim women, and for failing to tackle the social roots of radicalism among young Muslim migrants. “The key area to address is how we can involve the fringe elements to be inclusive and transparent....What we are facing is a new generation of disfranchised youth ripe for indoctrination by radical Islamic leaders.

We need to take action and work with these groups, not to further alienate them (quoted in Allard, 2005, p.8).

Another young Muslim leader, speaking on condition of anonymity said the narrow list of invitees risked widening an “us versus them mentality” between elements of the Muslim community and the government. “Most of these people have very few real links with the community....It’s no representative at all.” (quoted in Allard, 2005, p.8)

The desire to be recognised by the state as representative of the Muslim community is clearly expressed by Ahmad Kamaledine, the now ex-president of the LMA: “Quite frankly, if you want anything to be successful, you need to open up a dialogue with the Lebanese Muslim Association. It’s a fact”. And when asked about the Federation of Islamic Councils (AFIC), he replied: “Well, we are not members of the Muslim federation, nor do we recognise them either. So I don’t see how effective they can be and how effective they can be in representing the Muslims. Because, I mean, these type of people don’t have a point of contact, they don’t have anything on the ground. So how could they deal with the real issues? That’s just something I can’t understand” (Colvin, 2005).

Many more Muslim leaders were unhappy with the summit (Harris and Shanahan, 2005), and their criticism, similar to the one mentioned above, revolved mainly around the government declining to broaden the list of invitees rather than critically assessing the manner in which the government policy was addressing the risk of “terrorism” in Australia. In other words, they were contesting the legitimacy of invited leaders to represent the Muslim community in Australia.

In addition, an incorporated version of “ethnicity” was clearly present in the response of many community leaders to the London bombings and the call for a state “terror summit”. Leaders representing this form of “ethnicity” were overwhelmingly concerned about presenting their “community” as being in line with the government outlook on how Muslims should behave in Australia.

Dr. Ameer Ali, president of AFIC, commented on the summit by saying:

It was very constructive and very fruitful. We agreed to denounce extremism, terrorism and the teaching of hatred in this country....There is a problem, we recognise that, there is a problem, and we decide to have this dialogue to continue in smaller groups, the reference groups, in the future, which will make practical suggestions to the Government with regard to training imams, the school curricula, the youth problem, the women in our society-so on so forth.” (*ABC Online*, August 23, 2005)

Iktimal Hage-Ali, an ex-member of NSW Youth Advisory Council (YAC) founded by the previous NSW Labor government of Bob Carr, made a distinction between a majority of moderate Muslims and a minority of “extremists”, and argued that the leaders’ role is “to bring [a small minority of extremists] in line. And I think through dialogue, through

conversations, and through listening what their concerns are, we'll be able to bring them in line." (*ABC Online*, August 23, 2005).

Aziza Abdulhalim, president of Muslim Women's National Network (MWNN), Australia, declared: "What we need to do is maybe for the imam to meet with [radical young Muslims] and re-educate them" (*ABC Online*, August 23, 2005). And while some delegates hinted during the summit that Australian presence in Iraq and Afghanistan may have negative effects on Muslims in Australia, Mohammad Al-Salami, the then-president of the Islamic Council of Australia (ICA), had a completely opposite view: "I raised my gratitude to the Prime Minister, to the Government of Australia, on behalf of the Iraqi Australians, as well as the Iraqi people, that their assistance to the Iraqi people, to the Iraq security, to the infrastructure, is greatly received by Iraq." (*ABC Online*, August 23, 2005)

Even before the 'anti-terrorism summit' took place, Al-Salami welcomed the idea of a summit with great enthusiasm. He first warned the government that "Australia has a 'real problem with extremists' and urgent action is needed to stop an explosion of violence..." (Sammard and Overington, 2005, p.11), and accused the so-called "religious zealots and fanatics" [members of the Wahabi Movement] as people who "don't want anything to do with assimilation...". He then continued:

[These people] should be tested by competent authorities, and if they fail those tests, if they see that their views are utterly at odds with the overwhelming majority who are happy to exist peacefully within the Australian community, then they should be given an official warning....Those who would endanger our liberty, have to know that their own liberty is not God given right. It can be taken away from them. They can be jailed, deported. (Ibid, p.11).

Furthermore, *The Australian* reported that Sheikh Fehmi Naji el-Imam, imam of Preston Mosque in Melbourne, "will tell the Government that most Muslims share the same values as the rest of the country". Aziza Abdul-Halim, on the other hand, construed the problem in similar terms, but insisted that Australian Muslims should not be held responsible for the perverted individuals who commit crimes in the names of Islam". She advised the government that it should "weed out" these individuals from the broader community (Ibid, p.11).

Ali Roudi, principle of Rissallah College in Sydney's Lakemba neighbourhood, reassured the public and the government that most young Muslims would support him in opposing "in the strongest possible terms... any form of terrorism" (Ibid, p.11).

Al-Salami used a medical metaphor in his description of the extremists in Australia as "cancerous cells....[They] have to be excised from the body of the community [or] they spread. The cancer of hatred and violence grows and it reaches a point where it cannot be stopped" (Ibid, p.11).

Al-Salami's aggressive approach is further revealed in the advice he gave to the federal

government regarding Islamic preachers visiting Australia: “If they incite hatred they should be stopped, as simple as that...The government and their agencies must scrutinise them. This meeting should come up with a resolution regarding the foreign imams who have extreme views.” (Allard and Morris, 2005, p.8).

These views of the “incorporated ethnicity” were confirmed by journalists in the *Sydney Morning Herald*:

Muslim leaders will today voice their support for having Australia imams vetted and accredited and tighter restrictions on visiting clerics, to weed out those preaching dangerous and offensive values.

The sentiments to be aired at the summit hosted by the Prime Minister, John Howard, will be welcomed by the Federal Government, which favours greater self-regulation of Islamic religious and a more pro-active moderate Muslim leadership (Allard and Morris, 2005, p.8)

At the conclusion of the summit, the statements made by the leaders who participated in the event show the extent to which they had been integrated into the position taken by the government on the prescribed role of the Muslim leaders in addressing the problem of terrorism in Australia.

In this context, Dr. Ameer Ali indicated: “We have an unreserved commitment to the safety and security of this nation, of all the groups that live in this country, so that we can live in a peaceful, harmonious society. There is no place for hatred, there is no place for terrorism, there is no place for violence in this country” (Howard August 24, 2005).

On another occasion he also declared: “[The summit] was very constructive and very fruitful. We agreed to denounce extremism, terrorism and the teaching of hatred in this country.” (Yaxley, August 23, 2005)

Wanting to stress the fact that young Muslims are totally assimilated into the “Australian way of life”, Iktimal Hage-Ali said: “I’m privy to a lot of young people of Arabic-speaking background ... and none of them share the view that we can’t assimilate; none share that view that Islam is against Westerners or against Christianity. They all share the same view that I do, that we are all one.” (Gordon, 2005).

Finally, it is important to note that a “rebellious ethnicity” did also emerge in the midst of these events, but it was not embodied in strong community organisations. This form of ethnicity adopted a completely different approach in addressing the so-called “terrorist problem” compared to the one followed by the federal government. First, it opposed the government position of making the Muslim leaders take the ownership of the problem of “terrorism” and have a principal role in combating it. The representatives of this ethnicity argued that all Australians, including Muslim Australians, have a role to play in supporting the federal government in its fight against terrorism. Secondly, they called upon the

government to be equally responsible in addressing the problem of racism against ethnic communities, and to serve this end, they asked the government to promulgate stricter laws prohibiting racism and discrimination against ethnic communities, especially as it is manifested in Australian media. Finally, representatives of “rebellious ethnicity” wanted the government to protect and develop multiculturalism as a framework for fostering proper citizenship instead of threatening “suspected citizens” with stripping them of their Australian citizenship (Wakim, 2005, Arab Australian Centre for Political Studies, 2005).

The devalorisation of ethnicity: the dismantling of multiculturalism and the ethnic field

At this point it is important to recapitulate our argument; since 1999 major developments in Australia have resulted in generating a crisis in the field of ethnicity. In this chapter we have concentrated on the emergence of the so-called “Lebanese gangs” and the “terrorist threat” in Australia, and showed how the Lebanese and Muslim community leaders have responded to these two developments by adopting three forms of ethnicity: “competitive”, “incorporated” and “rebellious”. In the remaining sections of this chapter, we will discuss the reactions of the state government to the “Lebanese gang crisis” and the reactions of the federal government to the “terrorist threat”. In the context of these developments, our discussion will show that the ethnic field has entered into a deep crisis and that the government in NSW and the federal government undermined multiculturalism in their attempt to overcome this crisis.

In the process leading to the construction of the ethnic field, the establishment of the Ethnic Affairs Commission (EAC) in New South Wales (NSW) in May 1977 represented an essential step by giving this field a formal and institutional presence in the state. In March 1985, the EAC became independent of the Premier’s Department following the establishment of the Ethnic Affairs Ministerial portfolio in December 1984. A close look at the Ethnic Affairs Act (State Records NSW, November 23, 1979) reveals that by establishing EAC the state of NSW had adopted a policy of acknowledging the ethnic diversity of its population, and that ethnic communities have special needs that would require intervention to address them. Also, the specified functions of the Commission ensured the valorisation of ethnicity (competitive and incorporated ethnicity as symbolic capital) according to the policy terms of the state government. In this context, EAC funding of ethnic organisations provided an essential means to keep them in line with state-sponsored policy. In brief, at the level of the state of New South Wales, the Ministry for Ethnic Affairs and the EAC were the main state institutions in the field of ethnicity that paved the way for the emergence of valorised ethnicity and legitimate ethnic leadership.

In April 1999, six months after the outbreak of the “Lebanese gang crisis” and following the victory of the governing Labor Party in the state election, the NSW Premier announced the decision of his government to change his Ethnic Affairs portfolio to Minister for Citizenship and to replace the Ethnic Affairs Commission with the Community Relations Commission (CRC). This announcement caused a lot of reactions among community leaders and state politicians. On the far right of the political spectrum (i.e., One Nation party), the Premier’s announcement was received with enthusiasm (Community Relations Commission and

Principles of Multiculturalism Bill, 10 October, 2000). In contrast, critics of the bill in the Upper House (e.g., Dr. Chesterfield-Evans, a Democrat) accused the government of trying to appeal to the votes of “the ultra-conservative” and the “racists” by changing the name of the EAC to CRC, and consequently, to change the funding policy of the Commission by making funds available to “community” rather than “ethnic” groups. Chesterfield-Evans also stated that while people lobbied him on both sides of the argument, he discovered that: “The better funded-groups seem to support the bill, and the smaller and unfunded groups do not” (Community Relations Commission and Principles of Multiculturalism Bill, 10 October 2000).

In their critique of the bill, state politicians further revealed the shift in the government policy on multiculturalism. They conceived of Carr’s new policy as a way of “mainstreaming” Hansonism that symbolised racist policy and stood for the return to assimilationism. Peter Wong, a Unity party member of the Upper House, argued that:

One example of the ‘mainstreaming’ of Hansonism ... is the current efforts by the NSW Labor government to rename the Ethnic Affairs Commission (EAC) as the Community Relations Commission (CRC). One of the issues Hanson has campaigned against was government grants going to ethnic communities and multicultural projects. The EAC was the prime government agency which handed out these grants and spoke on behalf of ethnic communities in the state (Hansard, 10 October, 2000).

Helen Sham-Ho, an independent member of the Upper House, argued that both major parties (the Liberal party and the Labor party) have actually retreated from their multicultural policies:

[Prime Minister] Howard is talking about cultural diversity of the Australian society but refuses to use the word multiculturalism, because that implies adopting government policies to recognise non-Anglo migrant cultures. In the same way, NSW Labor Bob Carr wants to talk about ‘community relations’ and not ‘ethnic affairs’ (Hansard, 10 October, 2000).

In the words of Usha Harris, an information officer for the Multicultural Arts Alliance, “Carr is taking the word ‘multiculturalism’ out of politics. He has changed his portfolio from Minister for Ethnic Affairs and Multiculturalism to Minister for Citizenship. Now he is changing the name of EAC. Basically, ‘ethnic’ is out now” (Seneviratne, 2000). Bill Cope, a former Director of the Office of Multicultural Affairs in the Prime Minister’s Department, and Mary Kalantzis, Dean of the Faculty of Education at RMIT University, Melbourne, defended the term ethnic by arguing that the word community described everything, “and by describing everything describes nothing” (Cope and Kalantzis, 2000b, p.19). Cope and Kalantzis (2000b, p.19) further indicated that out of the 92 submissions received by the Upper House Committee looking into the community relations legislation, only two prepared by Carr and EAC Commissioner, Stepan Kerkyasharian, preferred the words “community” and “citizenship” to “ethnic” and “multiculturalism”.

Both supporters and opponents of the community relations legislation clearly indicate that the state government was embarking on a process of dismantling the ethnic field in the state of New South Wales by redefining immigrants in terms of citizenship and community relations. Indeed, the state began to abolish the basis of multiculturalism by negating the ethnically diverse character of Australian society and its implication on the social policy of the state. This shift in the political views of the state government came at a time when the devalorisation of Lebanese ethnicity was at its peak in the context of addressing the issue of crime and “Lebanese gangs”. During this process, the misrecognition of the ethnic field as a field of disinterested pursuits became impossible, and consequently, a crisis in the legitimation of the ethnic field emerged. The government and its supporters could no longer justify the presence of the ethnic field and criminalise ethnicity at the same time. On the other hand, Lebanese community leaders and other ethnic leaders rejected the racialisation of criminality despite the different strategies they had used to maintain “good” relations with state representatives. It was at this moment, when Lebanese (and by implication all non-Anglo) ethnicity was demonised and ethnic leaders were rejecting the racist devaluing of (Lebanese) ethnicity, that the state government started to dismantle the ethnic field in the state of New South Wales, and to initiate its gradual replacement with a field of community relations. In brief, the state management of the “gang crisis” in the ethnic field has greatly facilitated the shift in the state policy from ethnic affairs to community relations and citizenship.

On the other hand, the problem of a terrorist threat in Australia and its association with Islam as a religion and its association with ethnicity made the mis-recognition of the multicultural (ethnic) field as a field of disinterested pursuits even harder to maintain. A common social perception was that being a Muslim necessarily implied the threat of committing a terrorist act. This shift in the perception of Islam led to a series of other shifts that culminated in redefining multiculturalism and made it readily interchangeable with assimilationism in the dominant discourse of the federal government. As a result, Muslims in Australia increasingly came under public scrutiny, and were continuously forced to reiterate their allegiance to Australia and to repeatedly confirm in public that Islam does not negate “Australian core values”.

Immediately after calling Islamic leaders to “assist in eliminating intolerance and the promotion of violence” in Australia, Prime Minister, John Howard, clarified that: “the meeting [with Islamic organisations] will include identification of strategies to promote a commitment to shared values and enhance social cohesion within the Australian community” (Government of Australia, August 18, 2005; Sofios, 2005; Grattan, 2005a; and Harris and Shanahan, 2005).

Two weeks after the summit, Howard threatened Muslim clerics who “break a relevant Australian law” with “running the risk of being deprived of their Australian citizenship” (Houlilian, 2005). The assimilationist terms laid down by the Prime Minister for accepting migrants including Muslims in Australian society were unequivocal. “If somebody has come from another country and has failed to properly embrace the values of this society...

then the idea of taking away their citizenship is one that ought to be looked at. When somebody comes to this country, you enter into mutual understanding. You receive the benefits of living in Australia, and in return you have an obligation to embrace the values and attitudes, unconditionally.” (Butterly, 2005, p.12). It is clear in these utterances that the government is backing down on its previous acknowledgement of the multicultural character of Australian society.

Deporting holders of Australian citizenship, who are “convicted of crimes”, was also supported by the then treasurer, Peter Costello and the Labor opposition leader, Kim Beazley (Skehan and Agencies, 2005). Furthermore, Costello was clearer in his assimilationist message to the public through an interview with *The Australian*, on the day of the summit. “If you don’t like [Australian values], then don’t come here. Australia is not for you. This is the way I look at it: Australia is a secular society, with parliamentary law, part of the Western tradition of individual rights.” (Maiden, 2005b, p.1).

Likewise the then Federal Education Minister, Brendan Nelson, declared that “he would meet with the Australian Federation of Islamic Councils to discuss programs that ensure students understand Australia’s history, culture and values. “We believe in giving every person a fair go....But what we want them to do is commit to the Australian constitution, Australian rule of law and basically, people who don’t want to live by the Australian values and understand them, well then they can basically clear off.” (*The Sunday Mail*, August 24, 2005).

In *The Age* (Grattan, 2005b), Nelson Brendan went even further in his assimilationist approach in addressing the “terrorist threat” in Australia:

We want [migrants] to understand our history and our culture, the extent to which we believe in mateship and giving another person a hand up and a fair go. And basically, if people don’t want to be Australians and they don’t want to live by Australian values and understand them, well basically they can clear off.

Nelson expressed the opinion that if the country lost sight of what Simpson meant for Australians, “then we will lose the direction of the country.” John Simpson Kirkpatrick, carrying wounded soldiers on his donkey, is the iconic image of Gallipoli. “He represents everything at the heart of what it means to be Australian” (Grattan, 2005a, p.31)

In addition, Howard declared in an interview with Perth Radio (Howard, 2005): “It is very hard for a government or any of its agencies to penetrate every aspect of life. But equally, if people are not willing to give their first loyalty to this country, they obviously must understand that that will arouse enormous concern within the rest of the Australian community.”

In response to the growing call for Muslims to assimilate into the “Australian way of life” or leave the country, representatives of “incorporated ethnicity” were very quick to assure the government that Australian values are taught in its schools. Mudenia Abdurahman, Principal of the Arkana Islamic College in Kingsgrove, Sydney, stated: “We fly the

Australian flag, we sing the national anthem at the assembly each week...". The material interest lurking behind "incorporated ethnicity" is publicly acknowledged by the school principal herself: "The Federal Government knows for a fact that we cannot get funding if we do not comply with their regulations, as they know we are teaching Australian values." (*The Daily Telegraph*, August 25, 2005, p.5) Moreover, Silma Ihram, then Principal of Noor Al-Houda Islamic College, declared that it is "dedicated to ensuring that its graduates are exemplary Australians who live by the highest standards of integrity in a harmonious manner with their fellow citizens." (Ibid)

Conclusion: Towards an analysis of the ethnic field

In New South Wales a new rhetoric of "community relations" is reconstituting the ethnic field and some of its attendant policies of multiculturalism. Along with this change, the symbolic capital of ethnicity is being exposed to systemic attempts of de-valorisation by the state Labor government, the representatives of the One Nation party, the Police Commissioner and important sections of the media. In the midst of this process, deeply entrenched assimilationist views in the "white" community have further been activated. The emphasis of the state government on community relations is transforming the latter into a new symbolic capital around which a new category of leaders is emerging. "Community relations" leaders are gradually replacing "ethnic" leaders. Ethnicity is being gently pushed to the margins under the new rhetoric of community relations. At the federal level, the then Liberal Government and the Labor Opposition reactivated the assimilationist discourse in addressing the problem of terrorism and its association with "radical Islam". In doing so, they reinterpreted multiculturalism and made it interchangeable with assimilationism. Assimilating the Muslim other into the "Australian way of life" and forcing him/her to adopt "Australian values and attitudes" become the primary task of the state and its agencies. The future development of Australian ethnic politics will certainly demonstrate whether the shift to "community relations" and the drive to adopt "Australian core values" have significant consequences for the wider project of multiculturalism in Australia.

For the time being, we believe it is necessary to develop a more sustained analysis of the ethnic field by exploring questions around ethnic capital in more depth. The first question is how the state allows for the valorisation of certain ethnicities over others. The second entails examining in more detail how the general field of ethnicity relates to the accumulation of particular ethnicities. The third and related issue is to explore what is actually accumulated when one accumulates ethnicity and how this is converted into what we have called general ethnic capital. This could be best achieved by an empirical mapping of the key organisations which constitute a particular ethnic community, and how ethnic capital is distributed unevenly across these organisations within the wider field of ethnicity. A fourth issue is to consider how the ethnic field as shaped by forms of political representation and organisation relates to the operation of ethnicity in the course of civil life, a key theme in this book.

“Habiibs” in Australia: “like saying mate, but in Lebanese”

Our observation over a period of time of young people of Lebanese background in Sydney revealed to us that the language they use in their daily conversation is punctuated with specific Arabic words and expressions. We also noticed that in doing so, they impute new meanings to some of these words and leave others intact. Linguists have dubbed this phenomenon an “ethno-lect” and it is called “Lebspeak” among its users according to journalist, Deborah Cameron (2003, p.5). These preliminary observations have led us to examine more closely the language used by these youths in their routine conversation and, more specifically, to concentrate on their usage of a particular Arabic word *habiib* and its emergent place in Australian English. We want to explore in this chapter the ways such uses of language reflect changes not just in the formation of ethnic identities, but in the use of symbolic capital in the field of ethnicity in Australia

To begin with, however, it is appropriate to discuss the analytical advantage of using the concept of “ethnic capital” for the purpose of our investigation of the culture of young people. As we argued in the previous chapter in relation to political leadership, ethnic capital is a form of cultural capital which has been converted into symbolic capital because it has received recognition and was made legitimate by the Australian state and its guardians in the domain of culture. It is true that in the years (1996-2007) of John Howard’s Liberal and National Coalition government in Australia there had been less federal government enthusiasm for multiculturalism, and throughout this period at the level of state government in New South Wales, the various Labor leaders have often brought unintegrated minority ethnicity, and more particularly Lebanese ethnicity, under severe attack. Undoubtedly this has resulted in partial devalorisation of Lebanese ethnic capital, and consequently a reduction in its symbolic value, as we have demonstrated in the previous chapter. However, despite these developments, multiculturalism is still the official policy of the federal and state Australian governments, and ethnicity, including its Lebanese version, is still a valuable form of capital desired by members of the Lebanese migrant community for the purpose of securing attention and resources from the authorities and enhancing position in the dominant power hierarchy. However, it is appropriate to note at this stage that for this ethnicity to be valorised and become a form of symbolic capital, it has to fall in line with the definition attributed to it by the state and public guardians of ethnic affairs and multicultural policies. If an ethnic or a cultural group protests against a state policy in

the domain of multiculturalism, it runs the risk of making its ethnic capital lose some or all of its symbolic value. Consequently, different ethnicities acquire different symbolic value in the “field of ethnicity” depending on their assessment by the dominant authority and its compatibility with the policy directions of official multicultural and ethnic affairs. For this reason, ‘ethnicity’ is more often than not an object of struggle and negotiation between the dominant culture and the state (as the ultimate source of symbolic value) and the community representatives of the ethnicity. Moreover, the definition of an ethnicity by the state may not only be challenged by representatives of the community concerned, but is also subjected to pressures emanating from various groups struggling *within* the community. In putting up a challenge to the official interpretation of the designated ethnicity, these groups do not end up opposing the representatives of the dominant authority alone but also those of their own community espousing the official version of their ethnicity.

In his definition of Bourdieu’s concept of cultural capital, Hage argues that it “represents the sum of valued knowledge, styles, social and physical (bodily) characteristics and practical behavioural dispositions within a given field. In short, they are material and symbolic goods constructed as valuable within the field and specific to it.” (1998, p.53) This is true, of course, of civil society as it is of the realm of politics. In much the same way, we argue that ethnicity as a specific form of capital can be understood analytically as the sum of ethnically sanctioned and valued social and physical cultural styles and dispositions (ethnic culture) adopted by individuals and groups, as well as valued characteristics (ethnic types and ethnic character): looks, accent, demeanour, taste, ethnically valued social and cultural preferences and behaviour, etc. Now these are not to be understood simply as “negative” capital in the field of White belonging, as Hage would argue, nor as capital that is esteemed within an “ethnic community”, but as forms of capital that position people as “ethnic” within the field of ethnicity, the sub-field of national belonging. Spoken language is an essential part of the deployment of ethnic capital, as we demonstrate in our analysis below.

In its attempt to maintain its dominance, the state sets limits on the various forms of ethnic capital which operate within the ethnic field of power. In this process, it grants recognition to specific ethnic styles, dispositions and characteristics, including what Bourdieu calls “legitimate discourse” (Bourdieu, 1977, p.650), and transforms them into ethnic symbolic capitals. Ethnic characteristics which are not recognised by the state as part of ethnic capital end up being devalorised and used as markers of exclusion and disempowerment for those who claim their possession.

It is from within this perspective that we aim to examine the “Lebspeak” used by youths of Lebanese background and show that it is not only a marker of exclusion and disempowerment, but also a linguistic resource which challenges the state’s definition of Lebanese ethnicity through the invention of its “illegitimate” vocabulary.

The “Arabic-speaking community”: a reified linguistic community

In the discourse about multiculturalism, the term “Arabic-speaking community” refers to a community of migrants who come from Arabic-speaking countries and speak the Arabic language that they transported with them to Australia from their countries of origin. So

according to the imaginary created by multiculturalism, these migrants speak Arabic, or if they are second-generation migrants, they are depicted as people who come from an Arabic-speaking background with perhaps little skill, however, in speaking the language of their parents. In any event, however, the Arabic that first- and second-generation Lebanese migrants speak is presumed to be similar to the language that they inherited from their country of origin. Language and country of origin don't of course, map directly onto each other: while the vast majority of Australians of Lebanese ancestry have Arabic as their mother tongue, and those of Lebanese ancestry constitute the largest group of those from Arabic-speaking backgrounds, there are also large groups of Arabic speakers from Egypt, Iraq, Sudan and elsewhere. Nevertheless, popular perceptions often equate Lebanese with Arabic.

This perception of these migrants and their children fits very well with the general tendency found in official multiculturalism to divide the population in Australia into discrete and well-bounded linguistic communities whose intercommunication in the absence of knowing the English language is secured by accredited interpreters and translators. From within this perspective, so-called "community languages" such as Arabic are reified in that they are not conceived as living entities that are dialogically made and remade in changing and different contexts. We argue that this perspective lends itself too easily to disregarding new linguistic constructs that are continuously created by migrants and their descendants. More importantly, we show that disregarding these linguistic constructs also contributes to the process of silencing migrant cultural practices that can undermine the ethnic capital valorised by the state in the process of maintaining its hegemony over ethnic communities. This is all the more so when we realise with Ibrahim (1998) that language is more than just an instrument of communication; it is also a symbolic resource and capital in which identities are not only reflected "but are also constructed in, through and within [it]" (Ibrahim, 1998, p.13). From within this perspective, "language becomes a vehicle through which speakers can challenge, negotiate, reproduce, and interpret" their identities (Giampapa, 2001, p.3). So, instead of examining the discursive strategies which involve "attunement" to the demands of dominant language conventions, and thus underwrite its social and linguistic hierarchies (Hanks, 2005, pp.74-75), we focus in this chapter on linguistic strategies that undermine "rewarded and sanctioned" expressions. If it is true as Hanks argues (in line with Bourideu and Herzfeld) that "[b]ehind the unity of most standard languages lie power relations, unifying administrations, economy and state formation, or governance", it is also true that behind socially unacceptable linguistic expressions and verbal styles lies a capacity to challenge power hierarchies and social inequality. We argue in this chapter that it is in densely multiethnic places, such as Bankstown, that social scientists are most likely to discover the new cultural products and practices that are created, re-created and negotiated by ethnically diverse denizens.

Empirical data for this chapter has been mainly gathered through open-ended interviews with 15 young people chosen through the snowballing method. The informants were five females and ten males who all lived in the Bankstown Local Government Area (LGA) of south-west Sydney. Their ages were between 14 and 20 years at the time of the interviews. One of them was unemployed, and the rest were still studying (nine of them were in

secondary education, two in technical and further education (TAFE) college and three were at university). Four males were Christian and six were Muslim. The girls were three Christians and two Muslims. All interviewees, however, were second-generation Australians whose parents were born in Lebanon except for one female whose mother was a second-generation Lebanese immigrant: that is, born in Australia of Lebanese parentage.

We selected our sample from the Bankstown LGA, except for one male interviewee who was living in Parramatta LGA at the time when the interviews were conducted (around mid-2003). Both areas, however, have a large number of first- and second-generation Lebanese migrants.¹

English/Arabic language: inventing words, creating solidarity

During our interviews and fieldwork, we established that youths of Lebanese background used a number of Arabic words when conversing with each other, and the meanings of some of these words were changed while others more or less remained the same. Despite this distinction, however, all the Arabic words that we came across were used in a new context where the speakers were mainly concerned with creating an autonomous and unique identity, and/or were looking for ways to escape authority and obtain more freedom.

Since the purpose of our research was not to carry out a comprehensive socio-linguistic study of the language spoken by young migrants of Lebanese background, we will not be concerned in this chapter with providing an exhaustive list of all the Arabic words and expressions that are used by these young people. Instead, we will concentrate on the use of certain significant words that sustains our analysis about the relationship between the spoken language and the speakers' identity and their efforts to obtain greater autonomy in society.

All the respondents that we interviewed indicated to us that they use Arabic words when speaking in English with others who come from the same ethnic background. The most frequently used words were *habiib*, *shoo* ('What's up?') and *yallah* ("Let's go!"). Other words also included mostly swear words and '*ijaa* (literally, "he came", used particularly by teenagers to inform each other about the arrival of an undesirable authority figure such as the teacher when he/she is about to enter the classroom).

Habiib is particularly important here. In standard Arabic the word *habiib* literally means a male lover, and the word is used to address or refer to a beloved person, rather like "darling" in English. When we asked the male, second-generation respondents in Sydney about the use of the word *habiib*, eight of them stated that they used it, one claimed that he used it sometimes and the last one (aged 14) said that even though he is called *habiib* by his older brothers and friends, he did not use it at all. Although about half (three out of five) the female respondents indicated that they used the word *habiib* in their interaction with other friends, all of the female respondents clearly showed familiarity with the term and used it in talking about *habiibs* who did not belong to their circle of friends.

In response to the question: "Do you use the term '*habiib*'?" Fahid, a 17-year-old male high school student who attended a Catholic school in the inner city, said, "Yeah I use it, but not

to the point where it's every time, every second word is with *habiib*, sometimes when I'm saying 'hi', I'd say 'Hi, *habiib*'. Daniel (17), a Muslim *Alawi* who goes to TAFE College to qualify as a painter, gave the following answers to our questions:

- Do you use the term *habiib*?
- Sometimes.
- Can you tell me when, under what conditions?
- When I see my mates, I go, "Hi *habiib*, what are you doing?" or with my girlfriend.

Nabih, a tall 18-year-old Sunni Muslim, said that he didn't use it much but "a lot of people" call him *habiib*. (At the time, Nabih was doing body-building and as a result he had a muscular body. This is important to realise especially when we discuss later the gendered dimension of being a *habiib*). Boutrus, a 17-year-old teenager who goes to a Catholic school in western Sydney, claimed that he used *habiib* to refer to "a close friend or loved one". Another teenager (17-year-old) who attended a Maronite school in south-west Sydney reported to us that even though he tries to avoid the term, he still uses it: "It comes up once in a while". Alaa' (18-year-old Sunni Muslim male), Rabi (a Sunni Muslim and a 20-year-old university student) and Hisham (Sunni Muslim studying pharmacy at university) declared that they all use the term *habiib* on some occasions.

Moreover, some respondents indicated to us that the use of the term *habiib* is not confined to teenagers of Lebanese background, but it is also used by non-Lebanese Arabic-speaking persons and other "wogs"².

When we asked Hisham: "Does any one call you a *habiib*?" he replied:

- Yeah, my friends do.
- Why do they do it?
- It's just a common term. It's used in Arabic, like a slang language.
- And your friends are Lebanese?
- Not all of them, no.
- The ones that call you *habiib*?
- No, not all of them, one of them is Iraqi, one of them is Egyptian, one Syrian, one's Palestinian.
- And they all use the term *habiib*, whenever they do?
- Yeah.

Alaa' revealed that his "multicultural" friends use the term *habiib*:

- Does any Anglo-Australian use this term [*habiib*] with you?
- All my friends use it, they call out, sometimes for the fun. Sometimes they call out because they've got nothing else to say, or they want to sound like hard people, so they use it.
- Hard people, what do you mean?
- Like try-hards.

- Some of your friends.
- Yeah, multicultural, instead of saying “bro”, say *habiib*.
- They could be Indonesian?
- They could be Indonesian, Greek, Italian.
- They would use *habiib*? Why do they use it?
- It’s like when you say “Hello Stephen”, or something, it’s “*Shoo habiib*, what are you doing?”

Rabi confirmed that most of his university friends, including the ones from non-Arab backgrounds, call him *habiib*:

- Are they all of Lebanese or Arabic background?
- No.
- Even people of non-Arabic background call you *habiib*?
- Yeah.
- It’s becoming popular?
- Yeah.

It is clear from this evidence that *habiib* is widely used by many young people of Lebanese background to refer to (male and female) friends and loved ones. Arab Australians of non-Lebanese background (e.g., Iraqi, Syrian, Egyptian and Palestinian) use it, as well as non-Arabs (e.g., Indonesian, Greek, Italian and Anglo) who associate themselves with Lebanese youth. The latter are referred to by one informant as “multicultural” friends.

This evidence shows that the term *habiib* is making inroads into the spoken English of these young people, and in doing so, its original meaning is being transformed. But before we look closer into the new meanings it acquires, it is significant to note that the term *habiib* is not simply confined to the spoken language of young people, but it is also found to be slowly integrating into Australian popular culture, such as *Fat Pizza*, a TV comedy show, and it is increasingly being used to name take-away shops that sell Lebanese food in various parts of Sydney.

Beyond this, it is interesting to examine the reasons for the restricted circulation of this Arabic word to mainly young people of Lebanese background and their friends, especially non-Anglo ones. This is mostly evident by looking into the views given by our interviewees when asked about the difference between the terms *habiib* and “mate”.

We asked Alaa’ why he says that he doesn’t use the term *habiib* when speaking to an Anglo-Australian, and he replied:

Because, I don’t know, it’s just like, you’ve got the one language, they are full far away, than with our multicultural friends, like the Greeks or something, basically they’re not talking to a wog. When you talk to a wog, you can talk how you want to talk, but with them they won’t understand nothing, they might just think you’re stupid, or you’re saying something. I just use it for someone that’s a wog, or Asian, but not Australian.

Clearly, Alaa' declares that he speaks English like any Anglo-Australian, but he does not think he always shares with them the same language. For this reason, he indicates that he uses the term *habiib* when talking "to a wog" but not to an "Australian". The reason for this choice is made clear when Alaa' is asked about the difference between the terms *habiib* and "mate":

They do differ, because "mate" is like a friend, or because I'm your mate you're going to the bar, have a drink, just to make fun of them. But with the term *habiib*, you're talking to him, like a serious talk, you might want to be laughing and say *habiib* this, and *habiib* that, you just say it once in your conversation, or twice, like "Hi *habiib* how are you?", or "See you *habiib*, I'll talk to you later". But you won't use it all the time, how you going mate, what are you doing mate, it's just once or twice in a sentence....

Alaa' draws a distinction between Anglo- and Lebanese Australians by playing on the differences between the terms *habiib* and "mate". According to him, *habiib* refers to young people of Lebanese background with a "shared understanding" not found within the context of "mateship". This shared understanding cannot be understood by the "Australians" and more than that, it creates a sense of being comfortable that is denied to him when interacting with Anglo-Australians. In fact, sharing with "wogs" and "Asians" the experience of being treated differently by the dominant host society can make Alaa' share with them the experience of *habiib*-ship. Also, Alaa' distinguishes between *habiib* and "mate" by arguing that the former is used in serious talk whereas the latter is not. Mate, according to him, loses its binding power because it is used indiscriminately and very lightly. In contrast, *habiib* denotes a shared reality which makes it widely circulated among "wogs".

The feeling of solidarity implied by the term *habiib* is further confirmed by Hisham and Nabih. According to Hisham, *habiib* refers to a form of bonding between the speakers "on the basis of ethnicity or religion", and "if you say the word *habiib* you obviously know he is going to be from an Arabic-speaking background, so it definitely puts them together". Clearly, in Hisham's view the use of *habiib* is about a sense of solidarity exclusive to young people of Arabic-speaking background. Nabih also brought out the issue of ethnic "closeness" in his response: "...the Aussies use 'mate', 'cause they're Aussie, and that's their language. When they use "mate", they bring a closeness together, between two people, and they show an interest in getting to know them. When a Lebanese person, to another Lebanese person, uses *habiib* that's like saying 'mate', but in Lebanese". Nabih's comment clearly indicates the role that the use of the word *habiib* plays in the process of constructing a distinct identity for the Arabic-speaking youth in Sydney. In the same vein, Ziaad declared: "[*habiib*] can be used as a form of identity in that the Lebanese youth have adopted their own part slang term to communicate in their own unique Lebanese way....It's commonly used in conjunction with the term 'bro' meaning close mate also. For example, 'He's my *habiib* bro'." The term *habiib* may be used more fluently around a certain crowd, which fits a certain Lebanese mould or simply exchanged when talking to [people you trust]. In bringing out the issue of trust, Ziaad points to another important characteristic found circulating among *habiibs*. The feeling of solidarity experienced by

habiibs is not only based on shared understanding and mutual feeling of comfortability, but more than that, it is founded on trust that teenagers of Lebanese background found lacking in broader society. Recent writings on “trust” indicate the importance of this condition for overcoming the feeling of risk and anxiety generated by living in modern society. It is argued that “Trust ... is a basic psychic mechanism for handling the demands and dangers of everyday social life; trust is crucial for establishing what Giddens terms ‘ontological security’. It is because an individual learns a sense of trust in other people that feelings of inner trustworthiness come to predominate over anxiety. Trust established between self and others is fundamental to creative ongoing human relations; trust enables individuals to achieve a practical engagement with the open-ended nature of modernity.” (Elliot, 2002, p.76). *Habiibship*, therefore, is not about trust found operating between Lebanese-Australian youth and broader society but rather it is generated among the *habiibs* themselves.

Furthermore, by combining the terms, *habiib* and “bro”, we realise that the African-American term “bro” which is borrowed from African-American youth is not sufficient to express the specific solidarity, feeling of trust and shared reality that the Lebanese-Australian youth have in common.

Transforming old meanings, inventing new ones

By looking more closely at the term *habiib* as used by the interviewees, we found that teenage Lebanese Australians have changed its original meaning and have given it a new one. As mentioned earlier, in Arabic the masculine noun *habiib* means “darling” or a beloved person. *Habiibah* is a word used to refer to a female beloved person. Both words, however, derive from the noun *houb* meaning love. In addition, in Lebanon (and many Arab countries) the word *habiib* can be used to express a special liking to a second person who could be a friend or a close relative.

In recent years in Sydney, teenagers of Lebanese and Arabic background have borrowed the term *habiib* and have integrated it into their speech when conversing in English with one another, as we have demonstrated. More important than this, their use of the word has resulted in the transformation of the meaning that is imputed to it in Arabic-speaking countries. In the new Australian context, the term *habiib* has acquired two basic meanings that are mainly restricted to a specific ethnicity (Lebanese) and specific age group (teenagers and young adolescents. This is also referred to as their idiolect). However, despite the difference in the newly acquired meanings of the term, *habiib* continued to denote a sense of bonding among its users.

Many young people of Lebanese background are using the term *habiib* to mean a sense of ethnic comradeship that binds them together and draws a line between them and the Anglo-Australian other. On the right to use the word *habiib*, Charlie reported to us: “In a sense that you have to be a Leb to actually use the word, I don’t know why, but that’s the way it’s been carried out for the last I don’t know how long. If an Aussie came up to you, or any other nationality, and told you ‘*Shoo habiib?*’ [‘shoo’ is another Arabic word incorporated in the speech of Lebanese-Australian teenagers meaning “What’s up?”], it would be ‘Who are you to tell me that? You’re not one of us.’” And when we asked Charlie about what the

term *habiib* meant to him, he replied: “I guess it’s a word where there’s no real meaning behind it, it’s just what you call another Leb, but you wouldn’t say it to an Aussie, or an Italian, or a Greek, or anyone else....”

Fahed stated that *habiib* is a “Lebanese name for someone. A lot of Lebanese people, like a lot of time I’ll say to my friends ‘*Marhaba* [hello] *habiib*’, or ‘How are you *habiib*?’ It’s like a reference to your Lebanese friends”. And when we asked Fahed for the reason that moves him and his friends to use *habiib*, he said: “They’ve learnt to accept that, they want to classify themselves as something. I know you’re Lebanese, you know I’m Lebanese; I’m going to call you *habiib*. A lot of the time you can say ‘the *habiibs* from Lakemba, the *habiibs* from Bankstown. It’s another way of saying boys”. Fahed also raised the point about associating the use of *habiib* with respect “[Calling them *habiibs*] is a way of showing that you respect them, you’re a *habiib*.” According to him, “...it would seem weird if someone other than of Lebanese origin said it. If an Australian said it to me...it would seem different, or if a Greek, or an Italian, anything”. In other words, a person qualifies to become a *habiib* if he has a Lebanese background and, in addition, he deserves to be respected by those calling him that. However, this is not always the case as the interview with Alaa’ indicates above. For him, *habiib* is an identity that could include Asians, Greeks, Italians and non-Lebanese Arabs.

Nabih reported that “When someone calls someone *habiib* that makes them more, like if you just got introduced to someone you wouldn’t call them *habiib* straight away, but when someone does call you *habiib* you feel in with them, you’ve got that friendship going”. Alaa’ made a similar point, “[*Habiib*] means friend, how can I explain it, like a close friend, someone you can trust, someone you’ve known for a long time, you understand them...[a *habiib* is] my best friend” Daniel, Ziaad, Ahmad and Rabi repeated the same point when they stated that *habiibs* refer ‘mostly’ to their good friends. In fact, Ziaad likened a *habiib* to his cousin, a reference to a blood-based form of identity.

Language as an aestheticised inscription of gender and identity

The term *habiib*, however, is not used simply and solely by Lebanese-Australian youth to refer to young people of their common background with whom they share a sense of bonding based on trust and respect. *Habiib* has acquired an additional meaning which reflects an element of cultural parody, perhaps even self-deprecation; it also refers, somewhat pejoratively, to an aestheticised mode of living developed by some Lebanese-Australian teenagers.

Boutrus, for example, lamented the fact that the meaning of *habiib* had been transformed. According to him, the term has “lost its meaning to most people today. I think it’s lost its meaning, so I think it defeats the purpose for someone to call me *habiib*. Unless they truly mean it as a loved one, I don’t want them to call me it”. As we probed more into what Boutrus meant by the newly acquired meaning of *habiib*, he described this meaning in terms of the way in which a typical *habiib* would behave: “[*Habiibs*] always think they’re bigger than who they really are. If someone is calling *habiib* in public, they’re probably looking up to themselves, saying ‘look at me, I’m on the top of the world, and everyone’s

under me'. Yeah, that's what it's come to these days. Everyone, whoever is saying it is basically thinking he is a step ahead of everyone else". Ziaad reported that among his friends "the term *habiib* is also used to describe a typical Lebanese show-off."

In trying to make the same point, Daniel focused on the attitude of *habiibs*: "Attitude, [a *habiib*] thinks he runs the show, he thinks the only one is me, I'm in the spotlight, look at me." We then asked Daniel whether *habiibs* are troublemakers, his answer was "Not really, some of them are just all show, they want to be, but when it comes to it they'll back away, they won't do anything much. Some of them are 'Yeah, I'm a troublemaker, stay away from me'. Some of them prefer to be troublemakers, some of them like to act that they're a troublemaker." Hisham also agreed that *habiib* can have a different meaning. "Those kind of people" he said, "may act like gangsters, it really depends on who you're trying to target, some people might call it *habiib*. They might have a certain behaviour, like walking side to side, or have a necklace round their neck, or acting tough or something like that." He then added, "[s]ometimes their attitude is pretty bad, 'cause they're pretty loud, and they don't have respect for other people, but that's just talking about those type of people that have no respect." Nabih described a *habiib* by saying that he is a person "not from a background of being at work, going to uni. They tend to pick up that slang type of talking through hanging out on the streets, and going out places where they meet people which they shouldn't be meeting, they pick up that kind of talk." But then Nabih broadened the term *habiib* to include those who "would be jolly ... down to earth, but still got something to him. If he's smart person, he goes to uni, has a wide vocabulary, and talks properly, he would not use *habiib*, only if they were mucking around or saying it as a joke."

Fahed spoke about the two meanings of *habiib* in his answer, "...if they want to say they're the *habiibs* from Bankstown, automatically you assume it's a Lebanese gang. But if my friend were to say to me *habiib*, I'd say it's a friendship. But again, if I hear someone else say *habiib*, they're the *habiibs* from there, it's saying they're a Lebanese gang." Fahed repeated the same points in the context of comparing the term "mate" with *habiib*: "... if you were to say "they're my mates from Maroubra, or Bondi," they'd think they were your friends. But if you were to say "they're my *habiibs* from Bankstown, oh they're boys, they're gang members, or into gangs and drugs. That's where [*habiib* and mate] really differ. *Habiib*'s been given a term for a gangster, "mate" is just a general term used to say how are you between friends, or how are you mate". But then, he added: "If I said to my friend *habiib*, and he was a good friend of mine, I wouldn't mean it any other way except for you're my friend, you're my *habiib*." So in addressing his good friend, Fahed would use *habiib* instead of mate.³

Charlie confirmed that a *habiib* is "a try-hard, 'cause it's not being yourself, and I don't think anyone is like that, I think it's just the image which is being portrayed against us Lebanese, and I think some people like [this image]." We then asked Charlie, "Why do you think they put on this image?" He replied, "I think it's power, to show power, and dominance over other people." The question of power emerges once more when Charlie compares the difference between a *habiib* and a mate, "We use cuz, cuz is more closer to mate than *habiib* is to mate, that's the way I see it. *Habiib* is more a labelled image, where

Lebs like to use *is* to show dominance, where a mate, Aussie say 'How ya going mate?' it's a mate, you're not labelling him as a *habiib*, or a thug, or anything like that. ...If we go '*shoo habiib?*', or '*shoo cuz?*', *shoo cuz* is like 'How ya going mate?'... '*Shoo habiib?*' is like he thinks he's seen a thug, if you say '*Shoo cuz?*' he's the same."

All our male informants agreed that a *habiib*, in the sense of being a teenager of Lebanese background, could also mean a 'try-hard'. He acts tough and is always intent on projecting the image of a strong person. The fantasised and inflated character of the power position (something encountered when examining the sexuality of Lebanese youth in the next chapter) assumed by these teenagers is best understood by reference to their lack of real power in broader society, and more particularly, in the ethnic field as defined by the dominant discourse of multiculturalism. This is not to deny the real power that these young people enjoy within their own created world. In fact it is this power which enables them to endure and resist the sense of marginality that they experience in broader society. It is a sense of power that translates itself into a specific style of life that is mostly evident in the way they dress, cut their hair, drive their cars and, of course, speak to others. But before we discuss this point any further, it is important to reveal the way in which *habiibs* are perceived by our female respondents.

Female respondents depicted *habiibs* in terms similar to those used by male respondents, but more remarkably they emphasised the term's putative masculine power. Linda reported to us that *habiibs* "think they're better than another race/religion. A *habiib* is someone who has a car that he has spent so much on it so it can look good...*habiibs* are usually the ones who have the hotted up cars, [a] big religious symbol hanging half way down their chest and those who think they can get any girl they want." Linda then added, "I don't like the term *habiib*, but when I hear it, honestly, the first thing that comes to my mind would have to be young, Lebanese boys, [as she laughs sarcastically]." Mona gave us a similar impression: "When I think *habiib* I think typical Lebanese teenager, somebody who has an ego problem, somebody who kind of places themselves superior, above other people, that's the connotation I get....When you think *habiib*, you're putting people into a group, they're classing them as something. If somebody was to say to me 'that person is a *habiib*', I would immediately think he's Lebanese, he's a teenager, he probably has a fast car, probably trying to grab some girl's attention in a rude manner." As in the case of Charlie, the question of power is raised again in the context of Mouna's comparison between a *habiib* and a mate. Mouna went on to say "I think *habiib* is a bit more specific in that it's more a negative aspect, like placing themselves superior to other people, I don't think mate really — mate could be used to put somebody down, but when I think about it, I don't think so."

`Oula emphasised the presumptuous aspect of a *habiib* character: "A *habiib* is someone who follows people, who is not an original or genuine person. It's someone who follows a group and tries to impress others. That's what I find, that's what I think a *habiib* is. 'Cause *habiib* is a try-hard, and if a person is a try-hard, they're someone they are not, and tries to be someone they are not. Not in good ways, not in education or not in a job, that's what I would call a *habiib*." Salam indicated that "the whole thing of what is a *habiib*, to me, when

I see person with their car, heaps of gel in their hair, flirting with girls, girls doing the same with guys, swearing, showing lack of respect, thinking ‘because I’m Lebanese I’m better than you’, that kind of attitude.”⁴

Apart from another female respondent, Salam is the only informant who reported to us the presence of female *habiibs*. All our male respondents agreed that the term *habiib* is only applicable to boys. They systematically refused to include girls as part of the *habiib* group. Despite this masculine appropriation of “*habiib*-ship”, the evidence gathered from the girls suggests that female *habiibs* are also present, even though their number is considerable less than the male ones.

It is clear from the girls’ responses that male *habiibs* deploy their *habiib*-ship as a strategy to entice female teenagers and assert their masculinity. They ethnicise their masculinity as a way to increase their masculine power. Male and female respondents concurred that *habiibs* are obsessed with “hotted up cars” and loud music, and have their own style of dress and a peculiar way of talking. This has already been referred to by Linda and Mona, but it is more evident in Salam’s report to us. “At school most of the *habiibs* are Lebanese.... They do wear a lot of Adidas and Nike, you wouldn’t see them wearing Mambo or Billabong, or something, so that’s their trademark. On their pencil cases you have the Nike and Adidas signs...”. On their relation to cars, Salam wanted to elaborate: “The loud cars, instantly you have *habiib*, then you have [Subaru Impreza] WRX, or something, they’re loud cars, and all the *habiibs* [referring to those in her school who amount to 40 *habiibs* according to her estimation] now have their P’s [provisional driving licences], they’re always talking about the speaker systems in their cars, and what kind of car they’re having. With the car also comes their music, you always hear the cars going boom, boom, boom, in the street.” Germaine indicated to us too that *habiibs* walk in a special way, “their shoulders are like that [slightly lifted to give the impression that their upper torso is bigger and that they are strong], and they’ve got the chains”. She also mentioned that they use “slang language” and “rude words” with a “deeper tone” when they talk.⁵ Linda reported that a typical *habiib* is someone who “has a religious symbol hanging off his/her chest and have their cars all fixed up looking for attention.... [*Habiibs*] usually have their tarty girlfriends with them.” Mouna reported that *habiibs* are “teenage, Lebanese, boys with fast cars, loud music....”

These discussions aren’t simply capturing a particular type of ethnicised masculinity which is parodied per se by young men and women, but demonstrating changing relationships between, on the one hand, young men and available masculine styles and, on the other, those between young men and women which constitute a specifically ethnic “gender regime” (Connell, 1987). Two types of femininity, for example, emerged during the interviews with the female informants: one which could be labelled as “subordinate femininity”, and the other as “resistant femininity”. In this connection, subordinate femininity represents the female teenager who approves the “gangster” version of a *habiib*. She submits to the domination exercised by the male *habiib*. By contrast, the resistant femininity ridicules this type of *habiib*-ship and rejects its domineering style in relating to his female counterparts.

But the primary concern is with the masculine deal at the heart of the new configuration

of *habiib*: Boutrus linked the *habiibs*' obsession with hotted up cars with their concern to present a good image, "... the more money that's spent on the cars to make it [sic] look good, the presentation is what they're into". Charlie stated that *habiibs* dress up with "bandanas and beanies over their head...Adidas here and there". And when they talk, "there is always that extra tone to their voice, or extra swear word where it's not needed". When they walk "there's always the shrugging of shoulders, and twisting of legs". Fahed agreed with this description and mentioned that this type of *habiibs* are located in the Bankstown and Canterbury areas: "...that kind of *habiib* will be classified as having a deep voice, he'd be swearing a lot, that's what I believe people have a view of a *habiib* from Bankstown, or *habiib* from Lakemba". In addition, Fahed reported that *habiibs* dress up with "big puffy jackets, big hoods, baggy pants", and have their cars "lowered, [extra] exhausts [and] mags [put on] and big systems". Alaa' indicated that they wear a special hair style; "zero underneath, and long from the top, or rat tail, or fringes, so many ways". It is clear from these words that in the act of creating their aestheticised world, *habiibs* are also involved in re-accentuating the gender order in which they are immersed.

The doubling of ethnic youth

It is clear from the above exposition that the meaning of *habiib* has been transformed in the way it is employed by Lebanese-Australian youth, in stark contrast to its original meaning of "darling" or "the beloved person". The adoption of this new form of the word by young people into their spoken language reflect the complex relationships experienced by them. In his analysis of "national language" and the novel, Bakhtin makes a similar point in relation to the inescapable link between language and social reality: "[processes of shift and renewal of the national language] are inseparable from social and ideological struggle, from processes of evolution and of renewal of society and the folk" (Bakhtin, 1981, pp.67-68). In fact, we want to argue that the "voice" that is given to these experiences by these young people is not heard in the White-centred terms of multiculturalism. The dominant narrative of multiculturalism and all its associated master concepts such as social harmony, community relations and settlement needs of non-English-speaking-background communities erase the cultural expressions of these experiences by claiming to represent and speak for Lebanese ethnic youth. In this sense, the narrative of multiculturalism has an abusive and transgressive effect on the lived experience of these youth through the operation of what Spivak would call its "master concepts" (Morton, 2003, pp.34-35,45).

It is within this context that we should understand the reasons that led Australian-Lebanese youth to invent new meanings for the term *habiib* and to integrate it into their speech. As we have demonstrated above, the term "mate" does not capture the specificities of these young people's experience, which pertain to their age, ethnicity and strong bonding based on their shared social reality and likened at times to blood-based unity. In addition, the experience of these young people and its stylisation which is evident in their specific way of talking, dressing, listening to music and driving cars, is totally unacknowledged by the characteristics of the symbolic capital of ethnicity as defined by the master discourse of multiculturalism. More importantly, when the definers of this discourse talk about the cultural manifestations of these young people's experience, they name and define them in a way that erases their symbolic value and make them the opposite to what they consider

to be the defining characteristics of a valorised ethnic capital: their linguistic invention is unrecognised and even degraded (it's bad language), their social gathering is perceived to be a grouping of "Lebanese gangs" with intention to commit various crimes, and their style of music and dressing are symptoms of a pathologised gang identity. In short, the official definers of the dominant ethnic capital criminalise and demonise the creative cultural manifestations of the social experience of Lebanese-Australian young people by imposing their own reading on them, evaluating them in terms of that dominant ethnic capital.

More generally, the integration of certain Arabic words into the speech of Australian-Lebanese youth (i.e., *habiib*, *shoo*, *yallah* and '*ijaa*) helps in the construction of their exclusive identity which is not articulated in the White-centred discourse of multiculturalism. As such, Lebanese-Australian youth have borrowed words from the language of their parents and transformed their meanings to articulate their specific experience and give it a creolised verbal (and cultural) expression. The multicultural discourse on "Youth of Lebanese background" or "of Arabic-speaking background" names and defines these Lebanese Australians in terms of their cultural past as either a consensual and homogeneous group of youngsters or as real or potential members of the so-called "Lebanese gangs". In doing so, it does not give a voice to their currently diverse experiences, especially to those that relate to their invented response to racism and social exclusion inflicted upon them by the dominant society.

The integration of the term *habiib* into the speech of the Lebanese-Australian youth, and the imputation of new meanings to it, is a linguistic response to the racism they encounter. The change in meanings is reflective not only of their need to construct a sense of solidarity to face racism, but also of their innovative way of opposing it. We have shown in the above section that to be a *habiib* is to have a unique style of life that challenges the dominant norms of dressing, talking, driving cars and listening to music. The totality of these youth cultural practices creates its own valorised sense of ethnic capital, which is diametrically opposed to the ethnic capital defined by the dominant ethnic field and the master discourse of multiculturalism.

The ambivalence at the heart of this transformation of *habiib* is an ambivalence that underscores the doubled position of Lebanese youth in the field of ethnicity. On the one hand they foster forms of intimacy that sustain their local solidarities; on the other, they recognise the forms of ethnic caricature that arise through the aestheticisation of a lifestyle. We could speculate that they see themselves both within a logic of "the ethnic community" and from without, in terms of the logic of the field of ethnicity that perpetuates such caricatures. Either way, the tension between insertion and marginalisation, belonging and not belonging, structures their reflections on their own location. In the context of being defined and treated in this way within the dominant field of ethnicity, it is not surprising to find that Lebanese-Australian teenagers not only react by inventing their own aestheticised world to defend themselves from the symbolic violence of official multiculturalism, but they also create an environment in which they assume a fantasised position of (gendered) power, which they realistically lack in broader society. But it is also not surprising that they can reflect so readily on the ambivalences of this stylised transgression.

Conclusion

In this chapter we mainly examined the Arabic word *habiib*, as used by young people of Lebanese background living in southwest Sydney and demonstrative of the complex forms of ethnic capital they draw upon. We looked at how second-generation Lebanese youth living in this area have borrowed the word *habiib* (and few other words) from the Arabic language of their parents, and how they have transformed its original meaning to a form of address that suits the needs emanating from the experience of young (mainly) male migrants of Lebanese background. A second, related transformed meaning of *habiib* is to denote a “try-hard” identified with a particular male ethnic youth style, in which that form of address is common. We showed in this chapter that this word has acquired a number of meanings, each one expressing an aspect of the complex reality surrounding the life of second-generation Lebanese youth in Sydney. Overall we have argued that the borrowing of the Arabic word *habiib* is indicative of a complex and contradictory reality experienced by second-generation Lebanese youth, a reworking and reflection upon identity, masculinity, marginality and power; a reworking of the field of ethnicity that evinces a cultural creativity in the face of the challenge of White multiculturalism.

Hyper-sexuality, youth and ethnicity

As the Australian state gradually withdraws from its welfare role and politicians begin to attribute causes of “social ills” to “ethnic culture”, we can begin to see the overarching effects of the dominance of “identity politics” in shaping the field of ethnicity. In this connection, two important and interrelated developments have emerged in Australia since early 1990s: the racialisation or “ethnicisation” of “social problems” and attendant political practice on one hand, and the acts of responding to the way in which these problems are being addressed on the other. However, this double act of racialisation is evident not only in migrant politics and culture, but also in the construction of gender and sexuality, as this chapter’s discussion of second-generation Lebanese youth in Sydney will demonstrate. In the preceding chapter, we discussed the linguistic manifestations of being a young migrant living in the western suburbs of Sydney. We argued that these manifestations are part of the gender order through which young people navigate in complex relation to their sense of ethnic identity. Similar manifestations emerge in a discussion of the sexuality of young migrants of Lebanese background, especially in the wake of the “gang rape” that occurred in Sydney in 2000.

In 2002, a number of young men of Lebanese background were put on trial for “gang rape”. In response to this event, tabloid media, radio stations, opinion writers, callers to radio shows and letter writers to the editors of newspapers attributed the crime to the Lebanese (or, in some versions, Muslim) culture of these young men, which they considered to be inherently violent and misogynous. More specifically, some of them put forward the view that Islam is a religion which incites hatred towards “White” women motivating some Muslim young men to sexual violence against them. In addition to referring to verses in the Kor’an to “substantiate” these claims, the words reportedly pronounced by a member of the “gang” of rapists, “I’m going to f... you Lebstyle” (Crichton, 2002), were extensively used to demonstrate the racist element that motivated them to commit the atrocious crime. For the first time in Australia, ethnic boundaries separating White Australians from Lebanese migrants and their descendants also became sexual boundaries. Lebanese ethnic boundaries were suddenly transformed into ethno-sexual frontiers that needed to be observed, patrolled and policed. By attributing misogyny and violence to the Lebanese/Muslim culture, the issue of sexuality was brought forward to enact the Australian nation and define its “male” component: Australian men are

imagined as “civilised” towards the opposite sex in contradistinction to Lebanese men.

This chapter examines the sexuality of young men of Lebanese background and reveals how it is shaped by their ethnicity and their masculine identity. We argue, contrary to the racist and essentialist interpretation generally encountered in mainstream media, that their “embattled” ethnicity has a differentiating impact on their sexuality. We also show in this part of the book that the dominant “type” of this ethnic sexuality is patriarchal, in line with the dominant form of sexuality in Australia. We argue more particularly that this sexuality can be very conservative and at times assumes a fantasised and exaggerated character, but not in the simple, essentialist, generalising and negative terms of racist media. We use the term “ethno-sexual regime” to denote this, and to capture the ways gender and sexuality cut across and shape the idea of the field. We argue that the youthful, masculine discourse circulating within this regime is not only designed to ultimately secure the “boys” dominance over the body and sexuality of their female counterparts, but also has to be understood as defensive or “injured” in the context of the experiences of racism and marginalisation in Australian society.

In this chapter, we also argue that the sexuality of Lebanese-Australian young women is not only similarly shaped by their religion and ethnicity, as in the case of their male counterparts, but it is seemingly paradoxical in the sense that these young women maintain traditional views and values (with regard to getting married and having kids), while at the same time have strong modern and feminist values pertaining to their role in society (such as gaining financial independence, achieving a good education and aspiring to a career).

Foregrounding ethnicity, but a differentiated one

This chapter is based on 46 in-depth and open-ended interviews conducted between 2003 and 2004 with mostly young Lebanese females (22) and males (24) from Christian and Muslim background living in western Sydney. The sample was built up through use of the “snowballing” method among Arabic-speaking communities in this area. Most of our informants were second-generation Lebanese Australians (two were third-generation), and they all defined themselves by their ethnic Australian (i.e., hyphenated) identity. However, as the interviews progressed, they started to differentiate themselves according to their religious affiliations. Through discussing their responses, we can see that this differentiating act acquires its significance by locating it in the context of how the broader society is dealing with “Lebanese ethnic crime” and “Islamic terrorism” at the domestic and international levels.

To start with, it is important to note the high degree of affectivity that is loaded onto this process of self-identification. All male respondents declared that they were *proud* to be Lebanese Australian. In response to “How important is it to you to be a Lebanese?” Naim passionately stated: “It’s very important....In one sense I’m proud to go out there [referring to the broader community] and say I’m Lebanese because it means a lot to me, in that you want to prove the stereotype [i.e., Lebanese are sexually violent and criminal] wrong.” Peter responded to the same question in these words: “I reckon it makes you who you are. For me, I define myself as a Lebanese Australian.” In addition, Hashem said: “I think [to be

an Australian-Lebanese] is very important, the morals and ethics and values we have, and our culture, I think it's very unique. It has contributed an abundance [sic] to this country, that's why I like it." Raymond defined his identity as "unique and Lebanese", and when we asked him about the importance of being Lebanese he replied, "Everything about me is Lebanese so it's very important to me." In addition to claiming that he was proud of being Australian, Diab stated, "I've never been to Lebanon, but I feel proud of it as a country, as I feel proud of my background and my heritage." The affective intensity associated with the way our respondents identified their composite identity translates their defensive concern to obtain protection by asserting their belonging to their co-ethnics in a hostile, racist environment.

Even more remarkable is the differentiation that these young people made along religious lines when identifying themselves. Compared to the Muslim respondents, a far smaller number of Christians accorded priority to their religious identity over their Lebanese ethnicity. In contrast, the majority of the Muslim informants defined Islam as very important "in their life" more so than the identity of their national background. According to the more religious cohort, Christian and Muslim, religion was a "way of life".

Mazin, a Muslim *Shi'i*, declared: "I guess there's a lot of pride in me being Lebanese. I do love being Lebanese. But I don't also look at it as...I don't let it define my humanity, or people's humanity. I allow Islam more to define my humanity." Tarek clearly stated to us that to be a Muslim: "It's everything in life. Without it I shouldn't be alive." When asked "How important is it to you to be a Lebanese?" Samer replied: "Not much, I mean Lebanese culture for me, I really don't care about the fact that I am Lebanese." Like the previous two respondents, Samer fasts at Ramadan and prays five times a day. Nazih averred: "I like to see myself as not just Lebanese, mainly Muslim, 'cause to me Lebanese is just a word from a country with borders around it... As a Muslim everyone's the same, they have the same culture. Whether you're from India, or you're from Lebanon if you're a Muslim, it's the same.... If I'm not a good Muslim, or if I wasn't a Muslim, I would feel that there's no real life, there's no point in living."

The act of foregrounding ethnicity and then differentiating it along religious lines deserves closer analysis. We argue that selecting Islam as a specific target of disparaging and stereotyping after the events of the "gang rapes" in 2000, September 11, 2001, the Second Gulf War in 2003 and the Bali bombing in October 2003, has led to the heightening of the sense of Islamic identity among second-generation Lebanese in Australia. This is part of what we referred to above as the ethnicised response to the racialisation of social and political problems of the receiving society. In this connection, Muslim youth foregrounded their religious identity and presented it in positive, essentialist terms. On the other hand, some Maronite Catholic youth suppressed their "Lebanese identity" and accorded primacy to their religious identity to dissociate themselves from the "tarnished" identity of being Lebanese, which necessarily includes migrants of both Lebanese Christian and Muslim backgrounds. This is clearly expressed in the words uttered by Boutros: "I define myself as being Lebanese, but this is a big misconception. What's happening right now, I think people when they read in the media, in the papers or even television, they mention

Lebanese, and they mention Lebanese Muslim such and such, straight away when you say you're Lebanese, they say 'maybe he's Muslim...' Me personally, I don't like, I wouldn't like someone rubbishing my background, where I am from. This is why I mentioned to you there are Lebanese Muslims and Lebanese Catholics." We then asked Boutros more specifically why he thought the distinction he made between "Catholics" and "Muslims" was important, he stated: "To be honest, I seriously think that mainstream Australia sees... with the current events of what the world is shaping to be radical... They consider them to be radical and unpleasant. Where if you tell them you're Catholic, they consider you, 'oh you're one of us', so to speak." Doumit also justified the composite character of his identity (i.e., an Australian of Lebanese background and a Maronite) in these expressive words: "The minute they [the White Australian] find that you're a Christian, people relax around you, 'cause of the rapes, the media attention towards Muslim Lebanese. The minute they find out you're Christian, it's like you're normal. If you're Muslim it's like 'get away from me'." Obviously, being a Maronite Catholic in this case is translated in the mind of the speaker into being an accepted member of the dominant culture and community and hence, his remarks about being "one of them". More so, it means that he is "normal" whereas Muslims are not. More remarkable is the case of Edward who went in his religious differentiation of his identity as far as blaming the previous Mufti of Australia, Sheikh Hilali, for preaching about the footloose character of Australian girls "over the past 20 years." This is not an accurate remark, but it is a perception, shaped by media reportage (Kerbaj, 2006, p.1), that drives young Christian people like Edward to foreground their religious identity as being a primary determinant of their ethnicity: "...first and foremost I'm a Maronite, before I'm anything else, before I'm Aussie, before I'm Leb, I'm a Maronite Catholic". Jaad and Peter had similar views on the Lebanese reputation being dragged in the mire because of the gang rapes. The emphasis of Christian identity by these young men is a strategic move to validate their ethnicity in the eyes of the dominant White culture. This is done to enable them to convert their (religious) ethnicity into the cultural capital of Whiteness which is religiously defined as Christian (Hage, 1998, pp.48-67).

Female informants: religion, gender and ethnicity

According to the majority of Muslim young women we interviewed, Islam is "a way of life" too. In contrast, the cultural background for Christian young women was equally if not more important. It seemed to dictate their values and views of the world.

When we asked Faten, a 24-year-old female who works in orthopaedics, how she would define her cultural background, she said: "You have to make a distinction. For instance, I come from a Lebanese-Muslim background...", and culture has "nothing to do with Islam". 19-year-old Mona, who is currently studying Arts/Law at the University of Western Sydney, also gave priority to her religion over cultural background: "There's no point in denying that I do not come from, I'm not influenced by my Lebanese background, but I really try to avoid that, and want to get my Islamic culture, my Islamic way of thinking, my Islamic manners, behaviour, my dealings with people. I suppose that in itself becomes a culture."

Four young women interviewed in a clothing shop which sells Islamic women's clothes in Greenacre, in south-western Sydney also echoed this emphasis on faith. The focus of

these informants was on the importance of religion in their lives where it was not only a belief, but “a way of life”. The majority of the Muslim young women saw themselves as Muslim before anything else. Their Lebanese ethnicity was often secondary or not relevant to them.

As for the Christian girls, being Lebanese, or for many of them “Lebanese Australian”, took precedence over their religion. Although religion was still important in their life, it was their “Lebaneseness” that seemed to dictate what their views and values were, on sexual identity for instance. This is typically represented by 19-year-old Mary-Anne, a psychology student at the University of Western Sydney, who sees herself as having a Lebanese heritage and didn’t mention her religion even though she is a Maronite Christian who prays and regularly goes to church. However, this is not the case for all of the Lebanese Christian young women we interviewed.

As in the case of the young men’s identity, domestic events (such as the racialisation of crimes committed by Lebanese youth) and international events (the Gulf wars, September 11 and the Bali bombings) resulted in the hardening of ethnic boundaries, a common phenomenon in times of crisis (Horowitz, 1985; Banton, 1983; Human Rights Watch, 1995; Olzak, 1998). In this context, Muslim young women, like 19-year-old Mona, who is currently part of the United Muslims Association (UMA) – a youth organisation attached to the mosque in Lakemba which is involved in educating people about the message of Islam and organising social “sister” activities – began to put on the *hijab* and take more interest in their religion at a time when Australian media were inundated with images of Muslims and Arabs as “violent”, “aggressive” and “terrorists”.

As we can see, the female informants identified themselves differently depending on their religious identity, and the reason for giving precedence to their religious identity over their national identity is similar to the one mentioned above regarding their male counterparts. But in addition to the differentiating impact of religion, the gender identity of the female informants had a further differentiating impact on their ethnic identity.

A general perception in Australia is that women who put on the scarf are “oppressed” and “weak”. But this impression did not accurately describe the attitude of the girls in our cohort toward the *hijab*. In their case, wearing the scarf was not indicative of them being victims of a patriarchal system; it was an act of specifically subverting this stereotype. Twenty-two-year-old Karen, who works full-time while she studies law part-time, sees herself as being independent from any Muslim group but still holds a strong faith and wears the *hijab*. She says her ideal woman would be “someone who has a voice, is going to speak, and represent Islam in a true light, in terms of what it really is.”

She, like many others, is empowered by the *hijab*. She averred that men now talked to her for who she was. Karen described herself as a very opinionated, strong-minded person. She declared that she was “not a submissive kind of girl” and, unlike many of the Muslim *hijabie* girls (those who wore the *hijab*) we spoke to, saw the importance of male-female relationships and had many close male friends, many of whom were Anglo-Australian.

As indicated above, post-September 11, Sydney witnessed an increase in the number of woman wearing *hijab*. This was a form of a political statement against increasing racist attacks against Muslims and their group identity. Our interviews show that Muslim girls increasingly dress “modestly” (inclusive of head cover) not because they are submissive but, as Karen pointed out, because they wanted to be judged for who they were (their intellect) and not for what they looked like. Moreover, putting on a *hijab* is a common dress code which generates a sense of a group bonding.

Perhaps it is appropriate at this point to mention the limitations of Althusser’s (2008) structuralist concept of interpellation. Although this concept captures the moment hegemony is brought into being by animating the subject into existence, it fails to capture the moment of its challenge by denying the ability of the agent to create a resistant mode of interpellation. In our example the *hijab* is appropriated by Muslim girls to construct an anti-racist and a feminist subjectivity. Female Muslim and Christian respondents in our cohort were conservative in some ways but had also adopted some “liberal” views and values. Most of them wanted independence. Those who came from working-class families were striving even more for professional careers and many were successfully achieving this goal. Career and education often came before husband and kids. Nevertheless, they still maintained the traditions and values of their parents while at the same time carving out a new “middle-class” identity.

In contrast, our male informants had different views on their social role in society. Christian young men saw themselves as the main breadwinners in the families they plan to have, and placed a lot of emphasis on hard work, having a good job, becoming successful, earning a lot of money, being respected in the eyes of the community. Muslim young men, on the other hand, spoke about equality between the sexes, and when closely examined, this equality showed the impact of living in Australia, a western liberal democracy, on their views on gender relations. They all expressed their belief in the right of women to education, to work, to be treated equally. To what extent these differences are matters of religion alone, or entail differences in class background is hard to tell. We can say that, to some extent, the latter’s comments demonstrate a liberal Islamic view of gender relations which is entertained by Muslim youth who were seeking tertiary education and had a middle-class, career-centred outlook on life. It could also be read as an attempt by the Muslim young men to present Islam in terms acceptable to the norms laid down by the White community.

Our findings demonstrate that many women, while maintaining a strong sense of religious and ethnic identity, were challenging their parents’ expectations by furthering their education, pursuing careers and becoming financially independent before choosing to get married. The evidence gathered on subverting the symbolic meaning of the *hijab*, seeking higher education and professionalism and the development of an assertive and independent personality, points unequivocally to the differentiating impact of gender (and class) on the young women’s identity. Whether Christian or Muslim, young men coming from a working class background tend to emphasise the role of men as the primary breadwinner and the

role of women as mothers and housewives.

Sex and young men of Lebanese background

Most of the Christian and Muslim youths that we interviewed systematically disapproved of sex before marriage. When asked: “Do you think young people should be free to have sex?” most of them said “No”. However, six of our respondents presented a different view and spoke about their own personal experience or the experience of their acquaintances involving pre-marital sexual activities.

23-year-old Moussa, who is a student of Aerospace Engineering, stated that age should determine the right of young people to have sex. In response to the question about what age young people should be free to have sex, he said:

I think at the age of 21, 22 and above, I think because the person has actually matured, and they're wise about their own decisions, whereas when you're young you're not, you're careless, you do what you want.

Moussa spoke about sleeping with a number of girls during his university years.

Moreover, two second-generation youths, one Muslim and one Christian, declared that sleeping with a girl should only happen if the guy is in a lasting and serious relationship with her. Mazin, a 23-year-old Muslim youth, stated clearly that he is strongly against the right of young people to have sex before marriage, and that this code of behaviour should apply to both men and women. But, on the other hand, Mazin admitted that if “an affectionate relationship” exists between two persons there is no reason why they should not have the right to engage in sexual intercourse. In fact, Mazin himself declared that he had “had sex with just one girl” whom he seriously loved. This view is shared by another Christian young man, Boutros (23), who qualified his support of sex before marriage in this manner:

It depends on the person. If you're a really mature person and it's not a bed-hopping, I don't believe in jumping from one bed to another, I think that is very wrong, but if you see a person, and you're young, and you love them very much with your heart, and you see that in the future you'll be with them, then yes by all means, why not? Yet again, I believe if you're bed-hopping so to speak, I think that is very wrong.

Boutros was the only respondent who approved of this behaviour for both sexes, a position which was not shared with the above three respondents. Doumit, who was 23-years-old and a third-generation Lebanese youth of Christian background, stated that he “totally [agreed]” with young people having the freedom to have sex before marriage. To him it was a matter of personal choice, but girls could not exercise this choice because of “the social stigma attached to it, as in if I find a girl sleeps around with guys; I find with that her morals are very loose. The guys are the same, but this reflects more badly on the girl.” It is clear from these words that female sexuality is made an integral part of the Lebanese ethnic

boundaries, which are then closely controlled and protected. In this connection, sexual permissiveness before marriage would simply bring shame and disrepute to the already embattled community.

Apart from these five cases, the remaining respondents (18) in our interviews expressed their unequivocal support of “no sex before marriage”. The ethno-religious factor plays a prominent role in shaping this attitude on sexuality. In general, the cultural values of those of Lebanese-Australian background are conservative on the question of sexuality and gender. They categorically condemn sex before marriage and link sexual activities to the function of reproduction. Female virginity before marriage is highly valued even though the loss of male virginity is implicitly condoned. This ethno-sexual regime is often strongly supported by the religious beliefs of the Lebanese community, irrespective of whether it is Christian or Muslim. However, it is crucial to note that the embattled status of the Lebanese community in Australia has revived its ethnic identity and brought its gender character into sharper focus. This is associated with advocating rigid rules for sexual behaviour ultimately used to uphold an ethno-patriarchal system of gender relations. Revealing the conservative character of their sexuality has become a sign of ethnic distinction designed to show the moral “superiority” of the “Lebanese community” in an Anglo-dominated society. This position is transformed into a community strategy to protect the “honour” and respectability of the community in an environment in which its identity has been attacked for at least a decade.

Ever since the first Gulf War in 1991, a series of moral panics around violent and anti-social youth, “gangs”, “queue jumpers” and “terrorists” have focused on what we have elsewhere called “the Arab Other”, a fiction which strings together people from diverse national, regional, religious and ethnic origins, as though there is a cultural homogeneity (Poynting et al., 2004). These panics represent what Nagel, following Butler, refers to as the ‘performativity’ of (gendered) identity, how hegemonic forms of subjectivity come into being “through a series of iterations or repetitive acts that are largely unconscious, affirming, and constitutive” (Nagel, 2000, p.116). The cumulative effects of these “performative acts” are crucial in creating this “Arab other” against which the “invisible” identity of the Australian national is defined. They create a template through which young “Arabs” or “Lebanese” are framed and perceived. Differences in religion, ethnicity and gender are largely glossed over. In brief, a young male “Arab” in Australia is someone to be feared, and therefore should be closely policed and controlled by the state and society at large. First- and second-generation Lebanese youth in particular have been demonised and consequently, their social status and work opportunities have been considerably undermined. This situation has partly driven youth of Lebanese background to fall back more strongly on their ethnic identity to protect its reputation in a highly antagonistic environment. One basic aim of this ethno-religious revival is to enhance the image of “Lebanese ethnicity” and undermine the attempts to make it “dishonourable” by presenting the sexuality of the Lebanese community as being morally superior and family oriented. Casting “Lebanese ethnicity” by broader society as being “in crisis” is leading many second- and third-generation Lebanese young people into transforming their ethnicity into a “puritan” identity associated with moral superiority.

Religious fundamentalism and Lebanese sexuality

Youssef is an 18 year-old Muslim who is studying management at the College of Technical and Further Education (TAFE) and who is a member of UMA. When asked about his interaction with the opposite sex, Youssef replied that young people should not be allowed to have sex, and that people are committing crimes including sexual crimes, because they are steering away from the word of God. Youssef is a good example of a born-again Muslim who operates, like all fundamentalists with a Manichean logic leading him to believe that a good Muslim is someone who regulates his sexuality so that it is practiced within the confines of the marriage institution for the sole purpose of procreation.

Such statements implicitly make the claim that Islam and its true followers are not properly understood when described as being “violent”, “uncivilised” and “misogynous”. On the contrary, criminal youth of Islamic background in Australia are not “real” Muslims. They are the product of “western” civilisation which is in crisis and can only overcome its various problems by adopting the “true” teaching of Islam. Attributing international conflict and local crimes to the ethnicity of the Lebanese/Muslim community has led the latter to reverse this logic by criminalising the “White”, western culture.

The impact of demonising Islam in Australia (and the world) is further manifested in the data collected from the interview with Nabil. Nabil, a 23-year-old second-generation Lebanese-Australian Muslim, is a graduate in the field of Chemistry and Information Technology. Nabil’s experience of this Islamic awakening has been through his assumption of the role of a missionary as well his adoption of a very strict view of sexuality. In trying to explain why young people should not be permitted to have sex, he argued:

First of all ‘cause I know it’s against Islam, and if it’s against Islam I wouldn’t recommend it to anyone. I understand how people who are non-Muslims will do it, ‘cause it is fun, and so if it does not say in their religion that adultery is *haram*, or against their religion, then there’s no reason not to do it. For Muslims to have free sex, that’s not the way a Muslim should be

On the basis of these interviews, one way of responding to the marginalisation of the “Arab Other” is to espouse a fundamentalist version of Islam where male and female sexuality is tightly regulated and is perceived to be morally “superior” to the sexuality of broader society.

Two young Christian Lebanese Australians (i.e., Emile and Naim) also disclosed a similar response towards the issue of sexuality as an integral part of reviving their ethno-religious identity in a society where racism against Lebanese community is activated. We noticed that their identity is also defined in opposition to that of mainstream society which is generally conceived to be too liberal in its views on sexuality and less concerned about family values. This also applies to the cases of Hashem (18), Raymond (16), Jaad (17), Peter (16) and Edward (22).

Women from Arabic-Speaking-background and sexuality

The majority of Christian and Muslim young women we interviewed reported that they said “no” to sex before marriage. Nine of them actually argued that it was acceptable or that it was up to the person to say so, and they weren’t prepared to judge others on this matter. None, however, directly admitted to having had sex already, and at a time when most Muslim girls considered sex before marriage unacceptable, they also insisted that the same should apply to boys. They declared that sex should happen within the marriage institution or if it did occur outside this institution, they wouldn’t be open about it. In general, the girls in our cohort showed a very conservative attitude toward sexuality. For them sexuality should not be liberated. It had to be regulated and controlled. Pre-marital sex was, for both groups, *haram*, religiously and morally forbidden. For practising Muslim girls and young women, interaction with boys and men should take place strictly within the limits of Islam. According to Fatan, speaking “to them” should happen within the boundaries of Islam. There are rules for that.” The majority of the young women recognised the importance of preserving the reputation of the woman, the community and/or their religion and often felt uncomfortable even when asked such a question (even when interviewed by a female researcher).

For most female respondents, sex was still a taboo. Claudia said some of her Lebanese friends were not allowed to speak about their sexuality compared to Aussie girls. Claudia was the least conservative of the study sample as she saw a connection between sex and love and therefore considered sex permissible outside the marriage institution. Moreover, she had had three boyfriends before her current one; none had been Lebanese and a couple had been Muslim. Claudia (from a Christian background) represented an unconventional case because she didn’t see religion and culture as a barrier to love. Although the Muslim young women said it didn’t matter if their partner was not the same culture, religion was very important. In contrast, their Christian counterparts saw culture and religion as equally important. One young woman related that she had an “Australian” boyfriend but her parents weren’t happy about it and she probably wouldn’t marry him.

Furthermore Muslim young women saw homosexuality as *haram*. It was against the Koran. A few Muslim and the majority of the Christian young women said it was up to the individual, but no-one “came out” during the interviews.

All the girls condemned the notorious “gang rape” that was committed in Sydney in 2000, and argued that no matter what the girls were wearing they “didn’t deserve it”, strongly standing against the use of sexual violence against women. Domestic violence was also strongly opposed by the young women interviewees. When we asked Claudia about violence against girls in general, she averred that she wouldn’t forgive a boyfriend if he hit her and that it was totally unacceptable. She also related to us that one day she got angry when her friend was hit by her boyfriend. Yet paradoxically she added that she surprised herself when recently the same thing happened to her and she had forgiven the boyfriend because of love.

In our examination of how the religious and ethnic identities of young women from Lebanese background shape their sexuality, we have shown clearly that generally Muslim young women’s sexuality and identity is dictated by their interpretation of Islam. And

whilst they maintain the traditional views and values of their parents and religion, gaining a sense of independence for them was equally important. Most of the Christian girls also held conservative views about sex. Some of these young women may, of course, rebel against these conventions, but they didn't admit this to the interviewers.) Moreover, we should acknowledge that, like most other cultures, sexual behaviour amongst young Lebanese women runs across a wide range of spectrums –even is this is not evident in our sample. Only a couple of the Christian young women said sex before marriage was acceptable. One Muslim interviewee, sixteen-year-old Amanda, who does not wear the *hijab*, had a similar view: “Well no, not only after marriage. If they love the person, and they want to go for it, even if they're not married, then they're welcome to go for it. It's love, it's what they want to share, whether you're married or not married. But not a stupid one night stand or anything like that”). We can only add that much more nuanced research is needed to gain insights into many of these aspects of sexuality.

In broad terms, sexuality among these young females is not transformed against the more rigid wishes of their parents (mainly first-generation migrants) because it is important for them to honour their community and not give it a bad name (liberal sexuality is perceived by the majority as shameful). Furthermore, the racism that Muslim communities are experiencing in Australia has driven many females in our cohort to respond by putting on the veil even at a time when their parents were not asking them to do so, and their mothers did not wear the *hijab* in the first place, as is discussed in the following chapter. The sexuality and gender identity of these young women, therefore, cannot be separated from the broader social process through which their identity is being formed. In this sense, the experience of racism becomes constitutive of their gender and ethnic identity.

Lebanese Masculinity: diverse but certainly patriarchal

The vast majority of the Christian cohort expressed a preference to marry a girl of Lebanese background but at the same time expressed their willingness to befriend girls of all ethnic backgrounds. This preference finds its basis in the differential attitudes that Christian (and Muslim) young men had towards “Lebanese” and “Aussie” “girls”. Christian and Muslim boys believed that “Aussie girls” enjoyed more freedom in relation to their sexuality and social mobility than Lebanese girls. Lebanese girls were said to be more conservative because of traditions and religious beliefs, and parental control, though some were said by the young men to engage in sexual intercourse secretly (some Christian boys indicated to us that they knew some Lebanese girls who were as free as “Aussie” girls but they practiced their sexual freedom in secret. Many saw that “Aussie” girls were freer than other “ethnic” girls (such as of Greek, or Italian background). Unlike many of the young women we spoke to, male teenagers were allowed to go out late at night and sleep over at their friends' houses. In contrast, some of the female interviewees were not even allowed to sleep over at relatives' houses because of what they described as “safety reasons”.

Some Christian young men insisted that sexual intercourse should happen after marriage and wanted to remain virgins until they married, others insisted on the same point but said that it was up to the individual to make choices about their sex life. The majority of Muslim young men on the other hand, categorically condemned sex before marriage, and

expressed their belief in sex within the framework of a married life. They also unequivocally condemned rape, a significant issue in the context of panics about ethnic gang rape. And the vast majority condemned homosexuality as unacceptable.

Non-fundamentalist Muslims, who are in the minority, however, showed a more relaxed view of sexuality. Some didn't even object to sex before marriage. One such boy was a street youth: he related that he smoked drugs and practiced group sex (which he claimed was consensual, a comment supported by a local youth worker). Another two youngsters, who were university students, said that they slept with girls of non-Muslim background. One of them preferred to marry a Muslim girl, whereas the other didn't mind ethnicity or religion (in fact he had a Chinese girlfriend) but was fully aware that his parents wouldn't accept this relationship, and would strongly reject the idea of getting married to a non-Lebanese and a non-Muslim girl. His parents were trying to marry him to his cousin from Lebanon.¹

All Christian and Muslim respondents disapproved of being violent and coercive with women and condemned the gang rapes that occurred in 2000. However, many of the Christian cohort attributed this behaviour to the Islamic identity of perpetrators. Two interviewees said that the Muslim boys committed pack rape because their attitude towards "Aussie" girls was shaped by Sheikh Hilali's past preaching of their parents about "the morally cheap" quality of these young women. Eventually, these Christian respondents said, young Muslims developed an attitude about Anglo-Australian girls as being easy and readily available for sexual intercourse. The two interviewees argued that this type of preaching affected the upbringing of Muslim boys and led some of them to commit the rape in 2000.

Most of the male interviewees, both Christian and Muslim, disapproved of homosexuality, but some varied in their intensity. Edward (Christian) for example, admitted that, "Homosexuality appalls me. I'm abhorred by it; it's a perversion of nature. They're thinking they can go against nature, we have a saying: 'God forgives, humans sometimes forgives, but nature never forgives'." Naim similarly argued that it was wrong from a religious standpoint (the church doesn't approve) and from the perspective that same sex relationships can't reproduce. Yet Doumit, also a Maronite, on the other hand, said: "I am fine with them, as long as they're generally nice people, I'm fine. What they do in their spare time in their bedroom is their business." Peter also suggested that if he had a gay friend, if he was a "true friend" he couldn't judge him for it. Boutros thought that society would "come to accept" homosexuality, but didn't think they should "parade it". These young men are clearly trying to reconcile quite diverse positions, and pragmatic acceptance often juxtaposed dogmatic judgement. This is summed up in Raymond's position: he declared it "inhuman, but it's their choice."

The findings from the interviews with the Christian young men show that they underlined their ethnicity, and wanted to present themselves as successful, well-educated and law-abiding citizens. They indicated that they wanted to distinguish themselves from their Muslim counterparts to enhance their own image and counter-balance the racial attack on

“Lebanese gangs” and “Lebanese rapists” by the dominant media and politicians. Only a few Christian young men, on the other hand, gave precedence to their religion over their ethnicity to achieve the same result. By contrast, all male Muslim interviewees showed pride in their religion. They were also proud of their ethnicity and how it enhanced their masculinity and their sexual attractiveness in their interaction with the opposite sex. Once again, these were strategies to protect their image from the racist attack it was receiving locally and internationally.

A fantasised sexuality: the case of reverse racism

The characteristics of sexual and gender identity among our male respondents were certainly different from those defining the sexual and gender identity of their female counterparts. A number of them spoke about pre-marital sex. As we have shown above, some approved of it on the condition that the couple should be involved in a serious relationship leading to marriage, and only one respondent (Diab) argued for the unconditional right of having sex before marriage to be enjoyed equally by both young males and females. In addition, Bassam and Mazin spoke about group sex. The former admitted that when he was a teenager he took part in this form of sexual activity, and the latter revealed that he knew about many incidents involving group sex.

Bassam spoke about many teenage youth of different cultural backgrounds, including himself and Anglo-Australians, who occasionally practice consensual group sex. More importantly, he told us that the Lebanese boys were becoming very desirable in the eyes of many girls who took part in their sexual adventures. As Bassam was relating this story to us, he seemed to strongly believe in the sexual popularity of Lebanese young men. According to him, this belief was circulating widely among many girls of non-Arabic-speaking background. Speaking after the trial of the “gang rapists”, he made the point that now Lebanese youth were very careful about this form of sexual activity for fear of being wrongly accused of “gang rape”.

This myth about the unique sexual prowess of Lebanese youth was also shared by Mazin. But Mazin remarked that now the myth is getting popular in the rich and middle-class areas of Sydney:

I was actually talking about this earlier on today, with a friend, the Australian girls from this area [referring to western suburbs] don't like the Lebanese boys, 'cause they're probably sick of them, they've seen what they do. But when you go to richer areas, like Double Bay, Vaucluse or Chatswood, the Australian girls there love the Lebanese boy. I've got no explanation for that, I think maybe they just like bad boy image I guess. The boys also take advantage of that, by them being rich, and the girl will buy them a lot of things.

Farid, a youth worker with the Lebanese Muslim Association in Lakemba, knew most of the young Lebanese who were charged with gang rape in 2001. Farid confirmed the existence of the sexual potency myth surrounding Lebanese youngsters and its wide acceptance by Australian girls: “A lot of [the alleged gang rapists'] friends, I've seen it first hand, are

Anglo girls, and on the contrary, Anglo girls seem to want to fit in with the Lebanese boys in Bankstown and other places around the area". When asked about the validity of the claim that girls are "attracted in a special way to the image of the Lebanese boy". Farid replied: "I think...yes, I've actually seen it." He then added: "I think because there's so much media coverage, and plus people are susceptible to media coverage, and pretty much sucked in to media hype, and they just want to see what it's all about. I think it's curiosity at the beginning, and then at the end they find these boys are quite acceptable to what they want, and they meet their requirements. I suppose money, having fast cars, and having the means to treat them well, by buying them gifts, showering them with gifts, and they are, they're fun to be around."

Many Muslim informants indicated that "Aussie girls" believed in the hyper-sexualised character of the Lebanese boys, and thus, some Lebanese boys seemed to believe this myth and made maximum use of it in their interaction with the opposite sex outside their community. This is, of course, in contrast to earlier comments where the young men eschew promiscuity. These contrasting attitudes among different milieux within the same ethno-religious cohorts are not simply "mistakes", but, we suggest, represent a strategic response to the injuries of racism.

Lebanese youth sexualities and everyday practice

The embattled ethnicity of the Lebanese community in Australia has generated among its youth types of sexuality which cannot be fully understood apart from the growing racism of the "White" society in which they are immersed. In the interviews conducted, three types of male sexuality emerged: the first one involves the practice of sex with non-Arabic-speaking girls and the choice of a Lebanese girl when marriage is proposed. The second type indicates the existence of a fantasised Lebanese (male) sexuality circulating among teenagers of both sexes and utilised by young men of Lebanese background to enhance their ability to sexually attract girls of non-Arab background. The last type of sexuality reflects a conservative outlook on sexuality which strongly condemns in religious terms the practice of sex outside marriage, and argues that Lebanese youth should get married to girls of similar ethnic and religious backgrounds.

Amidst the diverse and sometimes contradictory views, we can speculate that these young people are not simply making their way between imperatives of home and wider, highly sexualised culture of the West, but are negotiating the complex and competing logics of the contemporary gender order in Australia (Connell, 1987). The responses of the young men, for example, are designed to ultimately secure their dominance within this order, over that of their female counterparts, and as part of overall male dominance in Australian society. However, the ethnic factor in their sexual (and gender) experience is particularly brought out into play because of the injury inflicted upon their ethnicity. In the face of the injuries of racism they face in Australia and around the globe, the ethno-religious identity of these youth mediates the prevalent gender order and creates a "specific ethno-sexual regime" within its overall structure. This regime enables the Lebanese youth to defend their cultural identity and use it as a mark of distinction or a specific strategy to assert their will over their female partners in a society that increasingly devalorises the cultural capital of their ethnicity and makes them feel powerless.

The category of male Lebanese youth who freely engage in sexual activities with non-Arab girls on the one hand, and those who disapprove of pre-marital sex for girls and prefer their marriage partner in the future to be of a similar ethnic and religious background on the other, do not act in this way to only secure the “best deal” for their overall dominance over the opposite sex. In enacting this type of sexuality, they are also driven by a motivation to ensure cultural continuity, which is also strongly encouraged by their parents. For this reason, we also notice that most of the male Lebanese youth who are wedded to non-Arab Australian girls insist on integrating their spouses into the ethno-religious culture of their own community. We argue that preferring a marriage partner of Lebanese background is gaining more prominence at a time when the Lebanese community is increasingly subjected to vilification and racism. This in turn may encourage this “specific ethno-sexual regime” whereby not only some male Lebanese youth assert their dominance over the sexuality of their female counterparts inside and outside the marriage institution, but in so doing, they also ensure the continuity of their cultural identity.

The fundamentalist version of Lebanese youth sexuality is much more impacted by their embattled ethnicity, in that they emphatically use their sexual values and gender identity to argue for the “moral superiority” of their community. To them, sex should not be permitted outside marriage. They also argue that many social problems in mainstream society are caused by the prevalent moral and sexual laxity. To them, Lebanese girls are preferred spouses because they are morally conservative (they preserve their virginity until they get married), and family-oriented. Most of the respondents in this category wanted to use their “specific gender regime” and other related “ethnic characteristics”, such as academic and business excellence, to make the claim that, contrary to the racist views about the Lebanese community, they are not only “better” than mainstream Australian society but also they possess the remedy to cure its social problems.

The last category of youth sexuality is unique in the sense that its representatives utilise ethnicity in the context of “group sex” which is not necessarily practised by the first category and is surely rejected by the second. In this case, Lebanese ethnicity is fantasised and hyper-sexualised to further prop up the sexual dominance of the male Lebanese youth in what we call the “ethno-sexual regime” that exists within the Lebanese community. Furthermore, this fantasised sexuality enables this category of Lebanese youth to enjoy a sexual form of power in a society which denies them any form of power, and increasingly devalues the cultural capital of their ethnicity.

In conclusion, the sexual and gender identity of Lebanese-background young people in Sydney is considerably shaped by their experience of racism. However, the impact of racism on their identity and their response to it is differentiated by their gender. As a result, male youth of Lebanese background attempt to exert more power over their female counterparts despite the limitations they face because of their encounter with racism in broader society while conversely, girls of Lebanese background have less freedom or control over their own sexuality, in addition to another layer of restrictions imposed by the racism of the White community. This sex and gender differentiation accounts to a large degree for the variety in the sexual practice and attitudes that we discussed above. All in all, however, the experience of racism by these youths enters into the very constitution of their sexual and gender identity.

Both academic and popular observation about second-generation immigrants (those largely from non-northern European nations, at least) often describes them as “lost” between the world of their parents and the world of their contemporaries in the country their parents migrated to and they were born in. Of course, there is some truth in this. It reflects their parents’ generation’s concern for cultural maintenance, as well as the need to accommodate to the touchstones of the self-appointed guardians of the national culture: what can now once more be demanded in Australia without embarrassment □ since the success of Hansonism¹ and the attacks on multiculturalism □ as integration or even assimilation. Yet it also fails dismally to grasp the lived experiences, the everyday life, of the second generation being worried about in these competing concerns. Moreover, it fails to capture the dialogical positioning that, we have argued in this book, illustrates the structuring of the field of ethnicity in Australia.

In earlier work, we critiqued the ideology about second-generation “lost boys”, deemed to be “trapped between cultures”, and the associated policy prescriptions of either rescuing them, or forcing them out of the wrong, backward-looking side (Poynting et al., 2004, pp.79-115). This chapter, following the previous discussion of youth and sexuality, pursues those arguments in relation to second-generation “lost girls”, about whom some equally silly public pronouncements have been made by Australian politicians seeking to raise their profile by espousing xenophobic populism. Conservative Coalition MPs Sophie Panopoulos and Bronwyn Bishop have both urged banning the *hijab* in schools, for instance (*The World Today*, 2005). Bishop had suggested that young Muslim women were principally adopting this symbol of oppression, the *hijab* (which she persistently mispronounced), out of defiance of the mainstream Australian culture (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 2005; Wakim, 2006). Contradictorily, she also argued that many were forced to wear the veil against their will. The young women of this generation were torn between their parents’ culture and that of the country of their birth. Like all ideology, there are aspects of a social reality that these posturings are reflecting.

While this rhetoric has been around for some time, it has ramped up since the July 2005 London bombings, because there has been a sustained increase in public worrying about second-generation Muslim immigrants and the emergence of “home-grown terrorism”.

This expression was once reserved for right-wing militia types in the US, such as Oklahoma bomber Timothy McVeigh, who are more likely to be White supremacist and Christian fundamentalist. Now the term mostly means those Muslims born in the country to which their parent migrated, who are said to be potential footsoldiers of international terrorism. The formula itself conveys the surprise that dawned after the July bombings in London that there are those among our native-born citizenry who might harbour resentments sufficient, in a few, to motivate acts of terror. The London transport bombers were born in Britain, raised and schooled there, spoke with English regional accents. How could such people, not invading barbarians but those raised among “*us*”, it was asked, turn against the very nation which had nurtured them?

The London bombers were second-generation immigrants who were Muslim. What had enraged them to assemble so coldly and methodically this mass killing? Suddenly, State and media attention was turned to the cultural soil that might nourish such home-grown produce. Whereas in Britain this has meant second-generation immigrants of mainly South Asian background, in Australia it has meant the culture of Muslim second-generation immigrants of mainly Arab background, the largest country of origin group being from Lebanon (Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, 2004). In both places, the conceptual tools for such a consideration were woefully inadequate, and they led necessarily to, at best inefficacious, at worst dangerous, and often silly policy proposals. For example, in August 2005, Australia’s then Education Minister Brendan Nelson bemoaned the lack of integration of Muslim immigrants, exhorting them to fit in or “clear off”. He prescribed the inculcation of “Australian values” in schools, through imbibing the Anzac legend and learning stories of heroes such as Simpson and his donkey (*PM*, 2005).

In earlier work, we analysed this supposed tension in cultural allegiances in terms of what we dubbed “strategic hybridity” (Noble, Poynting and Tabar, 1999). This is almost the opposite of being trapped between cultures; it involves appropriating elements of one’s parents’ homeland culture and the “dominant culture” in creative and quite fluid ways, shifting according to circumstances. What the various hybrid forms share is that they are misread and deprecated both by the traditionalists of their parents’ generation and those of the dominant culture who feel threatened when (only) elements of this culture are appropriated by “others”, who stubbornly remain *other* by refusing to assimilate unconditionally, and who feel just as threatened when other elements of it are rejected, undermining the singularity and exclusivity of what they see as “their” Australian cultural heritage: “one nation”. In fact, we argue, these young people are responding quite creatively to the double imperative of the ethnic field in Australia, that they be both “ethnic” and unflinchingly demonstrate their allegiance to (White) Australia.

The young second-generation Lebanese Australians we interviewed are acting within this double contradiction, working as well as they can within the constraints of their ethnic capital. Their parents want them to succeed in the new country; that is a main reason they migrated. The younger generation knows that this necessarily entails a degree of strategic adoption of dominant cultural forms: what Hage (1998) calls “accumulating Whiteness”. To the extent that they do this, however, they experience a sense of reproach for abandonment,

neglect, disregard, or even perhaps betrayal, of their parents' culture and their own origins. On the other hand, to the extent that they become fluent in the dominant cultural idiom, they are never judged to do so enough to attain the equality that they seek. They always do so imperfectly from the point of view of the cultural arbiters; they always have a cultural 'accent', as it were, which serves as a marker and a pretext for discrimination.

So, while the myth of being caught between cultures doesn't accurately represent how second-generation Lebanese Australian youth live their lives, it does contain elements of how they are at times made to *feel*. Like all ideology, it reflects aspects of reality which are presented in distorted form as appearances. This chapter will demonstrate this ideological effect by drawing on material from two periods of research that the authors engaged in: one in 1997 and one in 2003, in which we used in-depth, open-ended, semi-structured interviews with young people recruited through the "snowball" method. The first period of interviews took place soon after the entrenchment of Hansonism in Australian politics; the second after September 11 and the year after the first Bali bombing brought the so-called "War on Terror" to what was called our "doorstep". We interviewed young men and young women of Arab (mainly Lebanese) background from Western Sydney, both Muslim and Christian, over these periods. This chapter concentrates upon the young women of Muslim background, because they are often seen as the most extreme examples of young people living this contradiction.

"Most people don't believe me that I'm Lebanese"

The interview with Zahra (like those with Houda and Hasna, below) was conducted by one of the authors, Paul Tabar, a first-generation Lebanese immigrant man of her parents' generation. It was in 1997, when Zahra was about 17 years old. She was born in Australia; both her parents were born in Lebanon and came to Australia in the mid to late seventies. Her father was a skilled worker; her mother did home duties. The family was Muslim. They lived in the south-western suburbs of Sydney. Zahra attended a co-educational state school in a nearby suburb. She usually spoke Arabic at home, but would switch to English more when she was talking with her brothers or "when I'm talking about education" or for "certain issues that I can't express myself in Arabic". Her parents understood English very well but always spoke Arabic at home.

The ethnic identity Zahra nominated, when asked, was Lebanese Australian. She elaborated: "My parents come from Lebanon but I was born here and I respect both cultures. But I tend to find I'm [pause] out to keep that Lebanese identity and also keep the Australian." Zahra readily launched into a stream-of-consciousness with examples of what made this hard. The examples were all experiences of racism towards Lebanese, such as "rude and offensive things towards Muslims" said by teachers and fellow students in front of her, the teachers not realising she was of Lebanese background.

It's very hard sometimes.... It depends on what you value. See if you value your identity and your Lebanese culture, then you will stick to that. It's not like you don't respect the Australian identity, but it depends on what you value. I value my culture. I value my religion.... To tell you the truth, when people ask me what

country I come from, I sort of feel – I always talk to my parents about this – I feel really embarrassed to tell them that I'm Lebanese because most people don't believe me that I'm Lebanese.

One teacher had been interrupted by students, while bandying insulting stereotypes about the crowds around the mosque on an Islamic feast day.

Someone said 'Zahra is Lebanese, Miss', and she goes, 'Oh Zahra (and she's known me for about three years), are you Lebanese? I'm so surprised! I never thought you'd be Lebanese.' And I go, 'What makes you say that?' And she said, 'Well you're very smart, that's for one.' I was so offended.... A lot of people react like that; they don't think Lebanese people are capable, especially girls.

The put-downs also came from classmates at school.

... I always stick up for my culture, 'cause in classes we always have disputes about the way Lebanese are ... and they always seem to put the Lebanese down – with my friends, I'm talking about. I never used to see that side before. I just started to see that it was getting out of hand, they despised me so much. They had no reason to do that.

Zahra's sense of her Lebaneseness, in contrast to her parents' generation, was constructed from the beginning in the environment of White Australian ethnocentrism. But being "put down" is not the same as being "lost".

In Zahra's experience, the stereotypes were directed against "the religion, mostly". She found that they were compounded for young women in the "Muslim girl Lebanese" image. The ideological picture reflects some reality, of course, though in a distorted way. The distortions are hurtful, but the reality can be readily grasped:

My friends always ask me to go places and do things which, I know, like in my culture it's not accepted, and things they wear, they say, they do, I don't do, I don't say it, things like that. They respect that in a way but also sometimes it gets to them. It gets to a stage where I start to be neglected in a way.

Zahra tired of explaining things to her Anglo friends. Other Mediterranean immigrants had more in common. "With Greeks and Italians, they're sorts of wogs², you know? They sort of understand how you feel even though they're allowed to do things. They understand; they care. I tend to find that the Australians don't really care."

Zahra was a confident and articulate young woman. In fact, her bicultural knowledge was valued by the more culturally sensitive teachers, who often sought her advice in a community liaison role. She was not disoriented; she did not need to be found, to find her way or to find herself. Yet like the others, both young men and women, she was constructing her identity in conditions of racism; expressing her identity involved "sticking up for" her

culture. Zahra's story reminds us that ethnicity is not a given but is something that is identified, classified and judged in daily life; it positions each person in a wider field of differences. But this field is not an open field of equivalences, for it is also structured by a fundamental divide between Whites and "wogs".

Hierarchies of otherness

Houda was actively Muslim. She attended the mosque; she prayed every day; she fasted during Ramadan. She read the Koran with some difficulty and with the help of a translation. Islam was central to the way she identified herself: "I'm a Muslim Lebanese, Australian born." She spoke quite eloquently about what this combination meant:

Muslim is what I believe in. Lebanese is what I speak and my background. And Australian-born is. I was born in Australia and I have certain characteristics of Australians, not the same as Muslim-Lebanese that live in Lebanon. ... I was born here, they know the same culture what we speak, how we speak, what we like, how we dress. It's all different to how people in Lebanon would be. ... It's not as if you're Australian just because recently you came from Lebanon and you just came here and you got a certificate. If you spent time in Australia and you knew the people and you act like them and you speak like them, that's what makes you an Australian. ... Like, the only difference is I'm a different religion to most Australians and that's why we have different beliefs.

As indeed with the Christian Lebanese interviewees (whom we do not present here), Houda said that restrictions on going out distinguish her from other girls as Lebanese. "They're allowed to do more things. They can go out more. They act different. They wear different clothes. They wear really short clothes. Lebanese girls won't do that." Sometimes in the interview she would use "Muslim" interchangeably with "Lebanese"; sometimes she described a hierarchy of otherness which complicated the identification and positioning that ethnic identity is located within. Houda says of the Lebanese boys:

They respect the Lebanese girls more because they know they won't do the things that non-Lebanese girls do. Like they would muck around more with the non-Muslim Lebanese girls ... □ other girls give them what they want and stuff. Like they know their own religion so they know that the Lebanese girls or the Muslim girls, they know as well how they were raised and they won't do the things that others will do.

Many racist stereotypes of Lebanese women in Australia identify all Lebanese with Islam and identify Islam with "easternness", assume that all Muslim women are far more oppressed by men than western women are, and see the *hijab* as the sign of this. By this logic, a Muslim woman without a veil can only be lost or have lost her religion. Yet Houda had given a deal thought to the matter, and had her own mind:

I believe in wearing the veil; it's just that if you want to wear it you have to fully be comfortable with it. I know I should do it but I'm not ready yet and if I put it on now

it's not from my heart, so I shouldn't put it on now. And later in the future I will, hopefully. It's complicated. I'm living in Australia. I've been raised in a country where Islamic dress was hardly worn, but now it's better. At my school there's no one wearing *hijab* and I don't know, I just, I want to show my hair you know?

Such hierarchies not only organise identities, they structure access to public spaces (as we shall see later in the book) and they involve the ability of people to accumulate and deploy their ethnic capital within processes of recognition and judgment.

Hasna was a sixteen-year-old Shi'ite Muslim who was born in Australia of parents who immigrated from Lebanon some twenty years ago. The family lived in a southern suburb of Sydney where the Shi'ite mosque is located, and Hasna attended a selective public girls' high school nearby. She volunteered that her parents came from a village which is predominantly agricultural. Her father finished high school in Lebanon and was going to be a teacher, but had worked as a labourer in Australia and was out of work at the time of the interview. Her mother did not complete high school; she had worked in factory occupations in Australia and was then a "full-time housewife".

English was the language which Hasna usually spoke at home, but she would talk to Arabic-speaking visitors in Arabic. Occasionally she switched languages when talking with her parents:

My dad I speak more in Arabic, more than my mum, because my mum's a lot more fluent with English so she speaks to me in English as well. He understands everything but I just tend to speak to him in Arabic. I'll switch around, like I'll be speaking in English and half the words I'll say in Arabic My mum, usually if she's explaining for me to do something for her she'd say it in Arabic, but if me and her are having a conversation she'd tend to speak in English.... If she starts swearing or screaming at me it's always in Arabic. Father's the same.

Hasna, then, shifted relatively fluidly between the spoken languages. In common with most of the second-generation interviewees, she could not read or write much Arabic, but she drew practically on both idioms in her speech and in her thought.

Asked about her ethnic identity, it is interesting that Hasna first responded with what she perceived that other people thought, and what other people thought she was *not*:

Well a lot of people don't think that I'm Lebanese-Muslim; they don't think I act like I am. And I say what do you mean, 'act like I'm Lebanese-Muslim?' It's like, 'Oh, but you don't wear a scarf, that's why.' I go, 'Well, I personally don't think to express a religion, like a religion is something personal, like, that you express in your own way. I don't think that you have to wear a scarf to prove that you are religious.

Hasna described her identity succinctly as composed of citizenship, country of birth, her adaptation to the dominant culture and her obligation to retain aspects of her culture of origin. "I'm Australian-born citizen which my background is Lebanese, and I think the way I live my life is a lot more, like, I adapt a lot more to the Australian culture, but yet I've still got my Lebanese culture always there that I have to follow and I can't break." Yet

the “adaptation” was partial because it operates in relation to these hierarchies of otherness which structure the ethnic field – judged inadequate in the view of what she calls “the Australian group” in her class at school, whom she described as “really racist”. She was made to feel like an outsider, and a lesser being. “But if I have to sit with the Australian group, they have different beliefs and just everything about them is different to me, so yet we’d really have nothing to talk about and I’d feel inferior to sit with them.” This is an effect of the power to define the national culture, which is retained by the Anglo-Australians, and thus to establish a hierarchy of relative “Whiteness”, as Hage (1998) has argued.

Superficially, when Hasna said that the “Aussie” girls were different and “stick together” in cliques, she appeared to be saying the same thing as the new assimilationists who complain about non-English speaking background immigrants:

Well, they tend to stick together. Like, they stay together at school and they’re all just [pause] they’re all interested in different things that we’re interested in. Like the music they listen to is different, their dress is different, the way they colour their hair is different. They’re different towards the way we are.

It is not, of course, the same thing. The “Aussies” are not made to feel inferior. English-speaking background immigrants, whatever their difference, are still the bearers of “Whiteness” and can assert this in the cultural hierarchy – especially if they are in a position of authority which they are more likely to be:

A certain teacher said something to girls that were wearing a scarf. She said – they were in roll-call and there was girls up the back talking and she said – something like – she was American this teacher – and she was talking and saying something like, ‘It’s always the rag-head girls in the back of the classroom talking’, or something like that.

The veil also figured in the racist insults of other school students; they were called “scarf-heads”. It is crucial to note that stereotypes of ethnic masculinity and femininity are key images in the racialisation of Lebanese immigrants. This can be seen clearly enough even in the schoolyard taunts. When the boys are labelled “dumb Lebs”, it is a caricature of brutish masculinity. The scarf serves, in the racialised picture of Lebanese Muslim women, as a symbol of feminine submission to “eastern” male oppression, as well as a sign of what Hage (1998) calls “Third-World looking” backwardness. Women who wear the *hijab* seem to be targeted for more acts of racist aggression: not only since the so-called “War on Terror”, but especially since the first Gulf War, and peaking again after 9/11 and subsequent terrorist attacks. Hasna, interviewed in 1997, said that she personally had not experienced much racism. She had lighter skin than what seems to fit the profile of “Middle Eastern appearance”: “Most of the time it’s because people can’t tell what race they are, they don’t think I look Lebanese.” For Hasna to wear a veil in the face of such racism would be to experience further humiliation. In avoiding this, she was neither turning her back on her parents’ culture, nor embracing the racist one which labels it as backward. She was exercising a pragmatism which protected her dignity in a racist society. Her and her friends’ disposition towards their parents’ ways of being Lebanese, and the elements of these which they adopt, exaggerate, transform, downplay, negate or reject, depended largely on the social context in which they found themselves and how they moved to assert their interests and their dignity in a wider field of ethnicity.

As with other female interviewees, Hasna experienced the parental restrictions on her going out as part of being Lebanese:

Like, they think there's something wrong with not being at home, mainly for the fact of what other people are going to say. It's a big thing in the Lebanese society. ... Once they have marked you and called you a name or said something about you it tends to stick with you for life and you'll never get married and things like that. That's how they think.

Sometimes the local suburb, with its large Lebanese community, seemed like a village in the home country with the gossip and the prying eyes to be avoided.

Sometimes, like I know my mother, sometimes she won't like me hanging around with guys because – not the fact that she doesn't trust me or doesn't like them – only the fact that in case someone else sees me and gets the wrong idea. She'll say to me, 'I trust and I know they're just your – ' because I say, 'Guys are just like girls, you can be just friends with a guy like you're just friends with a girl.' She'll say, 'Yes, I know that, but other people don't understand that and they think there's something more to it.' Like she says if you're at a place where there's a lot of older people, like if I'm walking through [the suburb] or something, don't walk through with a bunch of guys.

So Hasna said that she doesn't like the suburb:

... because I think there's too many Lebanese people and they want to know what happens and goes on in everyone's life. Like they pry themselves into your life just to know what goes on just so they can have something to talk about. But my street is fairly quiet, like there's no Lebanese living in my street, they're all mainly Australian and they're all old people so they just keep to themselves.

Hasna was very conscious of the gendered division of labour, and complained about its unfairness. She saw her unequal load of household chores in comparison to her brother, as part of being Lebanese. In this context, she said, "Girls have a lot more responsibility. Like we've got to stay home, we've got to clean, got to help mum cooking, got to help with the younger sisters and brothers. Guys don't." Staying home is not only about safeguarding reputation; it is about being available to perform domestic labour, as a specific gendered form of ethnic capital. This gender-specific work inequality is integral to the ethnic identity which Hasna was constructing.

Bourdieu, of course, links reputation and positioning within a field, as we have seen in the discussion of political representation, But reputation is not the sole preserve of leaders; it has complex dimensions in everyday life. The sexual labelling and fear of gaining a "bad" reputation among working-class adolescent girls is certainly not unique to Lebanese-background youth; numerous studies have dealt with this among girls of Anglo and other ethnic backgrounds. Not unique to Lebanese immigrants either, of course, is the unequal burden of unwaged domestic labour borne by women. The point is that young women like Hasna experience these social relations as constitutive of their identity as Lebanese Australians as they negotiate the gender order that cuts across the field of ethnicity. They thus experience ethnicity in terms of the judgments of (sexual and gender) character and

worth, as their gendered ethnic capital. More precisely, these aspects of gender relations are exaggerated and caricatured by the culturally dominant in racist stereotypes of Lebanese women in Australia. Yet Hasna was not passively “caught” between cultures. None of this is to argue that she and her female Lebanese-Australian friends in any way have equal power with the boys of their communities. It is to insist, however, that they are not the passive victims portrayed by common ethnocentric representations. In common with their male Lebanese-Australian counterparts, their representation as lost sheep penned between impassable cultural ravines is in no way congruent with the realities of their lives.

The *hijab*: facing racism

The young women interviewed six years later, and after September 11, 2001, had different dispositions towards their identity. These were interviewed by Elissar Mukhtar, herself a young second-generation immigrant of Lebanese and other Arab background, though not a Muslim and not a fluent speaker of Arabic. The young women recounted how the events of 9/11 had shaped their identities. Indignant at seeing Arabs and Muslims constantly represented in the media as violent and as terrorists, they had begun taking more interest in their religion, and a number had only recently adopted the *hijab*. (In this Bronwyn Bishop and Sophie Panopoulos are right, the *hijab* has been taken up by many Muslim young women as a symbol of defiance, or resistance. Yet we doubt that they are right that banning veils at school would reduce the defiance, let alone the reasons for it.)

Maha, the middle of five siblings, was 19 years old when interviewed. She was born in Australia; her parents came from Lebanon thirty years ago. Her father was self-employed and her mother fully occupied in household work and looking after Maha’s two younger sisters. Maha lived in the household of seven in south-west Sydney, and was studying Arts and Law at university. Maha experienced her identity as Muslim first of all. All of the Muslims interviewed after 9/11 did. She said that, for her Islam was a way of life. She described herself as being “from Australia” and “more Australian” in culture, but (and she said “but”) as also having Lebanese culture that she identified with. She prayed five times a day and attended Friday prayers at the mosque, where she also prayed several times a week in addition. She fasted during Ramadan. She said that, for her, the *hijab* “is symbolic. It’s not any old thing that I put on, it’s actually spiritual and symbolic of who I am. It represents me as a Muslim, and when I put it on I feel good, and I feel liberated.... It safeguards me.”

She averred that the events of September 11 “probably made me stronger, if anything. It’s also made me want to portray myself, differentiate myself from those kind of events.” Asked if she has experienced racism, she replied she had. “I get people come up to me and saying ‘What’s that tea-towel on your head?’, or I get people telling me, maybe this is not discrimination, but I get people coming up to me thinking I don’t know how to speak the English language. They look at me like I’m uneducated, thinking that I’m oppressed.” Maha said this “motivates me to get an education, to work, to portray myself that I’m not what you think I am”.

Karen, who we met in the previous chapter, was 22 years old and born in Australia. Her father was born in Beirut and her mother was born in a village; they migrated to Australia in 1979. Karen was studying part-time while working full-time in insurance. Her father was a taxi-driver, and her mother a housewife. They were educated to intermediate secondary level. Karen lived in south-west Sydney with them and her six younger siblings, whom her

income helped to support.

Karen described her cultural background as “a mixture of Lebanese, Australian, and Islamic.” She said, of being Muslim: “Out of all those identities, over all the identities that I’ve come to encompass, and it’s more than just those, that one is perhaps the most important to me.”

Her father, she said, was “very modern, very progressive, and he fully endorses my independence”. Her mother’s family was more traditional: “They find it very difficult to see that I’m a working person... They would prefer her to be the kind of girl who leaves her hair out, and follows fashion. She observed that “it’s a very complex traditionalism ... it’s not Islamic, it’s more cultural.”

Karen prayed five times a day, and attended the mosque during Ramadan. She explained that, working full-time and studying what felt like full-time, she was too busy to go to the mosque at other times. She first put on the *hijab* for her first day at university:

It’s something I put on willingly; it is by my own choice. My mum doesn’t wear it. It’s something that I love, because it was only after I wore the scarf that I was able to get a different perspective of Australian society. You could see the changes, you could see how people were different, treated you differently, to what you were before you wore the scarf, and what you were after. All of a sudden you had this identity clash. Whereas before you saw yourself as Muslim, but it was more like an internal Islam, it wasn’t visible, people couldn’t see what it was that you believed in, it was okay, people just accepted you. They didn’t really know much about you, and they never really accessed that religious part of you, but now that you are visibly a Muslim people change. It became very confronting, I felt, for people, and they were very uncomfortable at certain times. Although people wanted to be your friend, they never wanted to be too close....

I was so determined that I wanted to wear it, on this first day. I’m proud of who my family is, and my religion, where I’ve come from, I want to put it on for my religious beliefs. But for me it’s always been an issue of identity, it’s who I am as a person. If you’re going to respect me, and accept me, then I want you to accept me on my terms, and that is as a Muslim. So I deliberately created this position of difference, so that people would, hopefully, ultimately respect me for that, and not for something else, not for just being a woman, but for being Muslim as well.

Karen believed that 9/11 has “changed everything”:

September 11 was the worst day ... for Muslims around the world.... [I]t wasn’t just an attack on America, but an attack on every Muslim living in a western country. Even people living in their own Islamic countries. It was such an attack on us. The perpetrators were said to be Muslim ... they brought down, they defamed a whole community.

It imposed an extra burden on her identity:

Sometimes you just want to wake up some mornings, and you want to be like

everyone else, you want to be normal. After September 11, I remember driving in the car and some guy pointing his hand at me and waving and doing all this stuff, screaming abusive comments. You don't want to constantly have to live your life like that.

She had experienced more subtle forms of discrimination, too. Karen explains that:

A lot of times you come across a lot of people who are almost disregarding of you because of the fact that you are a woman, and a Muslim. People are, after what's been happening in the media, people have taken a bad image of us. It's in those subtle forms, that people disregard your opinion, or don't value you as an equal contributor to what you're doing. Also it's the way people look at you, they don't expect you to be like their own children, they don't expect you to be that good, to be able to talk, to be able to defend yourself. They expect me to be the submissive character, which I'm not, and all of a sudden, they're like – people are always comparing you to ... the Australian Anglo woman, which I don't appreciate because I like to be [accepted] on my own terms.

Needless to say, Karen was not the oppressed Muslim girl who is obliged to wear the *hijab* by the men or even the elder women in the family. Her ideal woman, as we saw in the previous chapter, would be someone “who can assert herself, who knows her rights, can stand on her two feet”. For the women of her mother's village family in Sydney, according to Karen, to be “traditional” is to wear their hair out and dress fashionably. It's unlikely to be so in the village. The culture of this first generation is already strategically hybridised. For Karen and her second-generation cohort, the *hijab* can be strategically deployed to defy racism as well as to take on meanings of independence and assertiveness that are not part of any backward and misogynistic tradition.

Rhetoric that positions the wearing of *hijab* as a measure of the worrisome failure or refusal to “integrate” thus misses the point. So does the often well-meaning but increasingly persistent concern that sees second generation young women as “lost” between the culture of their parents and that of their Anglo contemporaries. The second generation Lebanese girls constructing their identities as Muslim women and as Muslim Australians in war-on-terror time face more anxiety and more urgency in the attempts at social control that seek to attach them demonstrably to the “mainstream”. If anything, this has made them more conscious in deploying symbols of their strategic hybridity.

In December 2005, women wearing the *hijab* on or by Cronulla beach were assaulted in the racist riots and driven from this symbolic home of “Anglo” Australian culture. The response of young Lebanese Muslim women was neither to don the bikini, nor to cede the sandy and iconic ground to the exclusionists of the new White Australia. With clever creativity, they invented the “burqini” (Reuters, 2007): a fashionable and colourful full-cover swimsuit. In refusing the reductive choice of bikini v burqa, they refused to be trapped in the binaries of the West v Islam, feminist or conservative, right or left, attempting to regain some kind of say in positions on sexuality and morality they felt did not include them (Lattas, 2009). This does not free them from the politics of sexuality, faith and Western values, but does display again the ways in which young people creatively negotiate their forms of symbolic capital in the context of a gendered ordering within the field of ethnicity.

We have suggested in this book that there is a “damned if you do and damned if you don’t” dilemma encountered by Lebanese immigrants and their children in Australia in confronting the logic of cultural integration. They might respond creatively, as with the young women we have seen in the previous chapter, but it is a dilemma that can’t be escaped. For instance, immigrants are disparaged for maintaining their interest in homeland politics, or pursuing ethnic politics, to the detriment of engagement in Australian political life. Then when they join Australian political parties – be they Labor or Liberal – in numbers, they are accused of “branch stacking”¹. Yet what could be more typical of Australian party-political life than branch stacking? Or, for another example, they are accused of “keeping to themselves” culturally, and not blending in, mixing in and adopting mainstream cultural practices. Then when they participate in archetypically “Australian” activities such as beachgoing on weekends, their mode of comportment there is seen as deviant and they are told they are not wanted on the beach, they do not belong there (Poynting, 2006). Even when their families have barbecues by the sea, though the “barbie” is appropriated as iconically “Aussie”, it is ironically seen to be “un-Australian”. This dilemma is not simply the dilemma of being ‘caught between two cultures’ but, as we have argued, the playing out of the contradictory logic of being “ethnic” in contemporary Australia.

This chapter is a case study of the playing out of this logic in the field of sport. Unlike many immigrants from the Mediterranean and elsewhere that have maintained soccer as their preferred code of football in Australia, the Lebanese-background communities in Sydney, particularly around Canterbury-Bankstown, have enthusiastically followed rugby league, the predominant and culturally “mainstream” winter sport in New South Wales (NSW). In doing so, as we shall see, they have come to be demonised and told they do not belong. Drawing on Cohen’s model of moral panic we have elaborated earlier (Poynting et al., 2004), we can see yet again the creation of a “folk devil” in which the demonisation of a particular social group is caught up in wider anxieties about multicultural policy, national identity and social cohesion which politicians and media organisations exploit for their own agendas. The moral panic over the ‘Bulldog Army’ supporters of the Canterbury-Bankstown based rugby league team in 2001-04 took place at the height of a concerted ideological attack on multiculturalism in Australia, in which immigration from supposedly inassimilable cultures had been presented as inimical to national identity and wellbeing.

A key element of this ideology was the criminalisation of the cultures represented as most different and therefore deviant. Arab (especially the more numerous Lebanese) Australians and Muslim Australians were foremost among these.

The bulldog is a well-known symbol of Britishness, but among rugby league football fans in Sydney it signals Lebaneseness. The Sydney Bulldogs rugby league team, based in the south-western suburbs of Canterbury-Bankstown with many Arabic-speaking immigrants, has been adopted by many local Lebanese Australians as “their” team, to the great dismay of some Anglo-Australians, who lament the loss of their “family” game. This immigrant appropriation of a traditionally Australian sport, and the subsequent backlash for doing so, encapsulates in the sporting field many of the contradictions we have seen in the struggles over national cultural capital (Hage, 1998). The Australians are virtually perennial “world” champions at this sport of British origin, seriously played at the international level by only about four countries. In the states of New South Wales and Queensland, rugby league was, throughout the twentieth century and even today, traditionally synonymous with “football” in mainstream culture (in contrast to other meanings of “football” elsewhere in Australia and overseas): it was the major men’s winter sport.

The summer equivalent was cricket: another abiding legacy of Britishness (Cope and Kalantzis, 2000). It has long been known that the mastery of the ways of this arcane and idiosyncratic sport, in a nation priding itself on sporting prowess, is a mark of successful assimilation. Chinese businessman Quong Tart succeeded in this amid the “White Australia” ideology of the nineteenth century, along with learning the bagpipes and marrying an Englishwoman (Meacham, 2003). There are many stories of this strategy in the mid-twentieth century: for example, the Polish immigrant intellectual in the assimilationist postwar period who applied himself to studying then following cricket, to give him a way into social and work conversations in this anti-intellectual, sports-mad nation. Or the son of middle-class East European Jewish immigrants, who passed months of late primary school in the late 1950s bedridden with an illness, whiling the time away by learning the obscure names of all the cricket field positions, so he could understand the radio commentary better than any of his Anglo-Australian classmates. Why, then, wouldn’t this strategy work with rugby league and Lebanese immigrants?

Recruiting the Bulldog Army

Sports writer Mike Gibson (2000, p.66) noted how few of the non-English speaking background migrants to Australia had taken to rugby league, most maintaining the interest in soccer prevalent in their homelands. “The Lebanese were different,” he observed: “Newcomers from Lebanon became as passionate about the game as those working-class Australians whose efforts had spawned it early last century”. Australian-born Darren Maroon, whose father came from Lebanon and his mother from Ireland, captained the “Cedars”, the “Lebanese” World Cup rugby league team in 2000. It is interesting to note that half of their players were Australian-born. Maroon played for South Sydney in the forwards for nine years, and also played for Easts and Manly. “The Lebanese were following the [South Sydney] Rabbitohs long before they started following Canterbury,” he recalls (Ibid). As early as the 1890s, a Lebanese community had developed in the inner-

south Sydney suburb of Redfern, where chain migration had drawn Lebanese Christians from the Beqaa Valley. Maroon's grandfather headed straight from the ship to Redfern, he told Gibson (Ibid).

Hazem El Masri, the Bulldogs' star goal-kicking wing until he retired in 2009, was born in Tripoli and migrated as a child with his parents to Australia, where they came to live in the Canterbury area. When he first arrived at age 10, he played soccer, but, "growing up around Belmore, like most Lebanese kids, I found myself getting along to cheer for the Dogs.... I was like every other young kid in the district. Belmore Sports Ground was our Mecca. All I wanted to do was to play for Canterbury" (Ibid).

Hilal Dannaoui, a son of immigrants from Lebanon who lives in Greenacre in Sydney's south west, was praised in the *Sun-Herald* (Sygall, 2002, p.93) for his mastery of cricket. It took a while for him to be accepted by his Canterbury-Bankstown team-mates, and he is often called a "wog", but persisting with cricket was a deliberate strategy to distance himself from stereotypes of Lebanese-background young men. Before he dedicated himself to cricket, he spent a number of years playing rugby league, and used to play with Hazem El Masri's brother (Ibid).

Such was the admiration for El Masri and the local Lebanese community support for the game and "their" team, that a group of five schoolgirls from Al Noori Muslim Primary School in Greenacre could be photographed in the weekend *Sydney Morning Herald* in their team's blue and white colours – loose-fitting blue tracksuit and white *hijab* – playing rugby league. Their teacher, Ms. Wafa Saboune, explained that parents' initial opposition had been overcome, and that, thanks to El Masri's status as a Muslim role model, they were now encouraging their daughters to participate. "Parents and kids can relate to a Muslim like him playing rugby league and they want to get involved in that sport themselves", she said. "It is an Australian game. That is where they are born and raised" (Bradley, 2001, p.5). Not to be outdone in pun or photo, the *Daily Telegraph* ran a similar story the following March, with four girls (in *hijab*, of course) from the nearby Noor al Houda Islamic College at Bankstown photographed at rugby league footy training: "It's not a passing interest in class front row" (Morris, 2002 . p9).

In between these two positive articles, with their approbatory depiction of cultural integration and adoption of rugby league by the Canterbury-Bankstown Lebanese communities, there had been a virulent moral panic about the supposed delinquency and un-Australianness of (especially young, male) Bulldogs supporters. It was not the first time.

The Bulldog Army becomes folk devil

In mid-1997, media headlines raged for a week about a "riot" which had occurred at Belmore Sports Ground during a Canterbury rugby league match. Pockets of spectator violence had broken out late in the game, during an altercation over a controversial refereeing decision. The police and security guards had typically over-reacted, "aggressively wielding batons" and sending police dogs and officers on horseback into the crowd. There were even several reports of a policeman pointing a firearm (de Freitas 1998). "Everyone was against the

police because they were so brutal”, recounted a youth witness quoted by the *Sydney Morning Herald* (de Freitas, 1998).

The police overreaction was followed by the media’s. The commercial media linked the causes of the disturbance to the multicultural festival sponsored by the Canterbury club in conjunction with the game (de Freitas, 1998; Hughson, 1998, 2001). It should be noted that these event coincided with a fairly concerted right-wing attack on multiculturalism as supposedly divisive, corrosive of the national culture, and unfair to “silent majority” of white, Anglo, Christian Australians. This ideological campaign culminated in the election of the anti-immigration and anti-multiculturalist candidate Pauline Hanson to the Australian parliament at the end of that year. Both the tabloid *Telegraph* and the broadsheet *Sydney Morning Herald* exaggerated the presence and the significance of a few Lebanese national flags among the others in the crowd at Belmore. “At least 70 officers from 12 patrols and security guards fought battles with spectators, many of them waving Lebanese flags” (*Daily Telegraph*, 1997 cited in de Freitas). “Eyewitness reports, too, claim that some of the brawlers were waving Lebanese flags” (*Sydney Morning Herald* 2007 cited in de Freitas). The *Herald* worried in an editorial that this flag-waving may have “long-term implications” in “the prospect that the brawl might have been caused by a clash of racial rather than club loyalties” (*Sydney Morning Herald* cited in de Freitas). Tabloids and talkback radio attacked and blamed multiculturalism, though the rugby league club’s investigation refuted the suggested connections between the violence and the multicultural festival, and this judgement was shared by the police (de Freitas, 1998).

Yet the ideology which prevailed was that “football riots” were an un-Australian phenomenon, and must have been brought from overseas. In an earlier period, there had been official worrying that the display of flags and national symbols (other than Australian ones, which are not “ethnic”) had led to endemic inter-ethnic fights at soccer matches, and this had led to the banning of ethnic team names, banners, flags and the like in Australian soccer competitions (Hughson, 1999).

The media-propagated images of Lebanese youth out of control in Canterbury-Bankstown remained in the public mind over the following years. The moral panic ensuing from the manslaughter of teenager Edward Lee in Punchbowl during a street brawl in 1998 maintained and augmented these images, exacerbated by a repressive police campaign targeting Lebanese-background youth, which led to gunshots being fired at Lakemba police station (Collins et al., 2000). As with the reportage of the “Belmore riot”, metaphors of war abounded (Noble and Poynting, 2003), along with the notion of violence of foreign origin being imported. Thus the ideological elements were available and circulating, and the media were well primed, when further disturbances arose among young Bulldogs fans in early 2001.

The moral panic of 2001

At the beginning of March, just as the 2001 season was getting under way, there were complaints about the “intimidating behaviour” of Bulldogs supporters on trains returning from an away game against the Newcastle Knights (Peterson, 2001, p.7). The events were

popularly interpreted in the light of, and may even have been prompted by, a concerted moral panic about “ethnic youth gangs” centred on the Canterbury-Bankstown area, around August 2000 (Poynting et al., 2004). The lack of explicit mention in the tabloids of the particular ethnic background imputed to the wayward Bulldogs fans can perhaps be explained by the anxiety of the club officials to avoid the bad publicity over ethnic tensions “that almost killed soccer in this country” (Gibson, 1997). In addition, police would have been equally keen to hose down what they undoubtedly saw as ethnic violence. With club officials and police comprising the most accessible and the main informants for reporters on the event, the initial result was unusually low-key discussion of the ethnicity factor of the disturbances (de Freitas, 1998). In any case, in reporting on a minor skirmish that took place the following week (which two days later was furiously beaten up on the front page of the same tabloid), *Telegraph* journalist Anthony Peterson (2001, p.7) reported, “There was only one fight at the Sydney Showground on Saturday night – between [sic] an intoxicated spectator who called another fan a ‘wog’.”

Sports reporter Peter Frilingos on page one of the *Telegraph* gave emphasis to his briefing by a National Rugby League (NRL) official, rather than the Bulldogs source, and told quite a different story about the same game. “Last Saturday, Bulldogs and Northern Eagles fans were terrorised by 60 hooligans in Bulldogs colours both at the Showground and on their way home” (Frilingos, 2001, p.1). Here we see inflated numbers, inflated damage (the NRL were seeking compensation from the Bulldogs club) and extravagant language – nothing less than “terrorism” was involved. Moreover, the delinquent Bulldogs fans were not genuine rugby league fans, but “hooligans in Bulldogs colours”. They were put in their place by an email from Kay Gardoll on the Bulldogs club’s official website: “go watch soccer or another sport” (cited by Bissett, 2001, p.10).

The media demonisation continued. A fortnight later, in an article occupying most of page three and subheaded “Hundreds of fans flee game violence”, we learn in the fine print that the Brisbane Broncos winger was inciting the Bulldogs fans with hand gestures (it didn’t help that he had scored two disputed tries and the Bulldogs were losing), the “violence” amounted to throwing rubbish on the field, and “at least one family” left the ground early, swearing never to come back (Sofios and Adams, 2001, p.3). The accompanying photograph and its caption showed an Anglo-Celtic named man leaving with his two redheaded toddler daughters in his arms, purportedly retreating from the throwing of (clearly shown plastic soft-drink) bottles in the other direction, onto the field. NRL executive David Moffett was quoted as saying, “The crowd was giving [winger] Wendell [Sailor] a hurry-up but it was good natured and I don’t think it did any harm. I didn’t see too much wrong with the banter from either side” (Sofios and Adams, 2001, p.3). Police also stated that no major incidents had been reported.

The troubles continued into the following month. At a drawn game between the Bulldogs and their old western Sydney rivals, Parramatta, six people were arrested when soft-drink containers were thrown at Parramatta Stadium. A police commissioner again emphasised the foreignness of the problem: “God help us if we have to go down the path of overseas countries with police in riot gear and using water cannons to control sporting crowds”

(Gilmore, Prichard and Leggatt, 2001, p.6-7). Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) reporter David Mark made a similar observation, only more explicitly, “Australians pride themselves on having competitive sporting culture without the violence that besets many overseas sports” (*PM*, 2001). Again there was the assertion that the troublesome Bulldogs supporters were not genuine rugby league aficionados. The Parramatta police local area commander was quoted as commenting,

I’m not so sure that these people are genuine Bulldog fans. The wider community come to the football to enjoy the game, and enjoy it as a social event. I don’t think these minority of people are coming to the football for that purpose. I think they’re basically coming to the football to provoke incidents” (*PM*, 2001).

This remark, made on national radio, was carefully coded, but the loaded terms “wider community” and “minority” convey a certain message. The punters on web pages and talkback radio did not need to be so circumspect. *Herald* columnist Paul Sheehan (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 2001, p.32) observed “a clearly racial dimension to the widespread belief within [rugby] league, amplified on talkback radio, that the ‘Bulldog army’ supporting the Canterbury club is filled with violence-prone Lebanese hoons”.

On Anzac Day, *Telegraph* cartoonist Warren Brown (2001, p.29) underlined the un-Australianness of the “Bulldog army” by summoning the ghosts of that Aussie icon, the World War One digger, to look sadly upon a rowdy Bulldogs fan being hauled off by a policeman, and ask, “We gave our lives for great-grandchildren like *that*?” Again the “true fans”, with Anglo-Celtic names like Rodgers and Kelly, were given space to “fight back” in a special letters column (*Daily Telegraph* 2001, p.79). Richard Kelly, of the western New South Wales country town Dubbo, reprised the “terrorising” theme, in contrasting those he characterised as animals with genuine supporters of the team: “Bulldogs fans don’t hunt in packs, terrorise innocent people or bring the club into any kind of disrepute” (*Daily Telegraph*, 2001, p.79).

Bulldogs’ chairman Barry Nelson indicated to the *Telegraph* his club’s efforts at community relations, in hiring “Lebanese security guards to mingle with supporters to identify and eject known troublemakers” (Salleh, 2001, p.5). He added that the club had “worked closely with the Lebanese newspaper *El-Telegraph*, appealing to parents in the Arabic-speaking community to supervise youths believed to be behind the recent violence” (Ibid). In addition to these measures, the Bulldogs club’s board resolved to ensure “Muslim community leaders attend each game to maintain crowd control” (Beikoff, 2001a, p.56). The club echoed the language of the police in their recent high-profile, ethnically targeted campaigns against youth in the area, by announcing a policy of “zero tolerance” (Ibid; Beikoff, 2001b, p.3). It sought to impose on-the-spot fines of \$500 “under the strictest crowd behaviour rules of any sport and any sports venue in the country” (Beikoff, 2001a, p.56). It pressured the state government to reinstate special powers introduced during the 2000 Olympics with the stated aim of protecting against terrorists, allowing security staff to stop and search and to remove any person from Olympic Park and other designated areas, including the Sydney Showground venue. Further, the Bulldogs club announced a ban on all flags at its grounds, except for

official National Rugby League (NRL) flags and, of course, the Australian flag (Ibid). Lebanese-Australian boxer, Nader Hamdan, ranked sixth in the International Boxing Federation (and therefore something of a role model) told reporter Paul Kent on the *Telegraph's* sports pages, "It is being handled all wrong....". "The Lebanese community feels victimised after recent crowd violence involving the Canterbury Bulldogs", recorded Kent. Said Hamdan, "The community has been singled out as being like that, but we're not like that" (Kent, 2001, p.123). He judged that the media attention and the tough-guy police and security response were exacerbating the problem, and that the much-publicised corrective measures would be counterproductive. The following day, one of the organisers of the Bulldogs' supporters' group which call themselves the "Bulldog Army" (analogously to the English cricket fans' "Barmy Army") told the tabloid *Sun-Herald* that they would defy the ban on their banner: "We have done nothing wrong" (Gilmore, 2001, p.9). The *Sun-Herald* reported the 15-year-old Basham Krayem as telling them the Bulldog Army "drew heavily from the Australian-born children of Lebanese, Greek and Italian migrants, living in the Bankstown, Yagoona and Punchbowl areas"; meanwhile, it was announced that sniffer dogs would be used to vet fans for flares or firecrackers at the forthcoming Bulldogs home game (Ibid).

Having been on the front pages of the Sydney dailies on the 24th and 25th of April (*Daily Telegraph*, 2001, p.1; *Scala*, 2001, p.1; *Walter and Cornford*, 2001, p.1), the Bulldog Army story did not return to page one until May, and then the angle was the measures put in place to prevent a resurgence of the supposed hooliganism among Bulldogs supporters (Beikoff, 2001c, p.1; 2001d, p.1). Nevertheless, it did make the headlines that there were *no* riots after a Bulldogs game, this being attributed to the intensive policing (Walter, 2001, p.75).

The following year saw scandals involving the Bulldogs club in the headlines, but for two different reasons which did not involve its youthful fans. The first concerned the club's breaching of the NRL salary cap rules, governing how much money may be paid by each team to its players. The revelations of the Bulldogs' illegally exceeding this limit saw them penalised by the subtraction of sufficient competition points to demote them from championship contenders to last-place "wooden spooners" (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 2002, p.6). This doubtless reinforced the Bulldogs fans' sense of being victimised, especially since certain well-heeled clubs from wealthy suburbs were reputed (though not proven) to have long engaged in the same practices. The second concerned an ill-fated \$900 million development joint venture between the Bulldogs and Liverpool City Council to build a sporting, leisure and gambling complex, "Oasis" (Davies and McClymont, 2002, p.6). It was alleged (though never proven) that the state Fisheries Minister, Labor Party "numbers man" Eddie Obeid, had offered the Bulldogs Leagues Club President, Gary McIntyre, to secure the necessary Crown land for the development and alleviate any licensing problems for the lucrative poker machines, in return for a million dollar donation to his party (Davies and McClymont, 2002, p.1). While the Independent Commission Against Corruption eventually found that there was no corrupt conduct by any of the parties involved, Mr. Obeid was ousted from Cabinet in a reshuffle in March 2003. The Oasis affair cannot have enhanced either his reputation or that of the Bulldogs.

The years 2001 and 2002 were also marked by media hysteria about so-called “ethnic gang rapes” in Bankstown and nearby western Sydney suburbs, and the various trials of the accused who happened to be of Lebanese background or Muslim background (Poynting et al., 2004, pp.116-152). This became linked in racist discourse to the supposed deviance of Middle Eastern asylum seekers, about whom the federal government opportunistically fomented a moral panic in the 2001 election campaign that successfully delivered them re-election. The election was marked by the government’s strategy of “dog-whistling”, a surreptitious intrusion of race politics which had been successful in the previous federal election. The notion of “dog-whistling” involves sending a particularly sharp message which calls clearly to those intended, and goes unheard by the rest of the population, like a high-pitched dog whistle audible to the canine but not the human ear. Its use in this case was intended on one level to retain the “ethnic vote” and that of the small-l liberals among the middle strata, who hear only the apparent reasonableness of the actual words being used. Examples include the slogans that it’s not racist to have a debate about immigration (in the 1997 election), or it’s not racist to limit asylum-seekers (in the 2001 poll). On the other level, it sends a signal that calls to the disaffected minority which had reacted to their marginalisation and insecurity with xenophobia, and turned to the anti-immigration, anti-multiculturalism One Nation party. Thus the strategy sends different messages to each cohort on distinct wavelengths, as it were. In the event, the dog whistle worked for the government in the 2001 federal election, in the context of a moral panic over the Middle-Eastern “queue-jumpers” rescued by the Norwegian ship *Tampa* off Western Australia in August, and the fear and insecurity induced by the airborne terrorist attacks of September 11 in the US. Above all, the terrorist attacks in the US on September 11, 2001 and in Bali on October 12, 2002 were followed by demonisation of Muslim communities in Australia as in the US and other allied countries, and the Lebanese immigrant communities around Canterbury-Bankstown in Sydney were especially targeted (Poynting et al., 2004). Thus in the minor moral panic about the Bulldogs Army, dog-whistling became Bulldog-whistling.

Particularly after September 11, the folk devils of the ongoing complaints about Bulldogs supporters became more “Muslim” than “Lebanese” in the tales that continued to circulate. One caller to Alan Jones’s notorious 2GB commercial talkback radio program was allowed to air the following diatribe in July 2002:

I have got an opinion on the Muslim problem.... They can call it what they like but it’s the Muslim problem. On Friday night I’m going to go and see the Roosters play Canterbury. I take my grandson, this is to the football, but I won’t be talking him on Friday night and that’s a disgrace. And the reason that I won’t be taking him is because there’s every chance that some lunatic in a blue and white jumper of Mediterranean appearance is going to cause trouble (quoted in Anti-Discrimination Board, 2003, p.63).

Again, in 2004, during a discussion about the Bulldogs on his 2GB program, Alan Jones made a comment about the Canterbury-Bankstown area being a problem generally. A caller replied that it was not the area but rather the Lebanese in the area who were deviant. Jones responded that it was not all the Lebanese, not the Christian Lebanese, but the Muslim

Lebanese who were the problem (Jones, 2004)². By this time there was another full-scale moral panic about Bulldogs supporters under way, the last instance that will be reported on here. Before discussing this, however, we need some background about the latest scandal that had beset the Bulldogs, though this did not incriminate the long-suffering team supporters any more than the salary capping or the Oasis affair.

Racialisation and the gang rape moral panics

Early in 2004, the media were reverberating with reports about an alleged group sexual assault involving six of the Bulldogs team, perpetrated on a 20-year-old woman in the Coffs Harbour hotel where the team was staying. Ultimately, the case could not be proven, and could not go to trial, but it was widely reported that team members were regularly involved in incidents of drunken group sex involving male bonding and virtually ritualised degradation of women. It is clear that this reprehensible practice was endemic among elite men's sporting teams; over about a year there were similar reports involving three codes³ of football across several states, and all involving allegations of rape. Uniquely in the case of the Bulldogs, however, the popular opprobrium over the Coffs Harbour case attached to the team's supporters. Moreover, when twenty-three of the players complied with the order to provide DNA samples to investigating police, Hazem El Masri was reported to be offended by the direction, and refused. He was not present when the alleged offences occurred, and was not a suspect, according to police (Davies, 2004). In fact, none of those alleged to be involved were Lebanese or Muslim. As sociologist Andrew Jakubowicz commented:

Over the last few months, Australia has been rocked by sex scandals in rugby league and to some extent in Australian football. In the case of the Sydney Bulldogs team, all of whom were under suspicion for behaving in grossly sexist ways, most of whom were not Muslim – in fact all except one were not Muslim – the only person who was deemed to be totally without any suspicion was the Muslim member. He was the one that the police recognised from the outset was unlikely to engage in rape, unlikely to get drunk, unlikely to behave in socially unacceptable ways (*Insight*, 2004).

Despite this, there was widespread criticism of El Masri's supposed lack of cooperation, and an ideological switching of the condemnation to the Canterbury-Bankstown Muslim communities.

It needs to be borne in mind that since 2001 there had been a serious upsurge in racial vilification and violence against Muslims, from verbal abuse and spitting, to serious assault and arson, with attacks often sexualised and targeted at women and girls, and involving many incidents of women's hijabs being torn off in public places (Poynting and Noble, 2004). Buried in the fine print in one of the early tabloid articles about the most recent Bulldogs crowd violence, in 2004, was a key contributing cause of the "riot": "Bulldogs sources claim a group of Canterbury supporters were urinated on by a Roosters fan from an upstairs balcony at Aussie Stadium, while a 14-year-old Muslim girl had a veil ripped off by a Rooster fan" (Hawse and Bell, 2004, p.58; see also Peterson, 2004, p.11). This astounding claim was corroborated by sources in the local Lebanese community. James Emmanouil, "a

Bulldogs supporter for more than 20 years”, wrote, in a letter to the *Telegraph* (30 March, 2004, p.19): “Walking through the stadium with my girlfriend, before, during and after the game, I was spat at, had beer thrown at me from the upper tier and was called a rapist. My girlfriend was also harassed in an unspeakable manner ... all by Roosters supporters” [original ellipsis].

This was not the whole story, of course. Demoralised by the gang rape accusations and the associated disunity between the team and officials, the Bulldogs were defeated 35 to nil by their Eastern suburbs rivals (*AM*, 2004). As in the earlier affrays, bottles were thrown onto the field; this time the game was interrupted for a minute. The headline blame, of course, was attached solely to the Bulldogs crowd. “SHAME ON YOU”, raged the *Telegraph*’s frontpage headline, with the page one story entirely in terms of Bulldogs fans attacking Roosters supporters (Chesterton and Peterson, 2004, p.1). Again there was the angle of the two little girls terrorised by the melee. One again there was the imagery of Bulldogs supporters as animals, who “should be corralled in a barbed wire cage at one end of the field to ensure general public safety” (Chesterton, 2004, p. 4). (This notion was particularly resonant at a time when pictures of Middle Eastern asylum seekers, just so caged, were still prominent in the public mind.) They were “devoid of humanity and even common decency”. The Bulldogs fans were once more not genuine followers, but merely “dressed in Bulldogs colours”. The well-worn stereotype of criminality was invoked, with the Roosters vs Bulldogs match being characterised as “the Chooks versus the Crooks” (Ibid).

The weekend tabloid, the *Sun-Herald*, recycled with relish the proven recipe about the toddlers so traumatised by the fracas as never to return to the game they loved (Duff, Lawson and Kidman, 2004, p.9). The accompanying half-page colour photo showed blue-eyed, light-haired, fair-skinned kids with a Celtic surname. Yet from there, the cycle of media outrage wound down, as eventually they invariably do.

The panic submerges

There was a story in August 2004 about police officers officially moonlighting in uniform for \$26 to \$30 per hour to provide extra security at rugby league matches, with a colour photo showing their blue and white uniforms neatly matching those of the (orderly seated) Bulldogs supporters (Kidman, 2004, p.44). There was a letter to the *Telegraph* later that month from D. Scott (10 August, 2004) from the opposition Cowboys Supporters Group complaining about the bad language of Bulldogs fans. The letter re-told the story of the small children whose game was spoilt. There was a single-column *Telegraph* “exclusive” in September revealing that Bulldogs fans would be urged by the club to sign a “code of conduct” (Ritchie, 2004, p.3). There were a couple of column inches the following week in each of the Sydney dailies about a firecracker being let off at the Bulldogs’ game against the Melbourne Storm at Aussie Stadium (*Daily Telegraph*, 2004b, p.3; *Sydney Morning Herald*, 2004, p.44). There were, however, no riots.

Police warned fans that there would be extra security at the grand final, in which the Bulldogs were to play the Roosters (*Sunday Telegraph*, 2004, p.5). The Bulldogs won that match and that year’s premiership. *The Australian* attributed the celebrations being

“remarkably free of violence” to the Bulldogs being “muzzled”. Nevertheless, there were hints of deviance in the observations about “doof doof”⁴ music, roaring cars, and loud horns (McNicholl, 2004). The police commented on the notable lack of violence, and said that “there had been few incidents at the Telstra [Stadium], where 82,000 enthusiastic fans watched the game” (Ibid).

In Cohen’s famous formula, the spiralling condition of moral panic either winds down or breaks down: it either “disappears, submerges, or deteriorates and becomes more visible” (1987, p.9). The moral panic over the Bulldogs’ supporters has for the most part stayed submerged since the events outlined here, though remaining just below the surface, to surge from time to time into the headlines and public attention. Early in the 2006 season, for instance, there was another round of lurid headlines, outraged letters to the editor, editorials demanding action, articles proposing stern measures, and the like, after a fight at between fans of opposing teams at the Telstra Stadium. All of the ideological elements detailed in this chapter were again deployed. It was proposed that the riot squad be deployed. The trigger event was a brawl in which one man had been arrested and ejected from the game, according to the *Sunday Telegraph* (Mascord, 2006, p.10). This cycle of panic subsided with the same themes as previously, that the potential violence of the wayward Bulldogs fans was only being suppressed by the strong police presence: “Peace reigns as officers swamp fans” (Watson, 2006).

Conclusion

In the case that has been presented here, the particular panic over the Bulldog Army has abated, but there is an abiding generalised sense of a crisis of moral order in the “debate” over immigration and multiculturalism, and an ongoing salience of the Arab or Muslim Other as the pre-eminent folk devil in contemporary Australia. This was strongly evident in the “Cronulla Riots” of December 2005, where beachgoers of Lebanese background or “Middle Eastern appearance” were violently attacked by a mob of five thousand, stirred up by vigilantes and white supremacists shouting “Piss off Lebs” and other racist abuse (Poynting, 2006). Ironically, the popular media blamed the groups who were attacked, and paid far more attention over the following months to reprisal violence by a couple of hundred of young men from these groups than they did to the affray of the racist mob. The ideological themes were very similar. The troublesome Lebanese immigrant young men, who were said to have brought the violence on their communities, were not “genuine” beachgoers; they only frequented Cronulla to make trouble. Their behaviour was “un-Australian”.

The Bulldog riots, like the Cronulla riots, bespeak underlying contradictions which remain submerged most of the time, but are nevertheless real and abiding. Such contradictions structure the position of migrants in the field of ethnicity, located as they are they in a double bind: being “ethnic” and (not) Australian at the same time. Australian-born Lebanese immigrants are being denied their belonging in the country of their birth. The more they participate in “Aussie” culture, from their point of view as if they belonged, the more their frustration at not being allowed to belong boils to the surface. The more this happens, the more they demonstrate to their deniers that indeed they don’t belong.

The logics of respect: integration and the politics of reputation

Scholarly discussions of migrant diasporas in recent years have largely focused on questions of identity: how groups of migrants and their children construct and negotiate their senses of shared belonging in relation to their homeland and to the country of settlement. This has often run counter to an increasing re-emphasis on the political discourse of “assimilationism”: the requirement that migrants adopt the national identity and cultural ways of their new home as the primary definer of belonging. This tension between senses of belonging echoes Gilroy’s (1993) elaboration of the notion of the double consciousness, an awareness of the competing imperatives of national and racial identity common to the diasporic experience. However, the doubleness we have emphasised in this book is structured into the very field of ethnicity in which national and ethnic/racial belongings are articulated and manifests itself not just in symbolic forms but in embodied practices through which belonging is negotiated.

Despite the theoretical sophistication of the scholarly analyses and the “pragmatism” of the popular debates, both tend to give little attention to the complex modes of integration through which migrant groups articulate themselves to the various sites of their new home as well as to a wider sense of a diasporic or a transnational “community”. Processes, forms and relations of integration, we suggest, can be usefully examined using the framework we have developed here drawing on Bourdieu’s notions of field, capital and habitus. Moreover, the issue of integration, especially for the “second generation”, requires that we extend our use of these concepts beyond the specifically conceived “field of ethnicity”.

The question of the modes of integration is particularly significant for the children of migrants in societies that exhibit high levels of economic differentiation and social and cultural complexity. As Portes, Fernández-Kelly and Haller (2005, p.1000) argue, the question is not whether the second generation will assimilate into the society of the country of settlement (in the sense that they learn to participate in it), but to what segment, and under what circumstances. This depends largely, they argue, on the “resources – intellectual, material and social”, they accumulate (2005, p.1032). This means recognising that migrant communities live not just “between cultures” and across the borders of nation-states, but across multiple domains within the country of settlement: a wider social field that is already marked by remarkable complexity and differentiation and within which the field of ethnicity is but one configuration of relations and positions. Levitt and Glick Schiller

(2004) argue that such a focus allows us to see that there is a difference between ways of being and ways of belonging: the former refer to the relations and practices that individuals engage in to participate in a social field, while ways of belonging represent those forms of identification which demonstrate a connection to a group.

Bourdieu's (1990) model of the various forms of capital which subjects accumulate and deploy in specific fields that we have drawn upon here, augments this perspective in two key ways. First, as Bourdieu suggests, capital is not simply an objective given; it has to be *recognised* as valid within a field. It is through this process that the individual capitals can take on symbolic forms – as honour and reputation, for example. Second, Bourdieu raises the problem of how capital from one field is converted into another. These insights correspond with the argument that identities do not simply emanate from the will of the subject but are the result of a dialogic process with others who have the ability to recognise and validate one's identity claims (Bottomley, 1991). These points are particularly significant for the second generation, whose depiction as “caught between two cultures” hides these complex problems of convertibility and recognition. And they are particularly significant for young people of migrant background who are making the transition to adulthood, for this period of transition sharpens the focus on both the politics of recognition – how we are perceived and addressed by others – and the problem of the limited accumulation of the various forms of capital available to young people.

Foregrounding these problems of temporal and contextual change and their relation to embodied social practices highlights several things. On the one hand, these issues ask us how we can best capture in analysis the generative capacities of the habitus alongside the structural limitations within which the habitus is lived – a theme central to much of this book. On the other, it suggests we may need to explore in much more critical detail Bourdieu's emphasis on the habitus and its accompanying capitals as specific to a single field. Some work using Bourdieu's model has already begun to show the complex nature of both field and habitus: Rapoport and Lomsky-Feder (2002) explore the “dual dispositions” of Russian Jewish intelligentsia, in which both difference and similarity are strategically striven for, and which shape the generative capacity of the habitus. If, as Shilling (1993) argues, the habitus is the embodied instantiation of the intersection of class, gender, ethnicity, age, and so on, and if it is always put into operation within a specific field, then the habitus cannot be singularly defined, but is a multi-faceted ensemble of competencies and capacities. Once we also take into account temporal and spatial contexts, this assemblage of capacities acquires other layers of complexity, and suggests that there are varying trajectories of habitus in relation to these other social identities and practices (Yelvington, 1991).

In this chapter we will explore aspects of these issues by revisiting a group of young men we first spoke to in the mid-1990s regarding their sense of identity and their search for respect, now in the midst of their shift from adolescence to adulthood. The desire for and achievement of “respect” is central to the issue of integration because it measures the extent to which the attempts to insert and locate yourself in an array of social domains has been recognised and “accepted” by others in the field. In analysing their experiences when

we first interviewed them, we argued that the formation of their peer groups, which were vaguely presented as a “gang”, had more to do with negotiating the complex dynamics of friendship, ethnicity and masculinity and the desire for a sense of social power and respect through a clearly defined identity than with any real connection to the world of criminal gangs, despite the attempts by populist politicians and media commentators to draw links between groups of young men of Middle Eastern appearance and violent crime.

We interviewed some of these men eight years later, and revisited these questions. While there was a continuing preoccupation with identity and respect we found a slightly different set of concerns, a different logic of *respectability*. These two moments in their life histories represent something of the contrasting and complex experiences of social inclusion and exclusion related to different structural and ontological contexts; the kinds of social recognition their embodied and cultural capital can confer at different moments of accumulation. The chapter suggests that there is a shift from a respect based partly on fear and strategies of visibility to one based on benevolent paternalism, where accomplishment, character and social giving promise respectability. Both entail the performance of particular forms of embodiment which embody cultural and social capitals in particular ways, and which garner respect in different ways. A singular notion of a habitus (defined in terms of migrancy or Lebaneseness), therefore, cannot carry the generational changes experienced by young people: it needs to be fully “generative”, in Bourdieu’s sense, and grapple with issues of (historical) transformation and (contextual) conversion.

Tough Guys – masculinity and the search for respect

In 1995 we spoke with two groups of young men of Arabic-speaking, Lebanese background from south-western Sydney – one Maronite and one Muslim – as part of a larger study of interethnic relations between young people (Noble, Poynting and Tabar, 1999). These interviews took place during a period when, in the wake of the first Gulf War, reportage of “ethnic crime” and cultural disharmony were making debates around multiculturalism much more acute. In 2003 we re-interviewed several of these young men. In the intervening period, not only had their personal lives changed as they made the transition from school to further education and the adult world of work, but they did so in a context where anxieties around men of “Middle Eastern appearance” were exacerbated by panics over the “ethnic gang rapes”, waves of “boat people” and the terrorist attacks in the United States and Bali. In these new interviews we revisited questions of cultural identity and belonging, their personal and social relationships, their experiences and views of Australian society, and their hopes and dreams.

In the earlier research, we analysed the ways ethnicity shaped their daily existence in friendship groups – each group belonged to a circle they described as “Lebanese” although this was in complex and fluid relationship to identity, class and gender, other non-English speaking background groups, “Australian” culture and to questions of faith. While both saw their cultural background as relatively unproblematic, they were incredibly flexible in how they defined it, when and where it became significant, and in what ways it took meaning. They engaged in both strategic essentialism – asserting an absolutist conception of their ethnicity – and strategic hybridity – an ability to move between “Lebanese-ness”

and “Australian-ness” – depending on the context (Noble, Poynting and Tabar, 1999). Most importantly for this chapter, however, is the way respect was a crucial theme that emerged in the narratives of these young men. “Respect” is a key term that crops up typically in studies of young people, ethnicity and subcultures (McDonald, 1999), and also in studies of marginalised or disadvantaged groups in society (Dunier, 1992). Indeed, Bourgois (1995) has written of the nature of such social groups in terms of their “search for respect”; respect articulates the way relations of power are experienced in terms of the politics of recognition and social and moral estimations of worth.

Both of the groups we interviewed in 1995 talked of how “sticking together” not only fulfilled pragmatic functions of mutual, public protection in the face of discrimination at the hands of other students, teachers, the police and other adults; it went hand in hand with a valorisation of respect in relation to family, religion and cultural heritage, and also in relation to social and economic power in the face of an experience of marginalisation. “Aussies”, they claimed, gave them no respect and displayed cultural traits that did not warrant respect in return: indeed, “Australian” culture was marked by a general lack of respect (around issues of family as well as toward those from different cultural backgrounds), despite the evidence that they participated enthusiastically in forms of leisure and consumption (football, pop music, etc.) that were part of this “culture”. This sense of disrespect marks the extent to which the strategies that they and their families have undertaken to locate themselves in Australia, to make themselves at home, have been partly rebuffed, particularly in a social context framed by generally high levels of unemployment and lower levels of education, and by social anxieties regarding Lebanese youth (Collins, Noble, Poynting and Tabar, 2000).

Unsurprisingly, the form that this desire for respect took was a very public, ethnicised identity in which family, language, tradition and religion were central, and which dictated specific codes of sexual and social conduct and emphasised self-respect (Poynting, Noble and Tabar, 2003, pp.148,150). But it was also a *gendered* ethnicised identity that took the strong form of a masculine toughness. This macho demeanour was marked by a particular style: a swagger, a propensity to talk up danger and physical strength, a boasting of criminal and sometimes sexual prowess, and so on. One group went so far as to style itself as a gang – the *Shi Be Faz’i* or SBF (something to fear) (Collins, Noble, Poynting and Tabar 2000, pp.149-150). We speculated that their ethnic identifications functioned as a kind of subcultural capital, valorised in and forming the basis of recognition in local settings, constructed to counter the experience of marginalisation because of their lack of generally esteemed cultural, social and economic capitals (Collins, Noble, Poynting and Tabar 2000, p.167). When asked to reflect, eight years later, on what respect may have meant when they were younger, Paul suggested that “I guess they want to be someone. They want to have a name for themselves, maybe they want people to notice them. For people to know that they are important, they are someone. For them to be recognised by their peers, probably that’s the bottom line”. Paul admitted that “SBF” was just a label that secured recognition within and beyond the group:

Basically it meant, if someone saw something out of the ordinary, or if a person did good in his studies, or did something bad in the playground, the label was

used, you did good in your test, or you hurt someone in the playground – you did something great in other words. That label was used for someone that did something extraordinary.

We deployed the notion of “protest masculinity” from Connell (1995) and others to describe these forms of emphasised masculine style as compensations for the hidden injuries of class and race that recuperate a sense of dignity. This style was something which bound them together and which defined them against those who they saw as both guilty of withholding respect from them and also undeserving of their respect. This gave them a very *personal* sense of respect fashioned through the negotiations of everyday life in *public* places. But to best understand the strategies they adopt, we need to unpack exactly what we mean by respect.

The nature of respect

As philosophers have argued, and as we can begin to discern from what these young men say, there are different types of respect, and we can see them operating in the discourse of these young men. There is respect granted to accomplishment, to extraordinary abilities, to social standing and to the moral worth of one’s character. All of these require mechanisms of recognition – of being “someone” or being “noticed”. Respect is, of course, evaluative, working around systems of the estimation and value of people and their actions. It is also therefore about processes, relations and institutions of social power (Dillon, 2003). Respect is a form of honourable recognition, but it is only valuable if it comes from those who you respect or who are recognised as significant – sometimes defined as your immediate friends and family, and sometimes as those whose social standing carries with it a broader reach.

Bourdieu, drawing on the anthropological literature, describes honour as a symbolic capital that exists through repute, or the representation that others have of it (1998, p.47). He focuses on honour as a reciprocal structure of challenge and riposte that entails recognition specifically among men and is experienced as an imperative to act in a particular way, according to a shared set of beliefs (2001, pp.44,48). Bourdieu is primarily concerned with the ways in which masculine domination is reproduced through the logic of honour – the way social relations of gendered power are *misrecognised* as personal traits and honourable behaviour in a broad social setting – and less concerned with the forms of *recognition* through which identities are lived in particular spaces and times. The comments of these young men demonstrate the ways honour – or in their words, respect – is articulated to ethnicity. They also demonstrate the varieties or diverse sources of respect.

As Bourdieu argues, honour – or acting honourably – “is inscribed in the body in the form of a set of seemingly natural dispositions, often visible in a particular way of sitting and standing, a tilt of the head, a bearing, a gait, bound up with a way of thinking and acting, an ethos” (2001, pp.48-49). Yet respect is not only achieved through accomplishment, standing or character: it is also granted to things we fear or consider dangerous (Dillon, 2003). This form of respect is also tied to physical attributes, like honour more generally; indeed, Bourdieu’s insight into the bodily dimensions of honour applies equally well to those aspects of the boys’ style we described in the early study.

The strategy for achieving respect through intimidation entails performances of exaggerated masculinity that demand attention, especially through “tests of identity” in which they are recognised by significant others – kids, police, shopkeepers – as a threat (McDonald, 1999, pp.129-130). As Polk argues, “contests of honour or reputation” can have dramatic consequences that make them central to male criminal behaviour and violence (1994, pp.168-169). Like other forms of youth sub-cultural activity they involve strategies of *visibility* that seem to challenge social hierarchies of respect and offer alternative codes which entail their own hierarchy of respect (McDonald, 1999, pp.145, 151).

As Albert Cohen (1955) argued many years ago, “delinquency” is a way of dealing with problems of adjustment. These are “chiefly status problems” because “certain children are denied status in the respectable society because they cannot meet the criteria of the respectable status system”; this, he stresses, is “not a fixed property of the person” but a problem of recognition, or “how he stands in somebody’s eyes” (1955, pp.121-123). We do not want to adopt Cohen’s language of delinquency to describe the young men we interviewed – perhaps Emler and Reicher’s (1995) notion of the “reputational project” underlying anti-social behaviour is a more pertinent description – but we do draw on his general point that marginalised subcultures provide criteria that allow for achievement of respect and status especially for those who experience social exclusion, and especially important to those who are making their transition into adulthood. They do not have the resources available to “mainstream” youth or to adults, so they make do with the forms of practice that generate and validate some claims to respect. McDowell (2003, p.225) recounts the same kind of tension between reputation and respectability in her study of young men in a region undergoing economic restructuring: their hardness excludes them from wider social respect but brings benefits among their peers.

We might say the causal relationship is the other way around: lack of social respect triggers strategies that compensate and recuperate a sense of respect. In the midst of the panic around “ethnic gang rape” (see Poynting, Noble, Tabar and Collins, 2004), New South Wales (NSW) Police Commissioner Moroney made several speeches about the importance of the “respect factor” and the need to teach fundamental values around respect and the role of families in maintaining social structures. Speaking explicitly in reference to the incidence of rape and sexual assault, Moroney bemoaned the loss of respect in society, especially towards women (Saunders, 2004, p.3). In a context where ethnicity has been tied to rape, the implicit message is that young men of Arab and Muslim background are the ones who have no respect for others. Two years later, following the Cronulla riots, the NSW state government introduced a “Respect and Responsibility” policy for schools (Fisher 2006, p.19). In the larger context this reinforces the sense that people of Arabic-speaking background have lost social respect.

This is even more sharply seen in the “deviant entrepreneuriality” Winslow (2001, pp.43-44) describes in his study of the conspicuous use of violence as a source of recognition amongst working-class men in a town experiencing de-industrialisation. For some, physical power and intimidation could be marketable assets, a career option, but more broadly it was fundamental as a means of maintaining honour and status within a complex local

economic, social and cultural hierarchy. Indeed, masculine violence is a way of accessing resources and forms of social power (Barker, 2005, p.81).

The “gang” members we interviewed in the 1990s, however, were not in this league: they were primarily adopting a macho style that garnered two forms of “attention”: sub-cultural capital within a group of friends and socially valuable recognition from adult authority (Collins, Noble, Poynting and Tabar, 2000, p.165). As Paul admitted, reflecting on his youthful behaviour, “SBF” was just a label that secured recognition within and beyond the group. But like the young men studied by McDowell and Winslow, these were forms of respect that relied on fear or a sense of threat because they had limited economic and cultural resources to draw upon. They therefore appropriated an essentialising myth of the physical prowess of Lebanese men: the Lebanese “use their hands”, unlike the ways other groups resort to weapons, they “fight hard” and are “strongly built” (Noble, Poynting and Tabar, 1999).

This is more than just the construction of identity, though. The fearsome respect sought through public performances of an ethnicised masculinity foregrounds two key issues: the problems of gaining recognition peculiar to the transition from adolescence to adulthood and the acquisition of a respect that traverses different domains (peers, family, school, and the wider social world). Accomplishment, family and religion were important to these young men, but refracted through the public displays of ethnicity that gained them some kind of purchase in the public world of school and street life.

From respect to respectability

Eight years on, respect is just as important to those we interviewed now as young adults in their mid-twenties. Respect is still tied up with notions of ethnicity and masculinity, and bound up in processes of recognition and relations of power, but with significant differences. Respect means “the world” to Paul: “I’ve always been a person that people have looked on me for advice, for direction, and it’s my duty to help these people”. George believes in the moral worth of his upbringing in “Lebanese culture”: we have close-knit families, we care for each other from the day we’re born “till the day we die. ... If someone’s sick we’re always there, as soon as someone gets older, we keep our parents with us, we look after our children, we educate them, we teach them respect and honesty and integrity”. There is a very strong “ethic of care” built into their familial, personal and community relations.

This linking of respect and cultural background entails the moral judgement of “Australian” society and the valorising of the homeland. Fundamental moral and social values are seen to be fostered by the cultural heritage they share, defined primarily around family and secondarily around religion. George believes that “Australian culture” is “too laid back, there’s less of a care for moral views and religious views. They are less caring”, their families “are more separate”. But George is adamant that there are things he likes about Australia, like the capacity to “accept people for who they are, don’t judge people”.

Respect still functions to maintain cohesion amongst friends: George and Paul see little of the other members of the SBF, but George explains that he continues to see Paul because

he is “a very honourable and honest person”. Abdul also said that what kept his current group of friends together was “respect”; you belonged because you were “a person of good character, who doesn’t lie, who’s trustworthy ... a lot of things branch off respect ... loyalty and trust and ... honesty: these are very important factors that I look in keeping up a friend”. For Hussein, respect had come because he had “done well, I’m not a criminal and I’ve got a good job. I’ve bought a house I get a lot of people that respect me for who I am, what I’ve done, what I’ve accomplished”. Respect derived from fear is markedly absent: accomplishment, character, good works and family values are much stronger.

Not only were these young men preoccupied with respect, they were eminently respectable. All of these young men had gone to university or TAFE and most now worked in businesses or in professional occupations: they were real estate and travel agents, small business owners, architectural designers, etc. Moreover, some had had or were still working several jobs to “get on”. Some continued to live at home with their parents, contributing to the household income, and sustaining the family as a corporate institution. Others had bought or were paying off their own homes, and a few had other properties. This contributed to their sense of accomplishment: achievements that melded family values with the dominant social ethos around property, work and independence. Part of this shift arises from the entry into adulthood when demands for contributing to economic and social well-being of the family become paramount and when definitions of identity become organised around jobs rather than peer groups and school.

Yet this sense of the respectability goes beyond the centrality of material well-being and career, for they saw their life and those around them in starkly moral terms. This was particularly significant for the Muslim men. Ahmed saw life as series of moral choices: “some take the good road, some take the bad”. This was manifest in particular choices about abstinence from alcohol, work, dealings with your parents and sexual codes (although he has had an “Aussie” girlfriend for 5 years!). He refuses to stay friends with people who he thinks are engaging in illegal or immoral activities. And he has a strong sense of personal conduct and appearances: “if you sit out on the street it makes you look like a troublemaker”. At first glance this seeming conservatism and avoidance of trouble appears to be in stark contrast to the brash boys we interviewed earlier, but this stance arises largely from his own experience and that of his friends being hassled by police for hanging about on the streets and looking like trouble. He recounted experiences of being followed and “treated like a criminal” by police during the moral panic around ‘Lebanese gangs’ in 1998. So now “we’d rather sit inside the house, make the neighbours happy, and make everyone else happy”. This social acquiescence is quite strategic in so far as it is the avoidance of social conflict in contrast to those tests of courage that need the possibility and sometimes actuality of conflict.

Respectability, of course, does carry connotations of moral and social conservatism and an attachment to largely middle-class notions of material prosperity. However, if we recognise that under this particular form respectability is “a mode of life conforming to and embodying notions of moral worth” (Dunier, 1992, p.65), then we can see how respectability is tied to the more fundamental search for respect but through a reliance on

particular dominant social conventions of worth. As these young men demonstrate a shift to a greater interiorisation of forms of social respect, they articulate key aspects of the social sources of esteem – work and so on, but see these in terms of the achievements that represent character and reputation.

These new strategies centre on a sense of moral worth premised on an essentialising of ethnic identity and social standing, but articulated through a sense of accomplishment at work, home and in the “community”, as well as through friendship groups. The shift is a matter of degree, of course: these modes existed in their earlier interviews, but now become more significant as fear-respect diminishes. Both moments reflect what we call, following Bourdieu, the problem of conversion – that is, how to deploy our accumulated cultural and social capitals and convert these into symbolic capital in other domains that has value outside one’s immediate locale. Further, in so far as the earlier strategies invert or challenge dominant conventions around conduct in public places, they can appear as politicised acts of resistance. The newer strategies, on the other hand, seem to affirm conventional codes and values, and, as a result, these young men appear as exemplars of an old-fashioned respectability.

Reputation, character and accomplishment

Sennett (2003) evocatively deconstructs the key dimensions of respect in contemporary western society and how these are understood in terms of character: the humiliation of dependence, a desire for control and the necessity of mutuality of recognition. These entail, Sennett argues, that we earn respect through self-development or accomplishment, care of the self and self-sufficiency, and the giving back to others. These young men demonstrate these aspects in various ways in fashioning their “reputational project”.

When asked if he had had any difficulty in getting his present business, an architectural design company, started, Paul described it in these terms:

Of course, definitely, for the first six to eight months I had no work. I did little things, bits and pieces, little carports or little extensions. But I was getting myself established and putting my foot in the door. Once I guess, when the word gets around, like you’re a good person, you’re reliable; basically you’re a hard worker. The news travels fast, and slowly but surely this business is growing and growing, and now we’ve got subcontractors.

Paul is clearly ambitious, proud of his success, eager to earn money and make his way in the world, but it is also clear that a sense of professional reputation and moral character is central to this process. He, like other interviewees, railed against greed for greed’s sake. As well as live successfully and comfortably, he wants to “help as many people as possible”. Further, Paul distances himself from the gang rapes and terrorist attacks – events that have shaped the lives of so many Arabs and Muslims in Australia in recent years – to assert a key principle in his life: “You’ve got to continue life and not let these people take over ... you’ve got to be a good person to society and have people look up to you”. He spells this out when we ask him what things are important to him: “Just being a good person, having

the right type of friends, having a good background for a person to rely on you for your advice. I look up to God for guidance.... Basically to be a good person in whatever you do, simple as that”.

This “ethic of care”, and a giving back to others, rarely gets captured in discussions of young men and their research for respect. This is partly because, as the existing literature has it, an “ethic of care” is generally deemed a female ethic; masculinity is more typically defined in terms of competition and power (Pateman, 1988). Such reductive perceptions of gendered oppositions often ignore the divergent forms of masculinity across classes and the existence of, for example, an ethic of care amongst working class men (Donaldson, 1991). This masculine ethic of care, defined primarily in relation to the family, is further complicated by the fact that, as Hopkins (2006) argues in relation to Muslim masculinities, the home is perceived as a feminine space and the normal tasks defined by attachment to that space – housework and childcare – are constructed as feminine activities. Moreover, some academic studies tend to put “reputation” (male) and “respectability” (female) into opposition: as Besson (1993) argues in her discussion of Afro-Caribbean women, these traits are gender specific but gender exclusive. Similarly, McDowell (2002) shows in her study of young English men that “strutting lads” also desire respectability and have domestic aspirations. But in so far as it conforms to hegemonic notions of masculinity and the sexual division of labour, it is very much a *patriarchal* ethic of care – a point to which we will return. Here strength is defined as strength of character, a moral strength, realised in meeting your responsibilities both in the home (McDowell, 2002) and in the public world of work and community.

If respectability embodies notions of moral worth, in practice this is defined against particular characteristics they disdain, and those that represent them: laziness, disrespect, lack of responsibility (Dunier, 1992). As George’s comments above show, his ethic of care is defined against the perception that “Aussies” are less caring, resulting in family fragmentation. Hussein talks about being a “strong” person in contrast to those who are “weak” and “two-faced” who may get “lost” between cultures. To “follow the right path” “comes back to respecting culture”. He too is concerned that people see him as a “good person” – and for him this is linked to his country of origin.

George talks about how his upbringing may have seemed restrictive when he was young, but as he got older, “you develop the understanding, you develop a personality, you know what’s right and wrong, you’re an adult, so they give you that freedom”. This allows him “to live life to the best of my ability”. “Helping people and working” are “the most important things” to George, to “be a constructive, decent member of society”. This inter-weaves narratives of self-development, essentialised cultural and familial values, social giving, character, accomplishment and moral worth. Abdul tells a similar story of maturation and transformation from being a “guy who likes to spend a lot of time with his friends and have fun, go out, work wasn’t a priority”. He wasn’t doing anything “constructive”: “as you start getting older, you go through this transition where you start waking up, you realise that money is very important. You need money in order to get things that you want in this life ... That way you don’t have to struggle”. Money gives you “security”.

These narratives of self-development entwine with stories of success and mobility. Some had come from backgrounds that, while not poor, were clearly difficult. Paul, who ran his own business, came from a family where his father was a factory worker while his mother stayed at home. He represents the classic example of the mythic “migrant drive” (Bullivant, 1988). We can recast this not as some innate ethnic pathology, nor even as the imperative of migration, but as a process of achieving recognition and respect via identity and reputational projects, interpersonal success, work, and faith, and so on. “Character” is the internalisation of the dynamics of migration, settlement and integration. This is particularly important for the second generation, which represents the point of tension, and often the bridge, between the migrant culture and the culture of the country of settlement. Through “character” these young men negotiate generational and social change.

Central to these ways these young men position themselves and articulate their perspectives on life is a sense of respect as positive appraisal rooted in an essentialised construction of their ethnicity. They all assert their pride in being Lebanese or Arab or Muslim or Christian, not just as a sense of ancestry but as a way of grounding a sense of their moral self. Paul talks about his visit to Lebanon several years ago as being very important to him:

One hundred percent Lebanese. I’m very proud to be Lebanese, the only reason being that I went to Lebanon last year and that has really confirmed my way of thinking. When I went to Lebanon and lived in the villages for two, three months, you’re really at rest. You feel peaceful, you can see where your grandparents have come from, the way they lived their life, the way they ate, the way they drank, the way they communicated with people. You’ve got the church in the middle of the village, and that’s the ideal position, or the ideal life that I would like to live my life and if I have a family, for them to grow up.”

He still loves Australia: “It’s given me so much. I accept the way of life here, and basically when I came back from Lebanon I appreciated Australia more because of its government, the way they do business, all that kind of stuff”. He described Lebanon as “day-by-day living” in contrast to the opportunities for a “secure future” in Australia if you work, save and invest.

Security is therefore an important term in relation to their sense of self and respect – whether it is drawn from professional reputation, the acquisition of money and property or a cultural essentialism. For several of the interviewees, their faith, whether it was Islam or Christianity, was what gave them an anchor or rooted their conduct, providing a kind of spiritual security, like Abdul.

The movement between strategic hybridity and essentialism is similar to that we saw when we interviewed these young men in the mid-1990s. They draw on elements from their sense of ethnic identity and from “Australian culture” as they need to. Importantly, they do not see this as a problem of insurmountable culture clash, or as being caught between two cultures. The construction of the parents is important here – parents, or the first generation, are often portrayed as admirably deficient. They are admirable in so far as they represent

immutable social values drawn from the cultural ancestry, but they are deficient in their lack of capital necessary to function in Australian society. This admirable deficiency allows the second generation to construct itself as a bridge between the migrant “community” and the culture of the country of settlement, because the deficiency of the parent rationalises the imperative of shifting and acts as a benchmark of the second generation’s capacity to shift. This shifting demonstrates the practical problem of the conversion of capitals, and how this allows them to move in and across different social fields.

Adjusting to different situations: the convertible reputation

Both the moments we have described here reflect the imperative, felt especially hard during the transition to adulthood, to deploy our accumulated cultural and social capitals and convert these into symbolic capital that has value outside one’s immediate locale in other fields. Bourdieu sees this primarily as a problem of conversion – but this suggests a singular moment that is relatively uni-linear: in reality, however, we constantly move across and between various domains during the course of a normal day. This is not simply an abstract problem but a decidedly practical challenge of social and economic survival. Paul boasts that he is able to deal with lots of different people in different circumstances, whatever their ethnicity, “you have to relate to them as Australian ... you’ve got to adjust to different situations”. He feels comfortable with the different groups he inhabits because “they’ve got full respect for me”. Hussein also sees the function of respect at work: “it’s all about trust. The people you work for have to trust you”. This demonstrates the necessarily convertible nature of reputation and character, and what others have decried as the “transposal” character of the habitus – its ability to change across historical and social contexts

A major shortcoming of their parents’ generation, as these young men see it, is their inability to move in to other social domains and their becoming fixated instead on their narrowly defined ethnic community. George is critical of the older generation precisely because it doesn’t take on those aspects of Australian society he admires. They have too many divisions, “there’s a lot of tension and hatred that goes back to ancient quarrels”. This could be experienced as a major life decision regarding direction: Ahmed felt so guilty about the opportunities that his hard-working parents had given him that he threw in his further education and went into the family business, hence limiting his capacity to accumulate convertible capitals.

This is not to say that these young men turned their backs on their community. The transposability they seek is paradoxically rooted in a strong sense of locale: for George, Punchbowl is “like a little village. You see people around and you say ‘hi’ to everybody”. This guarantees a greater degree of social agency. Paul talks of having “direction” both in business and his religious attachments: “you can do anything you want in life, as long as it’s the right path”. All talk enthusiastically about what they will do in the future and what they hope it will bring. On the other hand, they can be quite careful about where they go, because they may experience the kinds of disrespect they wish to avoid: George talks about not going to certain suburbs in southern Sydney where there is “a majority of Australians, and we feel like we’re outcast, because they look at us differently”. Like all agency it is situated and circumscribed by broader social relations of power that make their search for

respect even more acute. Several complain of what we might call institutional disrespect shown by media, employers, and governments and their bureaucracies.

George complains of the stereotyping of Lebanese people as criminals because this reflects on his character, achievements and capacities: “When they see a young man like myself, or my father, with so much properties and assets and money they think it’s made from other sources, other than hard work”. George recounts several such experiences, and complains that “I feel degraded, I feel little” even though he has done nothing wrong. Similarly, the equation of terrorism with Arabs also “degrades” him, “because I’m an honest person, I don’t believe in killing...I respect every person, I’m very humanitarian. Every person is a human being, I respect them for who they are, what they do” In contrast he resents the “fear” he sees in people’s eyes because of their incorrect perceptions of Arabs and Muslims. Ironically, he was a member of the group that gained a sense of self-respect when they called themselves the SBF, or someone to fear. Ahmed similarly feels disrespected by the media portrayals of Muslims as terrorists and rapists while he feels respected by friends, family and the local community. But, he says, you just have to “accept it ... what can you do?” Similarly, one of the boys anglicised his name in order to minimise automatic rejections when he applied for jobs. Abdul complained of the arbitrary raids by the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation and federal police in his neighbourhood that seemed to threaten the democracy and freedom of speech he valued in Australian society.

It would be easy to dismiss these young men’s newfound respectability as a retreat into an acquiescent conservatism, but we hope this analysis so far suggests it is more complicated than that. There is a conservatism here, of course: not only is their ethic of care structured around conventional constructions of male and female responsibilities and capacities, their gender politics more broadly are deeply patriarchal. The friendship patterns of these young men were overwhelmingly male-orientated; indeed, several (especially the Muslim young men) believed that men and women could not be close friends. Two of the young men, even more problematically, believed that the victims of an infamous gang rape (which was portrayed as an “ethnic” problem by the media – see Poynting, Noble, Tabar and Collins, 2004) are partly at fault (in contrast to the opinions expressed in an earlier chapter). They must have known, they reasoned, what they were letting themselves in for and must take responsibility for what happened. Another young man believed that men and women could not be friends because they were so different and sex would always intervene.

Responsibility, unsurprisingly, is a key term in their narratives alongside respect, and responsibility has become a central category in a range of right-wing agendas for dismantling the welfare system and legitimating a “user pays” ethos (Everingham, 2003). Abdul and Ahmed talk, for example, of having responsibilities that required them to be “grown up”. I would argue that the interweaving of personal experience of the transition to adulthood and the social and political contexts that we live in shifts these young men’s search for respect from strategies of visibility and fear (achieved via a performance of exaggerated masculinity) to a strategy of benevolent paternalism, a performance of the good father whose moral decency is deeply conservative. Indeed, some talk of taking on responsibilities at home (sometimes in the absence of their father) protecting their mother

and siblings. We've seen how Paul adopts the demeanour of the community elder at the ripe old age of 24, giving advice and direction to others. Here, responsibility is deeply enmeshed with the stakes of respect and respectability, and entails transformations of ethnic capital and habitus within the constraints of their specific circumstances.

Conclusion

Ten years ago, when one of our informants complained that the teachers at his school did not treat him and his friends with respect – “they don't give you a face” – he was simply articulating the struggle for recognition that humans engage in to make their lives habitable. Honneth (1995) argues that realising oneself as autonomous depends on the development of self-confidence, self-respect and self-esteem that can only be acquired intersubjectively through recognition by others we recognise. These are acquired through three domains of relationship – relations of love (family and friendship), legally instituted relations of respect (civil society) and relations of solidarity (the state).

Central to this is the garnering of “ontological security”, the trust and confidence we have in the continuity of our selves, others and the world around us (Giddens, 1990). Recognition is fundamental to our quest for ontological security in the perseverance of our being and to our capacities for agency. It is not just overt forms of racism and discrimination that are direct challenges to that sense of security, because the daily experience of “uncivil attention” erodes our capacity to experience ourselves as “fully human”, to be comfortable, to belong; these are constant reminders of our “inadequate” existence (Noble, 2005). Thus there are not simply logics of inclusion and exclusion, but of differentiation and inferiorisation (Wieviorka, 1995) to be accounted for.

These young men are involved not simply in a struggle between resistance and acquiescence, but in a struggle to enhance their capacity to be recognised, felt in acute ways by the second generation. They draw on their skills in traversability to increase the ways or forms in which recognition can occur, increasing the number of people and institutions that will recognise them. They are maximising the physical and symbolic resources they have to act in the world. These resources provide a basis for functioning in a range of sites and social domains, extending a sense of control and autonomy, crucial to their capacity to manage their lifeworlds and the social relations of power in which they find themselves.

Everyday racism and the uncivil regulation of ethnic capital

We have argued in this book that the diasporic experiences of Lebanese background Australians can be fruitfully explored by using Bourdieu's model of the various forms of capital people accumulate, exchange and employ to sustain their positions in the social fields in which they move, but principally in what we have called the field of ethnicity. We suggested, for example, that community leaders accumulate particular types of capital that have significance within their respective communities, and that many use their capital and the status it offers them within their specific communities to participate in wider political processes. In becoming "ethnic leaders" – that is, leaders who are recognised outside their specific constituencies – they attempt to convert their localised forms of capital into a broader form of symbolic capital. With this symbolic capital they can then claim to the party alliances into which they have been enrolled that they represent certain groups as well as claim to their constituencies that they have access to party political power as a result of their status as ethnic leaders, producing particular, paradoxical allegiances. Yet the forms of capital that Australians of Lebanese background possess are not always accrued for the purpose of acquiring leadership roles, nor for converting into symbolic capital in the political field. The discussions of civic and private life throughout this book demonstrate how the symbolic capital accumulated around ethnicity relates to a much wider array of networks and relationships.

Lalich (2003) argues that migrants develop "ethnic community capital" – the social and physical infrastructure needed to address the economic, cultural, welfare, recreational and religious needs not met by mainstream society – but adds that this capital has consequences and uses beyond the internal dynamics and needs of cultural maintenance. Lalich, however, construes this primarily in terms of the "ethnicity" of the community at stake. That is, he sees it primarily as a mechanism for community-building which relates to internal processes. We have argued here, however, that an ethnicity is not given, but is created in the country of settlement out of the resources brought and transformed in the process of migration and settlement. The formation of this communal identity and its attendant organisations is not a discrete entity, but exists within a field of ethnicity in Australia, so relates to other "ethnicities" as well as to national identities in the wider political and social fields. Yet, as we have suggested in the previous chapter, migrants and their children move across other domains of social life, prompting the problem of the consequence of ethnic capital in other fields.

The deployment of any form of capital from one social field to another involves problems of conversion, or how that capital is recognised and valued in a domain different from that in which it was accumulated. As we saw in studying the lived experiences of the young men we first spoke with in the mid-1990s, the conversion of specific capital around Lebanese identity also poses problems of conversion in everyday life, especially as young people enter into adult responsibilities and are forced to negotiate the differing demands of family and community on the one hand, and modes of integration into the institutions and relations of the wider array of social fields in contemporary Australia on the other.

In other words, the forms of capital that identify people as “Lebanese” have functions, intended or otherwise, outside the specific field of the Lebanese communities in which they have value. Further, the processes of conversion embedded in the modes of integration that Lebanese Australians undergo to participate across numerous social sites entail relations of recognition by and negotiation with others – with both dominant social groups and institutions and with a vast array of “ordinary” Australians. These relations of recognition shape the extent to which Lebanese Australians can feel included – or not – in the wider experience of national belonging in Australia. In this chapter we look at the incidence of racial vilification experienced by Australians of Arab and Muslim background since September 11, 2001, to consider the ways that the physical forms of capital are recognised and valorised with Australian civil society, as part of the larger issue of the valorisation of “ethnic capital” within the field of national belonging. As we have seen in the previous chapter, the social practices in focus here represent the ways in which the attempts by migrants and their children to insert and locate themselves in Australian society are often policed and checked as part of the wider processes of the surveillance of the space of national belonging.

It is important to note that participants included Australians from a range of Arabic-speaking and Muslim backgrounds – not just people of Lebanese heritage. As we have earlier suggested, being Lebanese in Australia means being situated in a series of articulated, overlapping and contradictory positions, shaped by homeland, faith, region and appearance, among other things. One of the common experiences of migrants in Australia is that they are constantly “*mis*recognised” – understood here not in Bourdieu’s sense, but in the more quotidian sense of being perceived in ways out of their control. Central to a politics of recognition is the desire to be recognised in the “terms in which we wish to be taken” (Yar, 2004, p.65). Racism in its various forms and degrees, of course, is a conflict over the terms in which we perceive and are perceived. In *Bin Laden in the Suburbs* (2004, Chapter 1) we used the concept of “the Arab other” to capture the ways in which people of diverse national, linguistic, geo-political and religious backgrounds have been lumped together as though they represented and shared a single cultural orientation and could be seen as a coherent category. This has real and dramatic consequences: during the increase in attacks on people of Muslim and Arabic-speaking backgrounds, others who are perceived to be the same, whether they be Sikhs or Brazilians – came in for the same treatment. It is especially important then to understand the experiences of racism amongst Lebanese Australians in terms of the patterns of racism towards a range of groups seen as consanguineous.

Understanding Everyday Racism

Bourdieu was typically more interested in analysing the accumulation of the various species of capital in terms of those social groups with relatively substantial forms of social power within a given field, or within the field of power (that is, the space of relations of force between different kinds of capital), than in marginalised groups. Furthermore, his analysis focused on the role of the state as having a special role in the “exchange rate” between these different forms of capital, or their conversion from one field to another (Bourdieu, 1998, pp.34, 45), rather than on these processes in civil society. Bourdieu occasionally offers glimpses into the position of the dominated – such as when he talks about the “negative symbolic capital” of the Arab or the Turk in contemporary Europe, this “most cruel” and unequal of all distributions of symbolic capital because it entails systems of “social importance and of reasons for living” (Bourdieu, 2000, p.241). Yet these comments are enigmatic rather than sustained analyses. Similarly, the various pieces by Bourdieu and his colleagues in *The Weight of the World* provide empirically rich illustrations of social suffering, but little elaboration of a theoretical framework or analysis. In contrast, his discussion of ethnicity in *Language and Symbolic Power* (1991) is an interesting but abstract discussion of identity as a struggle over classification and the performative nature of representations of ethnic difference, with no empirical grounding. Nevertheless, his framework suggests some productive insights into the functions of “ethnic capital” in everyday life.

Essed’s (1991) analysis of “everyday racism” focuses on the ways racism is expressed in everyday encounters but, in contrast to Bourdieu’s framework, draws on discourse analysis and cognitive sociology. She construes racism not just as a structure or an ideology per se but as a process to counter what she sees as the false separation between “individual” and institutional racism. She therefore defines everyday racism as a complex of cognitions and actions that routinely reproduces larger structures of racial domination in everyday life (1991, p.39). Alongside the discussion of experiences of black women regarding the labour market, housing and education, Essed analyses the practices of marginalisation that punctuate their daily lives: the overemphasis on ethnic difference, the attributions of incompetence, passive tolerance, humiliation and rudeness, patronising behaviour, and so on (1991, pp.160-172). Hopkins (2004) recounts the experiences of exclusion amongst young Muslim men in Scotland based on very visible signifiers of difference. In an even more visceral evocation of the racism of daily life amongst migrants in France, Sayad (1999, p.23) describes the sensuous dimensions of communal tensions, the “new kind of neighbourhood conflict” around different “smells” and “noises”, through which migrants comprehend themselves as “nuisances” and experience social suffering.

Everyday experiences of ethnicity and racism such as these bring into sharper focus than the “leaders” example the issue of the “convertibility problem” of Bourdieu’s notions of capital and field theory (Calhoun, 1995, p.139): that is, the ways in which capital from one field is recognised and converted into capital in another field. If the forms of identification central to the practices of what is called the “Lebanese community” are configured as forms of capital meaningful in this field, then we need to examine how they are recognised in the wider “community”, and how they shape the possessor’s ability to participate in this

wider field. Since these practices are always struggles over the definition of social reality (Bourdieu, 1991, p.224; Couldry, 2003), they also contribute to the formation of a sense of national belonging, or exclusion from it, in contemporary Australia: a sense of who belongs, and how.

Living with Racism

Just as in the period during the 1991 Gulf War (HREOC, 1991), the terrorist attacks in the United States on September 11, 2001 unleashed in Australia a spate of racially based attacks on Australians of Arab and Muslim background (*Daily Telegraph*, 2001, p.13; HREOC, 2004). These were not isolated events but were echoed in further waves (Morris, 2003, p.21; Delaney and Banham, 2004, p.8;), the result of both long-term anxieties about the growing presence of Islam in Australia (Dunn, 2001), as well as a spiralling moral panic towards the “Arab Other” in contemporary Australian society that had arisen around a series of media moments: “ethnic gangs”, the refugee crisis and the terrorist attacks in America and Indonesia (Poynting et al., 2004). As part of the broader *Isma* (‘Listen’) project conducted by the Human Rights and Equal Opportunities Commission (HREOC) (2004), two of the authors completed a study of experiences of racial vilifications amongst Arab and Muslim Australians in New South Wales (NSW) and Victoria in 2003. The first stage was a self-administered survey, completed by 186 respondents, which had been distributed to individuals and through religious and community organisations in Sydney and Melbourne. The questionnaire asked if people – or their communities – had experienced any racist abuse or violence since September 11, 2001, requested details of those incidents and their reactions to them, and asked whether they reported these incidents. The survey was followed by face-to-face interviews with respondents who indicated their willingness for further participation. Of the 34 interviews that took place in Sydney and Melbourne, 26 were with women (reflecting a similar proportion in the survey). The ages of interviewees ranged from 17 to 57, and the mean age of the sample – 28 – was the same as for the survey. The interviewees reflected various socio-economic levels and came from a variety of religious denominations.

The survey confirmed the anecdotal and media evidence of an upswing in incidents of racial vilification. Two-thirds of the sample said they had experienced increased racism since September 11, 2001, while 93% expressed the belief that there had been an increase in racism against their ethnic or religious community. The incidents recounted ranged widely: seemingly minor incidents of social incivility, discrimination at work and in other institutions, media stereotyping, verbal abuse and harassment, threats of violence and sexual assault, stalking, actual physical assault (such as veil-tearing and stabbing), property damage, and so on. Respondents listed many sites where they experienced racism – on the streets, through the media, in shopping malls, on the road or on public transport, in educational institutions, at work, in leisure spaces, and in government offices. Women and Muslims were more likely to report that they had experienced increased racism. Only a tiny number of respondents reported the incident: one-third of those who did not report it thought that nothing would come of it; another third were afraid of the consequences if they did (Poynting and Noble, 2004).

Most incidents involved one or two perpetrators; but some interviewees spoke of harassment by larger groups. Perpetrators were three times more likely to be male than female. Significantly, over 70% of those survey respondents who had experienced racism identified the perpetrators as “Australian”, “Aussies”, “Anglo”, “Anglo-Saxon”, “Anglo-Australia”, “English” (or something similar), or “white”, Caucasian, and the like. This helps explain how and why some incidents with little or no explicit racist content are recognised as racism. As Essed (1991, p.74) argues, most victims develop a sophisticated comprehension of the nature of racism, and understand the ways in which certain, offensive and rude behaviours – or even simple expressions of social distance – are implicit reactions to their cultural difference. This comprehension is based both on many years’ experience personal experience and an awareness of the social and political contexts in which these actions occur.

When asked what they thought were the reasons for others attacking them, participants had little doubt as to the centrality of their cultural difference. While these could sometimes be unambiguous aspects (such as the wearing of the *hijab*), however, they frequently voiced a mix of racial, ethnic and religious factors, and often even conflated these:

“I wasn’t wearing any particular religious or cultural dress, however my appearance is clearly that of a Middle Easterner.”

“Because of Arabic, Muslim identity.”

“Because of my appearance and identity as a Muslim.”

“Speaking Arabic in a public place.”

“Lack of understanding about the culture and religion.”

“Wearing a beard and having dark hair and eyes.”

“I look Lebanese.”

“Colour and religion.”

“Because I identified myself as Lebanese and supported a culture of people struggling, ie Palestinian and refugees.”

These reflect a range of aspects that refer to the visibility of cultural difference – phenotypical aspects, issues of cultural presentation or dress (some of which are specific to a religious faith) and language – and link these to broader claims to an ethnic or religious identity. Some respondents simply said “Most of the above”, given that the questionnaire had listed a variety of possible reasons. In other words, these categories are collapsed into a general sense of difference that is implicitly an expression of difference to an unstated white, Anglo-Australian-ness. These relate to what Shilling (1992), following Bourdieu, calls physical capital, the embodied forms of capital that have value within a particular field. Yet these forms of identification, which mark these Australians as belonging to a particular field of ethnic community, are also what sets them apart visually from white, Anglo-Australian citizens.

Experiences of Everyday Racism

The most frequently recounted experience is best described as social incivility – people being verbally abusive or exhibiting behaviours that are perceived by the recipients as rude

and insulting. The frequency of the experience of social incivility was expressed by Sabah, a young female Muslim university student of second-generation Lebanese background who told of many incidents “when people give you dirties [looks], or you feel unwelcome, or how people act towards you”. She recounted a typical experience:

There are many incidents, but the most recent was...I was around Central Station, I was going home in the afternoon. What happened, I heard some guy saying, ‘Oh terrorist, oh terrorist!’, and I just ignored him and walked off. I think it was adults, and they were males; they were standing by in Central Station.

Her experience contains elements often found in other incidents – it was in a public place involving unknown male perpetrators – but it is also interesting because it reflects a significant proportion of incidents which make explicit reference to the perceived links between international terrorism, especially since 2001, and the cultural background of the victim. Also interesting is the reaction of the young woman, whose disregard suggests this is such a typical experience of her daily life that it does not warrant a response. Apart from telling her friend, the idea of making a formal complaint does not arise.

Nada, a 39 year-old Lebanese-born community worker, recounted being followed in her car by a man making obscene hand gestures. He called her a “bloody wog”, and she felt intimidated and humiliated. Nada had no doubt that she was being vilified because she was wearing the veil. She did report the matter to the local police, but they said they were unable to do anything, as she had not noted the number plate of the car. This was a common frustration, both among those who reported vilification by strangers and those who, precisely because they *were* strangers, did not report the incidents. Several of Nada’s community work clients, she said, had also reported a man in the car alongside in a shopping centre carpark who had called them “wogs” and said, ‘Go back to your country! What are you doing here? We don’t want to see you here with your veil.’

Some of these events have a clear origin in recent international and local events, or involve a clear linking, however spurious, of local citizens of Arab or Muslim background with those events. For example, the “terrorist” and “rapist” taunts quoted above were echoed in the accounts given by other interviewees. Alya described a number of incidents on the local freeway, including one where a young man in a car, “got his hand pretending to be a gun, and just went, bang, like he was going to shoot me in the head.... He just made his little gestures, I’m going to shoot you in the head, and then away he went.” She also described another incident in which a man sat next to her in a shopping centre: “He was very close to me, he kind of had his face centimetres from my face, and really looking at me... and he said, you know, [in a] really heavy accent, ‘What you do here?’ I said ‘Excuse me?’ and he was reeking of alcohol, he said ‘You got bomb?’”

As Phillips and Smith (2003) point out, commonplace incivility has a long-standing history in social theory, but we have seen a heightening of concern around the perceived erosion of civic engagement (voiced strongly in the work of Robert Putnam). In this work incivility is often seen as an expression of social fragmentation, but not so clearly conceived as an

active response to these strains. It is perceived as symptomatic of social complexity and alienation, a collective withdrawal with a resulting loss of social capital rather than, as we shall suggest, a more active attempt to negativise difference and the unfamiliar. Moreover, they can be quite *aggressive* forms of negativising ethnic and cultural difference.

In contrast to what many would see as relatively minor experiences of name-calling and so on, was the series of incidents in the life of another young woman and her family. Amal was a 17 year-old school student of second-generation Lebanese background. She told of a horrific series of incidents beginning with being hit on the tram and having her “scarf” pulled off by a young man and his female companion, who also verbally abused her. The assailants lived in the same neighbourhood; the attacks continued and escalated. Amal reported that the young man’s mother struck her during a subsequent encounter, and that she was later threatened by some of the original assailants’ associates, a group of some ten young people, boys and girls, who were carrying baseball bats as weapons. Amal recounted that she and her brother were later waylaid after school by the parents of the teenage assailants. The father shouted at Amal, “I would not leave you till Osama Bin Laden dies; this is going to constantly happen to you till you die.” He punched in the face a young male bystander at the tram stop (also an Arab Muslim) who intervened to defend Amal; the young man later needed six sutures in his lip. After having Amal’s brother in a stranglehold, the perpetrator cut his neck with a Stanley knife, and Amal’s hand was also lacerated. Amal recounted further incidents where abusive phone calls were received, a brick was thrown through her house window, a petrol fire was set in her front yard, and young men with a club attacked her car. Much of her story has been documented with a community organisation, whose community worker helped Amal to secure an apprehended violence order and ultimately, when the attacks continued, assisted her and her family to move house.

In Amal’s experience, the police “didn’t really treat the situation as if it was serious”. When she reported the beating and stabbing incident by phone, she was told to contact a particular police station, which referred her on to a second, which referred her on to a third. “I told my story to so many police officers in different stations, and they go, ‘Oh, we can’t do much because we don’t know their details...we don’t know this...we don’t know that.’” Despite her being able to identify the perpetrators from school photographs with the assistance of the principal, no charges were ever laid, according to Amal.

Amal said she missed school for 50 days in late 2001, since she was too afraid to take the tram to school and had no other form of transport. “I would be scared just to leave the house. I would be scared to do things on my own. I wouldn’t sleep at night; I wouldn’t sleep for two or three days. I would sleep in the day and stay up in the night.” She had to have psychiatric treatment because of the trauma.

Jamila, a young Australian-born Muslim of Indonesian background is married to an Anglo-Australian man who has converted to Islam. She used to wear what she called the “normal” *hijab*. Since she was abused and threatened in a train on her way to work, she had given up her job, and at the time of interview wore the full burqa in public places,

and was contemplating emigration to Indonesia.

It was partly that incident and then a lot of other things that happened in my life that made me decide to cover my face, so I became a full – *purdah* – covered woman. That was one of the incidents that made me decide maybe work is not for me. It's not only that ... I decided I wanted to go back to school, educate myself a bit better, so that I could combat far worse incidents.

Latifah, a 25 year-old midwife, born in Australia of Lebanese background, recounted:

I was with my sisters and friends at the beach.... Two guys come past and started, 'cause I wear the scarf, and some of my friends did, some didn't, and they came up, and they were going 'get that f-ing thing off your head, look at it flapping in the wind, I want to come and rip it off.' They were swearing their heads off at us, and we got really scared.... We didn't say anything to them, we just ignored them, and they came up and they were swearing and threatening to rip our scarves off, and hitting us.

A Muslim woman in her forties reported threatening letters written to her ethnic community organisation. Since the letters were anonymous, it proved difficult to take any action. The effect was traumatic: the woman was afraid to leave her home alone, even to do the shopping. One of the letters, headed "Australians Against Arabs" said:

F---ing Lebanese are terrorising our beautiful city of Sydney. You c---s are problematic. As we mentioned last time, our aim is to protect innocent Australians from those f---ing Lebanese ...we will get rid of Lebanese from our streets. Just remember that you are numbered and you (sic) number will be coming up sooner than later. F--- off!

The ideological themes of "Lebanese terrorising Sydney", or of women being oppressed by Muslim men, of the *hijab* being an affront in a "Christian country" or a civilised society, and the like, have been circulating for several years in the popular media, especially the tabloid press and commercial talkback radio (Anti-Discrimination Board of NSW, 2003). Many of our respondents saw such media vilification as inciting the very racial hatred they were suffering. For instance, Zahra (a twenty-something professional woman of second-generation Lebanese background) talked about the:

media portrayal of Muslims, and situations where we've been portrayed unfairly, and in a very biased way.... One that comes to memory, is speaking to [a commercial talkback compere] on the radio. He said some really nasty things ... making allegations on the Muslim community, just general things that you hear everywhere I guess, all allegations and nothing more.... Everywhere I look I've been seeing things that offend me, things that upset me, things that basically make me unproductive in the work force because they upset me to that extent.

Rozalb, an Afghani Farsi-speaker tertiary student and retail worker in her early twenties who only recently began wearing the *hijab*, complained that she could no longer go for walks or runs for fear of harassment:

In the incidence of racism ... on a day to day basis, when you look at how you're being portrayed in the media, people have a stigma towards you.... There's no specific incident where I can say someone has done something, but ... people look at you, or act towards you, or behave towards you in a way that you know that it makes them feel uncomfortable around you.

Latifah, when referring to the assault on her and her friends on the beach because they were wearing "the scarf", replied to the question, "Do you have any idea why those boys did that?" by referring to the media:

From what I can think, they obviously have views about Muslims. They might not know that you're Muslim, women that wear the scarf, they might just look at us as bad people. If you look at the media, and everywhere these days, Muslims are portrayed in a negative way, and I can understand why that happens as well. They obviously have a very negative view about Muslims and Muslim women in particular. They obviously felt powerful or something, 'cause they felt that they could speak like that to us, and do all that, and no one would do anything to them.

Jamila explained how her being insulted and menaced on a Melbourne train by two men was directly related to a commercial current affairs television program the night before about gang rapes in Sydney and the purported endemic violence and misogyny of Muslim youth. During the offensive behaviour, the men spoke specifically of these matters.

Khaled, a young professional of Bangladeshi background in his mid-twenties, talked of the media "crushing" his painstaking personal attempts at good public relations on behalf of his religion:

Post-September 11, there was a barrage of questions from people that I work with, about, 'Who are you guys? Are you all terrorists?' There was that idea in a lot of people, maybe because of the media, and because of what was published around the world.... A lot of effort from my side, and a lot of understanding from theirs as well, we've got to a point where my close friends who are not Muslims, they do understand where I'm coming from.... It took a while to get that idea, and get that image across. The media comes in and basically barrages everything that we've built up on, and crushed everything, and we had to work at it, and rebuild that image.

Inaas, an Indonesian-born immigrant in her late thirties, spoke of:

just feeling very sad because everything I do, they don't know me, but it makes me feel bad, and more and more when we're looking at TV. Everything ... happen

[sic] because of Muslim, because of Muslim.... Our position in here becomes much worse, and worse, and worse.

Several interviewees recounted experiences which they believed exhibited racism prevalent in particular institutions. Zahra talked about how her younger brother was held unlawfully by police during protests against the war in Iraq: “I was upset because I believe that had my brother been white he would not have been held unlawfully for that many hours in the city”. When one of her colleagues at work overheard her complaining on the phone about what had happened, this had repercussions for her working relations within her own institution: “The harassment I received from work, it was bloody endless”.

Ameera, a European-background Muslim woman in her forties, complained of harassing and vexatious ethno-religious profiling by Australian customs and immigration officials, on return from a trip to Indonesia. She felt that it was directly “a result of September 11”, and recalled that she found it “really invasive” that they “went through personal documentation”.

A number of interviewees complained of indiscriminate profiling of their co-religionists by police and security services. Murshid, a Muslim of Indonesian background (and husband of Ameera) makes the point that these are the very same police to whom racist attacks are to be reported:

Like last time when I come to the mosque, I find the police is inside searching, when there's nobody there, they're thinking there is a bomb there, we're making bombs. There is already, if my wife she goes and complains to the police about little things like that, I don't think so, the police would go and listen to her.

Hamzeh, a twenty-year-old Australian-born security guard of Lebanese background, told of being pursued and pulled over by six police in three cars while driving to Friday prayers. They hailed him by loudspeaker, directed him to get out of the car, and subjected him and the car to a search for some forty minutes. One officer had his hand on his gun the whole time. “He was really, really arrogant. ‘Why are you here, why are you wearing that beard, where are you going?’ I go, ‘I’m going to the mosque.’ He goes to me, ‘what the f--- are you going to do there?’ Hamzeh made the same point that it was fruitless to complain about such harassment: ‘Complain to who? Go down to the police station and tell them that one of your officers was speaking to me in such a manner?’

The uncivil regulation of ethnic capital

The initial, noteworthy feature of these experiences is their pervasive and “ordinary” nature, both in terms of being routine, and as experiences that occur across social spaces – a kind of commonplaceness found in the literature on social incivility (Phillips and Smith, 2006). What this commonplaceness might underplay, however, is the ways in which incivility can be a highly “motivated” and intentional action for negativising and regulating ethnic and cultural difference. But these are not just individual or “personal” experiences, because

these actions are validated either by other citizens or by various institutions, and especially those of the state. Such a network of actions and reactions locate these experiences in a broader space of national belonging, and the peculiar place of ethnicity. Consequently, these experiences illustrate the issue of the conversion of the physical capital of ethnicity into the symbolic capital of national (un)belonging, and the intersection of issues of nation, ethnicity, class and gender. But they also demonstrate the significance of the habitus: the very physical nature of categories of belonging and the embodied, affective practices through which difference is included or excluded in the space of national belonging.

As we can see already, the interviews evince not simply a range of different experiences of vilification around ethnicity and religion, they also demonstrate that these experiences occur in a variety of social and physical environments. They most typically occur on the street, at the shops, around public transport, and so on, but they can also occur in an array of social institutions – work, school, the police station and government organisations. The pervasive and regular nature of these experiences suggest that for many people of Arabic-speaking or Muslim background, contemporary Australia constitutes a landscape of fear and incivility, where any place at any time could be the basis of an experience of discrimination or abuse. These may be trivial name-calling or threats of physical violence, but they punctuate the everyday lives of many of those of Arabic-speaking or Muslim background. As a pervasive experience of everyday life, however, they also function as a constant reminder of not belonging.

Khaled and his friends were subjected to shouted racist abuse and pelted with beer by a group of young men at the cricket ground, when they tried to find place for prayers. “The f-word was said a few times, also about things like, ‘Go home; you’re not welcome here’”. Sabah’s experiences of being abused for being a “terrorist” occurred around Central Station in Sydney. Jamila, a 26 year-old Australian-born university student was on a commuter train in Melbourne when she experienced abuse of “Mussos” from two men in their late twenties, including implied threats of sexual violence. None of the onlookers intervened. Alya described a number of events on a freeway in Melbourne. Nada and others recounted incidents of racial vilification on the road and in carparks. Alya describes one encounter, while she was in her car, of three young “Aussie” men in a truck: “There were three other kids with me, all in *hijab*, **the women, obviously girls, in hijab**. They were having a little bit of a go at us, doing silly things with the car, basically trying to intimidate ... I couldn’t hear what they were saying, but laughing, and they got a cloth and put it around their head, trying to make fun of us”. Fairuz and many others experienced racist incivility in shopping centres. Aladdin reports an attack by an “Australian” woman on his 12 year-old daughter, his wife and her stepmother in a Melbourne suburban shopping centre. The woman was “aggressive with them and was swearing at them ‘bloody Muslims’” and “tried to remove the scarf from her [the wife’s] head”. She hit the stepmother and broke her front teeth.

As well as very open public spaces being sites of harassment, institutional settings, including those that espouse an ethic of care and tolerance such as schools, can harbour antagonisms. Bilal, a 26 year-old teacher of second-generation Lebanese background, described an ongoing series of difficulties he had at the school where he was employed on a short-term

basis. He attempted to facilitate daily prayers for Muslim students in the school (where a majority were Muslim) but was refused for what he saw as spurious reasons. He also saw discriminatory practice by the school, which allowed Christian speakers to address the assembly and to hand out bibles. In this environment, he also witnessed a lack of respect and rudeness towards Muslims. In other words, certain forms of religiosity were esteemed in this institution; others were not.

Zahra believed that she would “never be given a promotion” because of her religious and cultural background:

With the workforce you're fine, if you don't identify yourself as an Arab or a Muslim, but for me, I don't wear the veil, but people can tell from my actions that I am a Muslim. When I have to get leave for Ramadan, or when they overhear me on a phone call ... that's how they identify my values and everything.... It's like you're censored, because the only time being a Muslim and an Arab is not an issue in the workforce is when you lie about your identity, or you try and hide it to the point where it's not so obvious.

She described in detail an ongoing experience of surveillance emanating from one member of her firm:

He collects things, like if I do make a personal call or anything like that, he'll collect that information and pass it on to other managers who he's closely linked to. They're male friends, white Anglo-Saxon males; they began the job at the same time. Basically, he passes on a lot of personal detail about me, and anything I may do during work hours, so it's made to look like there's a lot going on, when really I'm being just as productive as anyone else. You've got other people at work checking what time the rugby starts, and that's called normal.... Several times I had managers ... saying, 'Are you sure you really want to be here?' I believe it's one of the reasons that I've been pressured to resign from my current job.

This surveillance is partly structured by what is deemed as “normal” – read Anglo-Australian – collegial activity.

Most interviewees who experienced discrimination or racism at work – from co-workers or clients – were loath to complain, for fear of it endangering their employment. One professional man in his twenties, of Bangladeshi background, was considering changing his name, so he could not be identified as Muslim:

I have to go out to a lot of client sites, meet a lot of new people, and ... they even make comments, 'Oh, [Khaled], it's you guys blowing up things around the world.' They associate so much with a name.... Just recently I was applying for a job, and I sort of feel scared putting my name down on the résumé, thinking 'Jeez, is this going to be looked at as a no-no? What are they going to associate with that name?' ... To contemplate thinking about changing the name, it did hurt me.

Such pressures to assimilate embody the problems of conversion for those migrant Australians whose cultural difference shapes their existence as citizens. These spaces of fear and incivility also become landscapes of exclusion because they define not just what but who is acceptable. Racial vilification, by its nature, emphasises a sense of cultural difference, as we have seen above, but this sense of difference is also a sense of not belonging. Alya encapsulates this when she talks about little encounters that produce this sense: “Incidents, like ‘go on, get a move on ... in this country we do things like this’, ‘you don’t belong in this country, go home’....It’s just knowing that people will judge you for things that are totally outside of your control, and again not feeling like I belong to this land that I call my home”.

The collective devalorisation of ethnic capital

Many reasons were given by respondents as to why they did not report incidents, but one significant reason was the perception that this racism was socially and politically acceptable both amongst other Australians and core institutions. Jamila, subjected to racial vilification on a commuter train, said:

What was upsetting to me was the fact that there was about twenty other people on the carriage, yet not one person said, ‘Hang on a minute, that’s out of line, mate’, or something like that would have been appreciated by me. Considering I’m one person on my own and these two were – and there were sexual connotations, there was, you know, innuendo in what they were saying to me – I felt a bit scared.

Other interviewees recounted experiences in shopping centres or on roads – very public spaces – where others were present but did not act to intervene. This failure to intervene has the effect of participating in both the normalising of racism, and the normative dimensions of the behaviours and appearances against which the victim is judged. It represents the collective nature of mechanisms of conversion; the social processes through which species of capital are recognised and given value, or not.

As well as private citizens, key social institutions, and especially those of the state, were also seen to validate these behaviours and hence contribute to the devalorising of ethnic difference. Central to Bourdieu’s analysis is the role of the state in validating forms of capital and setting the “exchange rates” for conversion. This is crucial not just because of the ways in which it structures the fields of significant social power on which he focuses – the political field, the juridical field, and so on (1998, p.41), but because it also shapes the forms of conversion in everyday life. The political climate in Australia has shifted to the right since the rise of Pauline Hanson’s One Nation party in the late 1990s, a process coterminous with the election of the Liberal-National Party Coalition federal government in 1996, under John Howard, which cut immigration, tightened entrance requirements, reduced migrants’ access to welfare and abolished the Office of Multicultural Affairs (Ang, 2001, pp.96-100). In the 2001 federal election, this was even clearer. After a series of moral panics about ‘ethnic crime’ and ‘race rape’, especially in Sydney, and around an apparent increase in so-called ‘illegal’ migrants, the terrorist attacks in the United States and the bombings in Bali and London became the basis of a adroitly managed fear

campaign in which national integrity and wellbeing became entwined with issues around border security, crime and policing, and cultural harmony. Many media commentators and politicians stepped up criticism of multiculturalism as a way of managing cultural diversity and social cohesion as anti-Arab and anti-Muslim sentiment increased. This was echoed in the 2003 NSW State election, when the One Nation party (2003) voiced anxieties that multiculturalism was making Anglo Australians ‘a stranger in your own country’. This climate has contributed to the marginalisation of certain groups of Australians, such as those of Arabic and Muslim background, as the “folk devils” of our times (Poynting, Noble, Tabar and Collins, 2004).

The resigned belief that many racist experiences aren’t worth reporting, together with the expectation that little could or would be done in relation to these experiences, suggest that, in the current post-September 11 context, the various organisations whose task it is to police and prevent racial vilification are seen as complicit in the experience of racism in Australia. This applies not just to institutions of law enforcement – such as the police – but also to institutions that seek to defend citizens against vilification and discrimination. It does not help, moreover, that one of the social sites described as contributing to racism in Australia – the media – is seen to be somehow shielded from state control. In other words, for many victims of racism, the state is seen to be part of the problem, not the solution.

For Jamila, it was not worth reporting this harassment to the train guard or any station staff: “They wouldn’t do anything.... They’d probably, ‘Oh yeah, oh well.’ I don’t think they’d do anything about it. They’re more concerned with fare evasion and stuff like that.” She generalised this perception: “I don’t feel like I’ll be represented properly if I was to go to the state government office or a federal government office to complain about something that happened against me. I don’t think they would really care.”

One significant case of intervention was recounted: a female, Aboriginal tram driver intervened, without having to be asked, when 18 year-old Lebanese-background TAFE (Technical and Further Education college) student, Mustapha, was being shouted at offensively by an “Australian” male passenger in his thirties. “Go back to your country, you stupid Muslim! ... Go back to your country, you black c---!” The driver kept the tram stationary, left the driver’s seat, and came and sat next to the young man in the back of the tram. She declared that the tram was not moving until the offender got off. He did not, however, and eventually she had to drive off when the manager from the tram depot called her up. It is also noteworthy that the police did not arrive within that half hour, nor did other passengers intervene to assist.

The gendering of ethnic capital

The anecdotes told here also illustrate the gendered dimensions of racist experiences. Arab and Muslim women are much more likely to be victims of racist abuse. Certainly the wearing of the *hijab* was the single most cited concrete reason for experiences of racism, and far more likely to provoke abuse than males having beards or wearing traditional dress. Several commentators have discussed the ways in which the *hijab* has become, in the west, a key ideological symbol of not only the perceived cultural difference of the Middle

East and Islam in particular, but also of political despotism and social oppression and sexual inequality (Mackie, 2002). Whether it is in this that the significance of the gendered dimension of racism lies; or whether there is a further dimensions of sexual power which adds to the already complicated layering of cultural and ethnic (and class) inequalities, we can only say here is that if the experiences of racism are far greater for Australian women of Arab and Muslim backgrounds, then processes of exclusion and the conversion of ethnic capital have a significant gender dimension.

Alya, a 40 year-old Sunni Muslim professional woman of Egyptian birth, discusses letters and telephone calls she received in the wake of the terrorist hijackings in the USA:

From September 11, I got some incredibly, incredibly threatening letters, and telephone calls about people wanting to do certain things... about coming to blow us up, and killing. 'You just wait, as soon as you walk out, we'll be coming there. We're going to kill you.' Really abusive things.... Others just saying 'you don't belong in this country; go home; we're going to kill you; you're all terrorists; what are you doing here?' but ... in very profane language.

It is ironic that, at a time when Islamic fundamentalisms are chastised by the west for their treatment of women, it is those (especially men) of Anglo-Australian background (as we saw with many examples, such as that of Latifah, above) who exhibit significant intolerance towards women who represent cultural difference. Amal, who recounted a dreadful history of harassment, abuse and violence, including the tearing of her "scarf", did not live with her father, and her brothers were 14 and 16 years old when these events occurred. No man obliged either woman to wear the *hijab*; they chose to do so and insisted on this right in the face of vilification and attacks. What confined them to the household were precisely these attacks. As Amal's mother, Fairuz (whom we also interviewed) said, "I can't go out; I don't have my freedom". Here, not just the physical capital of ethnicity, but of gendered ethnicity, was lived as a negative capital preventing the full existence of national belonging.

Alya described herself as feeling like a "real alien", "like I didn't belong": "I felt like I stood out. Before September 11, I felt fairly invisible, just a person going around doing their own thing". After that, she felt "noticeable", "that people were looking at me". Here invisibility is felt not as being ignored, but as "fitting" in the public spaces of national belonging. This diminution of social freedoms is a largely gendered experience, but part of wider experience of disenfranchisement.

The feeling of not counting, the feeling of not belonging

The starkest features of the landscape of fear and incivility that we have described are when people actually fear for their lives, or are afraid to leave their homes. Murshid, a middle-aged Muslim man of Indonesian origin, says, "I'm scared to go out from the house". He is awaiting a response from the Department of Immigration to his visa application, and is fearful of being provoked in public into a retaliation that will be damaging for him. Yet, both the more violent forms of racism and the mundane incidents of social incivility

produce a profound a visceral sensation of social marginalisation, where one's worth as a human being is at stake: the feeling, as one of Sayad's interviewees puts it, "that we don't count for anything, that we are of no importance here" (1999, p.33). The "feeling of counting for others", the justifications of one's existence (Bourdieu, 2000, p.240), is a crucial aspect of any social co-existence, but it has particular consequences for those attempting to accommodate themselves to a new nation. As Hayat explained it to us, after "coming out" as Muslim to her Anglo school friends in the wake of September 11: "After that day, I [saw] from their eyes ... I was someone different". It wasn't just her (Anglo) friends who treated her differently, but her teachers: "it was the way she treated us, we didn't feel comfortable with that group because we were always seen *as less than them*" (our italics).

Several of the HREOC interviewees similarly complained of being *reduced* to a category – of Muslim, terrorist, rapist, Arab, and so on. Kefah (a 28-year-old male of Christian background, born in Jordan to a Palestinian father and New Zealand mother), is uncomfortable having to argue the pros and cons of the war in Iraq because he happens to be Muslim: "I don't want to live in a country where people are automatically put in the spotlight because there's some kind of culture connection. Where someone says, 'oh, you've got a Greek name, okay tell me about Greece and what your Greek government did today'. Well, I'm just a person, why should I have to be a spokesperson". As a result, Kefah says he feels "completely uncomfortable being Australian". This sense of reduction shapes the migrant's capacity to be "legitimate" citizen. It is not simply the absence of a sense of home at stake here; it is the absence of basic social freedoms that define for most citizens the essence of the western democratic nation. The consequences for the everyday lives of the respondents were immense – women especially reported an increasing unwillingness to go out into public spaces, while many respondents generally exhibited a sense of disenfranchisement from civic life.

Aladdin, a 40 year-old tradesman of Lebanese Muslim background, explained that after his wife and daughter were violently assaulted in a racist attack in a shopping centre, "We started to delay the shops for once a month, for example, we go to the shops and get all what we need."

It affected me in that I can't leave my children alone, and family I have to stay with them, together. I wouldn't dare tell them to go shopping and me going elsewhere.... We don't deal with anyone at all. We don't want to get close to anyone and vice versa. We kept a distance from all people. As the saying goes, 'folded within oneself.... We don't dare go on holiday to take the children, or to the beach.... If we have to go to the cinemas, we pick a place where there are more Muslims, so that we would be more comfortable that there are less bad people [translated from Arabic].

Alya, a 40 year-old Muslim woman of Egyptian origin, a professional person who has lived in Australia for 34 years, said that threatening, racist letters and phone messages have "had a horrific impact on all our lives. The kids – my son was seven, so he was always scared

that people would be coming to attack us.” As a consequence, she said, “I probably stayed [home more]. I didn’t stay at home all the time, because I’ve got a lot of commitments outside, but it certainly made me feel less secure”.

In contrast with the egregious expressions of racist violence and verbal abuse, as we have seen, the respondents also talked at some length about the everyday experience of social incivility that permeated their daily lives. Some made clear distinctions between these incidents and the more extreme actions they defined as racist. Rozalb remarked that racism is a “harsh” and “extreme” word that applied more to acts of “aggression”, and she did not think that it adequately described many of the incidents that she experienced in her everyday life. Most interviewees recounted many of these seemingly minor incidents: They could be as simple as being looked at in odd ways, but they could be extremely uncomfortable as a result. As Alya described it, “To have people look at me as if I’m some kind of threat to their security and a real alien is a really difficult thing”.

Such incidents contribute to the overall sense of fear experienced by Arab and Muslim Australians, adding to the increasing desire to not go into public space, as we have already outlined. Sara recounted one episode where some men drove past making machine gun gestures and telling her to “go home”; her response was that she was “not too comfortable going out”. Hayat also describes simply being made to feel at school, “from their eyes”, as though she was “someone different”. Yet this is more significant than simply a degree of minor discomfort – as she explains, the way the teacher treated her and her friends, “we were always seen as less than them [the Anglos]”. Rozalb pointed out that these “minor” incidents “lead to racism”, if they do not “get unravelled”:

For example, I used to be able to, I love going for walks and runs, and at the moment I can’t do that, because truly I’m quite fearful that someone ... will try to do something that will put me in a position where I need to defend myself.... So doing things on a day to day to basis, that I used to be able to do, I can’t do, because I’m fearful

As another explained in terms of apparently trivial incidents at work where he was made to feel as though he was the “spokesperson for Middle Eastern affairs”, and constantly put under pressure to discuss the Iraq war: “It makes me feel completely uncomfortable being Australian”. In other words, such examples of mundane racism contribute to the wider experiences of exclusion and marginalisation that the more violent examples of racism dramatise. This negativisation of ethnic capital means that it is rendered worthless in the wider field of national belonging.

Constrained by fear and incivility, Muslim and Arab Australians are forced to consider changing their names, their way of dress, their daily lives, or to live with everyday insecurity and affront. Some, as Ameera reports, have installed special security systems in their homes because of race-based harassment. Some Australian-born Muslims even consider emigration. Jamila, a 26 year-old university-educated Australian of Indonesian parentage, explained:

I don’t hate Australia, but I would really like, I feel like I want to go somewhere

where I can practise my religion easier.... When September 11 happened ... my first reaction was, what is my daughter going to do? ... She's a sixth generation Australian and my husband's fifth generation. ... I'm first generation Australian, and so both ways she's an Australian, and she's going to suffer because she's a Muslim, because of what these people did.... I'm very insecure about staying here.... We want to go overseas to get [education] scholarships in Islam, ... anywhere where we could achieve that.... That would be somewhere like Pakistan, or India or Syria: all the controversial places, unfortunately.

Aladdin says:

I have ... half my life here. I came here when I was 21 years and it's now been 20 years in Australia.... We paid taxes like all others and we followed the rules as all others and we respected their laws – and we grew up.

Now having experienced what he sees as humiliating harassment by ASIO (Australian Security Intelligence Organisation – “They only came to frighten us, not to understand and help or who's to blame”), he wants to say:

If you're not happy with my presence in Australia ... I'll go back to my country. If you don't want me here, I'll go and stay in my country. But I have left that country.... I'll go back to Lebanon and settle down there. ... I won't see Australia in my life again till I die [translated from Arabic].

As Alya eloquently put it:

Especially after September 11, it felt like our home, which Australia has been our home, for almost all of my life ... was somehow not our home any more. This feeling that we really were foreigners here, and I've never felt like a foreigner, but ever since then I've started feeling more like a foreigner.

The focus on everyday life offered here also requires that we think of national belonging less in terms of representations of otherness and “imagined community” than in terms of the ordinary practices of a “nation-ed” existence (Noble, 2002); it also requires that we think of racism as a array of strategic actions situated in specific social relations (Wieviorka, 1995). Hage (1998, p.53), following Bourdieu, conceives of what he calls “practical nationality” as a form of cultural capital, or the sum of knowledges, styles, bodily characteristics, and dispositions which are valued in a given field. By accumulating sanctified styles, this cultural capital can be converted into symbolic capital; that is, recognition of one's national belonging. Migrants accumulate nationality by learning how to speak the language, specific cultural practices, etc. – in other words, by assimilating. This field of symbolic, national power Hage dubs “Whiteness”, and both what Hage calls White multiculturalism and forms of racist exclusion exhibit a sense of governmental belonging – the sense that one has rights *over* the nation (the right to contribute to its management), in contrast to passive belonging, in which one belongs *to* the nation (1998, pp.45-46). Hage suggests that it is important to see racist practices, such as the act of the tearing of the *hijab* from Muslim women, as nationalist practices which are

attempts to managing a particular national space: who is allowed to be there and how they are allowed to act. As a consequence, many migrants are made to feel *less* national, are made to feel uncomfortable in the neighbourhood and the national space (Noble, 2005). It is this kind of practical regulation of belonging that everyday racism participates in.

Two years after this study was conducted, the Cronulla riots demonstrated just how powerfully forms of racial vilification directed towards those of Arab and Muslim background expressed an urgent desire to control national belonging and to exclude those who were seen not to belong. An unpleasant but minor conflict between a small number of Lebanese-background men and surf lifesavers at the beach escalated within a week – on the back of political posturing and hysterical media goading – into a major “race riot” the likes of which Australia had not seen for a very long time (Noble, 2009). Five thousand “white” Australians, displaying Australian flags, tattoos and several signifiers of Anglo-Australianness (like cricket gear), turned out to protest against what they saw as unacceptable behaviour by ‘Lebanese louts’. But it quickly became a violent riot when groups of protesters turned on anyone of “Middle Eastern appearance”. Signs asserting “Shire pride” [the Sutherland Shire being the local government municipality] sat alongside those proclaiming “Aussie Pride”. Over several nights, as “revenge attacks” were undertaken by young men of Arab and Muslim background, lines in the sand were drawn between “Aussies” and “Lebs”, between right and wrong, included and excluded, protesters and gangs.

Conclusion

What we have described as a pervasive landscape of fear and incivility fundamentally alters the social opportunities for Australian Arabs and Muslims to function as citizens. If, as Hage (1998) argues, racist practices must also be understood primarily as attempts to control the national space, then these experiences are fundamentally processes of social exclusion. It is not simply that people of Arabic-speaking or Muslim background experience abuse and harassment in their lives, but that these embodied practices serve to disenfranchise them from full participation in Australian civic life. As one student respondent described it, she was made to feel “less than” her Anglo-Australian peers, while many interviewees commented on not being able to leave their homes. Similarly, several interviewees commented on the political dimension of these processes of marginalisation: one said he felt he wasn’t being “represented”; others talked about the ways their political involvement – such as participation in demonstrations – was being threatened. More generally, they felt that the state was complicit in – or ignored – racist attacks.

The forms of racist vilification and social incivility described here are the practices which constitute a wide range of Australians of diverse backgrounds as a coherent, ideological “other” (Poynting, Noble, Tabar and Collins, 2004); but in doing this the forms of capital identified with specific ethnic groups or fields are revalorised as marginal and even dangerous to the wider national field. We do not just struggle for recognition, but for recognition in the terms through which we desire to be recognised. The ethnicised forms of social incivility in everyday encounters demonstrate the ways ethnicity is negativised in the space of national belonging. This returns us to the body of the migrant and the formation of what we have called the “ethnic habitus”.

CONCLUSION | **The torment of the ethnic habitus**

Practices of migrancy

This book has attempted to analyse various aspects of the cultural practices of Lebanese Australians, and how these practices locate them in relation to Australian society as well as a sense of homeland. We explore both the formalised practices which occur in specific sites – such as religious festivals – and informal practices which occur in a range of informal sites across everyday life in Australian society. In line with an increasing body of work that demonstrates that diasporic identities and communities are not given, neatly bound nor immutable, this book has taken as its starting point the argument that such identities and communities are constituted in and through an array of practices that are situated in time and place. In previous work we have suggested that identity categories are themselves always problematic and shifting: in *Kebabs* we suggested that the ways young men experienced and presented themselves – as Lebanese or Australian, for example – was partly a strategic response to the circumstances in which they lived.¹ In *Bin Laden in the Suburbs* we explored the ways the very idea of Lebanese-ness in Australia was only one form of identity caught up in a complex web of competing categories and meanings within dominant systems of representation – terms such as Middle Eastern, Arabic and Muslim – which may change over time. But ethnic identity is more than a struggle over classification and representation.

As Avtar Brah (1996) argues, such identities are always relational, borne of particular contexts in which our sense of self is shaped by those we interact with as well as ourselves. Brah argues for a concept of diaspora as an interpretive frame for analysing the economic, political and cultural modalities of historically specific experiences of migrancy (Brah, 1996, p.16). It is better, then, to talk of diasporas as composite formations that bring together diverse groups and which emerge in particular networks of spaces in which strategies of differentiation and similarisation are undertaken to fashion borders which constitute the apparent ‘community’ with its essentialised narratives of home and its trajectories of movement (p.183). The complex relations between movement and attachment are also central to Fortier’s (2000) study of Italian migrants in London. Like Brah, she argues that identities are not singular but generated by practices which produce the very cohesion they claim as essential to the diasporic community; practices which are also responses to the circumstances in which migrants find themselves.

This book makes a similar claim about the productive and strategic nature of those practices which bring the 'Lebanese-Australian community' into existence. Moreover, such practices are revealed as what Mauss (1967) called "total social phenomena": complex, layered, polyvalent entities which function at different levels. Such practices, for example, embody various modes of coping within a society refracted by class, gender, generational difference, intercommunal relations and racism, as well engendering an 'ethnic identity'; where everyday identities and relations are also implicated in the larger stage of national belonging.

The two chapters on *Ashura* and the *dabki* – events that have largely been ignored in popular and scholarly discussions of Lebanese Australians – deal with practices from a religious ceremony and a folkloric dance whose significance only partly lies in their status as 'traditional'. These practices are not only reinvented in the new context of urban Australian life, they entail forms of attachment and belonging which bring them into relation not only with a mythical home, but with the pragmatics of the here and now. Any study of a diasporic formation such as that we call the Lebanese-Australian community would be incomplete if it was restricted to the formal dimensions of their practices. To obtain a more insightful understanding of the cultural realities of Lebanese Australians, we have to probe into the experiential dimensions of their social existence and examine both its patterned *and* dynamic character. By showing the impact of the 'host' society on the cultural practices of the Lebanese Australians and the responses that Lebanese migrants and their descendants have made to it, we aim to reveal the dialogic nature of intercommunal relations. Different chapters emphasise different aspects of this relationality. The chapter on the Bulldogs and their fans, for example, concentrates on revealing the reaction of the 'host' society to an attempt by the second-generation Lebanese to become fans within a typical 'Australian' sport, rugby league. The attempt by migrants and their children to 'assimilate' to the ways of the 'host' society becomes the basis for new forms of symbolic exclusion. Instead of bestowing added value to their cultural capital, and fostering inclusion in national belonging, their fandom is ethnicised and used against them to undermine this capital as 'ethnic'. Any conflict with the supporters of the opposite teams is seen as emanating from the cultural pathology of the (Lebanese-Australian) Bulldogs fans, demonised as being animal-like and un-Australian.

Both the *Ashura* and the *dabki*, on the other hand, acknowledge both the power of the dominant culture, and yet serve to provoke and disrupt that dominance, and thereby find some ways of inserting oneself into a more productive relationship with it. The language we have for discussing the relations between "hosts" and settlers – notions of assimilation and integration, for example – doesn't quite capture the contradictory forms of accommodation and contestation that these events represent, the ways they flag the experience of migrancy and the desire for finding a place within Australian society. Indeed, the events we describe are best thought of as acts of *appropriation* that challenge and reshape the nature of these relations, even if they do not dramatically alter them. They negotiate experiences and structures of exclusion and racism as well as articulate experiences of migrancy, struggles for recognition and identity in a new world, and generational transformations.

At the same time, however, that we conceive these events as exhibiting a tendency by the marginalised migrant to use religious ceremony, cultural events and community

organisations, to express their concerns and partly recuperate their lost power, we must also acknowledge the tendency by authority figures (politicians, law-enforcement agencies and media personnel) to re-appropriate these cultural and political events to prop up their own social power and subsequently maintain their own version of national belonging (whether it aligns with an ethos of multiculturalism or not).

The book tackled questions of the relations between agency and patterns of marginalisation but with a more specific focus on how they impact upon the children of Lebanese migrants. It examined aspects of linguistic expression and gender identity amongst second-generation Lebanese youth and the identificatory processes involved in their interaction with broader society, how they construct a sense of national as well as ethnic belonging, or lack thereof, and how they go about achieving respect in a society which often marginalises them. As we make clear, this goes far beyond the cliché of being ‘lost between two cultures’, a cliché which emphasises a model of simple cultural clash at the expense of an understanding of more complex forms of attachment and difference, inclusion and exclusion. Iain Chambers (1994) lumps migrancy together with exile and quotes Said’s famous comment that they both entail a ‘discontinuous state of being’. To characterise the migrant experience as essentially or only one of rupture, like focusing on the ‘success stories’ of migrant settlement and integration, is to miss the complex interplays and layers of discontinuity and continuity, of the diverse logics of multiple connections and disconnections. This is not just because it fetishises the binarism of the ‘two cultures’ cliché, but because it misses the fundamental insight that any society is constituted not just as a singular culture, but as a network of cultures, sites and domains. That is, the situated forms of discontinuity and connection that people experience occur in and across a range of what Bourdieu would call social fields.

To capture this we need to reconceptualise the kinds of resources that migrants and their children can, or can’t, access in order to make themselves ‘at home’ in Australia, in the various sites in which they are constituted. What is significant about this book is that it begins to develop a framework, drawn from Bourdieu, in which practices of identity and community constitute diverse resources for operating within particular domains of Australian society, resources which have bodily consequences because they enable, or disable, migrants in very specific and physical ways. We use the notions of ‘ethnic capital’ and the habitus in particular to bring together the competing logics of migrant existence.

The paradox of ethnic capital

As we have suggested in earlier chapters, the theoretical framework of Pierre Bourdieu provides a way in to thinking about these questions in a way that is not reductive, but generates new and fresh insights. In some ways we wish to extend the work of Ghassan Hage (1998), who uses Bourdieu to think differently about racism and national identity by developing a notion of practices of governmental belonging, in which practical nationality is constituted as forms of cultural capital – knowledges, styles of talking and acting, bodily characteristics and so on which he dubs ‘whiteness’ – and which can be converted into symbolic capital, that is, recognition of one’s national belonging. We do not want to revisit Hage’s compelling argument; rather, we want to think about forms of ethnicity, which receive scant attention in Hage and Bourdieu except as ‘negative capital’. We want to

conceive ethnicity as a form of symbolic capital which is fundamentally contradictory, because 'ethnic capital' necessarily and overtly entails a kind of engagement with the bicultural dimensions of migrant existence. Paul Gilroy (1995) famously explored this in terms of the 'double consciousness' of black Americans, but we want to suggest that viewing 'ethnic identity' as resources deployed in every site of human existence foregrounds it not just about being 'torn between two cultures' but a constant grappling with problems of recognition and conversion.

Bourdieu's conceptualisation of cultural and social capitals demonstrates the crucial insight that they have to be *recognised* as valid within a field to take on a broader symbolic form – as honour and reputation, for example. In this book, we introduce the concept of an 'ethnic field' to analyse contending versions of Lebanese ethnicity and community leadership. Like any other field, the ethnic field is traversed with power relations and conflicts between its occupants, and it has its own forms of capital. Yet, the ethnic field always exists in relationship to wider forms of social and political belonging: it is not defined purely or even primarily by its own community organisations. The `Ashura and the *dabki* participants, for instance, must be conceived as struggling to appropriate their culture in a way that would affirm or challenge the official version of multiculturalism and, in so doing, they seek to amend the terms in which Lebanese ethnic capital is validated.

The notion of an ethnic field, however, raises several issues, which we cannot hope to resolve fully here. The first is whether conceiving the domain of an 'ethnic community' as a field in Bourdieu's sense is a useful and productive one for analysing the relations and practices of a specific diaspora. It seems most valuable when thinking about specific activities that occur as formalised, 'community' events, such as those examined in the opening chapters of the book. But it seems less useful, or at least far more complicated, when we look at the everyday lives of the members of diasporic entities. It is probably true to say that, in the way he operationalises his concepts, Bourdieu rests too easily on a reified model of what a field is. It may be that something like an 'ethnic field' is necessarily double-sided, functioning in two ways at the same time. This is because being 'ethnic' is both a marker of operating within a particular set of community organisations, sites and spaces, and yet it is also a marker of operating within a wider political field (as we have seen in the case of community leaders) or a field of national belonging (as we have seen in terms of everyday racism). And these are fundamentally linked, because performing the *dabki* in Australia means something different to performing it in Lebanon, as we have suggested in that chapter. So this field is not a one-dimensional plane of positions and relations, but a double-edged interface between what might otherwise be seen as two 'fields'.

The second problem is the related question of how capital from one field is converted into another. This is of enormous import for understanding the diasporic experiences of Lebanese Australians because 'ethnicity' has significance not only with the field of the 'Lebanese community' and in a wider political field, but also because it has consequences across all aspects of economic, social and cultural life, and sometimes in quite contradictory ways. Being Lebanese may be valuable within those sites identified as part of the Lebanese community, but it may be differently valued, or even negatively valued, in other domains.

This is perhaps most clearly seen in the efforts of community leaders to sustain their positions in the social fields in which they move. They accumulate particular types of capital that have significance within their respective communities, and then need to use their capital and the status it offers them within their specific communities to participate in wider political processes, which poses specific dilemmas (see Collins et al., 2000, p.218). In becoming ‘ethnic leaders’, recognised outside their specific constituencies, they have to convert their localised forms of capital into a broader form of symbolic capital that allows them to claim to the political parties through which they seek wider participation that they represent the ‘community’; this allows them to claim to their constituencies that they have access to political power. Yet it results in competing logics and paradoxical allegiances.

This paradoxical character of ‘ethnic capital’ also applies to wider questions of cultural identity, but plays out in different ways. As we saw in examining the young men we first interviewed in the mid-1990s and then some years later, the accumulation of specific capital around Lebanese identity also poses problems of conversion in everyday life, especially as young people enter into adult responsibilities which negotiate the differing demands of family and community on the one hand, and modes of integration into the institutions and relations of the wider array of social fields in contemporary Australia on the other. We saw in a much harsher way the consequences of the different valorisations of ethnic identity in the experiences of racial vilification in the wake of 9/11. Complex networks of sites and practices of recognition shape the extent to which Lebanese Australians can feel included – or not – in the wider experience of national belonging in Australia. In this case, moving from the possibilities of agency captured in the practices of the *dabki* to the politics of everyday racism, we can sense the kinds of ambivalent relations Lebanese migrants live with on a daily basis, producing not simply the sense of being torn between two cultures, but a conflicted presence within Australian society.

The tormented habitus

In this conclusion, we want to introduce a discussion of what we might term the ‘ethnic habitus’ to help understand the complexity of migrancy beyond the binarism of popular perceptions of the migrant dilemma. Bourdieu’s notion of ‘habitus’ has become a useful tool for thinking how social relations are internalised and experienced as ‘natural’, embodied capacities. At its most formal, habitus is defined as “systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles which generate and organise practices and representations” (1990, p.53). The notion of habitus – more simply understood as the dispositions which internalise our social location and therefore orient our actions – offers an invaluable tool for exploring the interdependence of social determination and human agency, the structured and generative capacity of human action. Bourdieu develops the notion of habitus specifically to overcome the binaries of much social theory – between objectivism and subjectivism, structure and agency, mind and body (Wacquant, 1992, p.3). He argues that our being-in-the-world is largely a practical mastery of the implicit principles of the social world, as a “feel for the game” (1990, pp.12,74). Because our practice is always situated, this practical sense is specific to the field or social space in which we are acting. But habitus is also the embodiment of our social location – class, gender, ethnicity, and so on – which is

manifest in our actions, modes of appearance and bodily bearing – posture, manners, ways of speaking – that is among the “outward signs expressing social position” (1991, pp.86-89,12). The ways our bodies act and look, our physical properties, embody the capital – economic, social, cultural capital – we possess.

If we reflect on the cultural experiences and forms we have explored in this book – religious ceremony, dance, language, gender and sexuality, racism, and so on – there is a significant physical or embodied dimension to what we are examining as the experience of the Lebanese migrant and their children²: a dimension which both indicates their social and historical origins and ‘expresses’ their status as ‘ethnic’ in their new homeland, which is ‘recognised’ in various ways, including through racist behaviour.

We have used the concept of an ‘ethnic habitus’ to capture what we call the ‘structured’ and ‘structuring’ moments of being a Lebanese migrant in Australia: both the impact of forms of marginalisation and racism in the construction of a Lebanese oidentity and the mechanisms through which Lebanese migrants and their descendants negotiate the terms of defining themselves (social being) and their relations with others. We have intended, therefore, to capture both the dynamic agency of the Lebanese migrant culture, and the patterned reality of this culture. Thinking about the embodied experiences of being a Lebanese migrant foregrounds the complexity of the *conflicted* nature of social being in Australia, beyond the binarism of the ‘torn’ cliché. We use the notion of an ‘ethnic habitus’ rather than, say, a migrant habitus because, apart from the issue of how we characterise the children of migrants, and the fact that not all migrants experience this process as intensely or as paradoxically as others, one of the central process at stake is the way that (some) migrants and their children become *ethnic* in the process of settlement, located within an array of cultural differences; it is this ‘ethnicity’ which is experienced as conflicted.

Bourdieu has been criticised for often representing the habitus in its overly structuralist manifestation, as a mechanism of social reproduction (Connell, 1983) rarely capturing the complexity, contradictoriness and dynamism of the habitus. This is probably true, but his concept is flexible enough for us to explore these aspects. In fact, Bourdieu explicitly rejects the idea of the habitus as monolithic, immutable, inexorable and exclusive, instead saying in his work on Algerian ‘subproletarians’ he emphasised the “cleft, tormented habitus bearing in the form of tensions and contradictions the mark of the contradictory conditions of formation of which they are the product” (2000, p.64). He argues rightly that how systematic and constant or divided and variable is the habitus depends on conditions of its formation and exercise, which can only be ascertained empirically – but he doesn’t elaborate on this point. This ‘torment’ is not reducible to a simple binarism (as in the ‘torn between two cultures’ cliché), but is constituted by multiple forms of conflict, and it is, importantly, an embodied experience. Ethnicisation is a process inscribed in our bodies and riddled with tensions, antagonism and contestations. The tormented character of the ‘ethnic habitus’ is forged within this process.

In this regard, we speak about the aspects of the Lebanese ‘ethnic habitus’ that refer to embodied, performative and affective dimensions: a sense of victimhood, the

affective relations of belonging, respect, a fantasised sense of sexuality and power, linguistic play, essentialist and a hybrid senses of identity, and so on, that also entail more complex understandings of questions of identity, recognition, agency, racism and wider social being.

The crucial point here, then, is that social belonging is not to be understood only in terms of cognitively orientated concepts of identity (as a dimension of consciousness) or abstract conceptualisations of social structures (where humans are seen primarily as bearers of structure), but is fundamentally rooted in the physical and affective aspects of the body, its appearances and its capacities. It is through the body that we learn to exist as a social being, so it is in the body that our history is lived out, and it is through the body that we engage with the world of others (Lande, 2005). It is in the body that the mutually determining relationship between social structure and social action is mediated (Gebauer, 2000, p.78). Bourdieu asserted the double nature of the habitus, as the internalisation of a social structure and the basis of agency, as the embodiment of a history and as an orientation towards a future, but frequently focused largely on the former element of each binary, but we need to hold these together (Noble and Watkins, 2003). The double act of habitus in taking us back to a social structure and throwing us forward towards action helps to explain the dynamic reproduction of society and the possibility of its transformation away from the perennial dichotomy between objectivism and subjectivism, because it is through the habitus that the world is liveable. But the body moves through multiple sites and domains, institutions and events: it is not simply lived in or across 'two cultures'. As the chapters on respect and everyday racism demonstrate, the plurality of these social spaces and the ways they are lived are central to a nuanced understanding of diasporic existence.

The chapters on 'Habiib', 'The Lost Girls' and to some extent sexuality amongst young Lebanese Australians evince aspects of the 'ethnic habitus' which reveals itself in this double act of reproducing 'the legitimate problematic' of the ethnic field but with a considerable measure of strategising in an attempt to change the validating terms of its capital. On the other hand, the chapters on respect, everyday racism and the Bulldogs emphasise more the 'rules' of the social structure, producing the limits within which the ethnic habitus is reproduced. The research on leaders, perhaps best of all, captures the dialectic between these two elements.

A common thread that runs throughout the book is the argument that a grounded 'ethnic identity' manifested in the various cultural practices of Lebanese Australians emerges in settings that escape and speak back to the control of the state and mainstream society, even while it is partly contained by the structuring processes of social legitimation. This ethnicity is necessitated by the experience of being marginalised and the feeling of non-belonging. It is "the anti-structural ... thrown up by the structural process" (Kapferer, 1995, p.64) of creating a 'white' multicultural state and society in Australia.

Unless habitus is understood as generating not only moments of underwriting the power hierarchy of the field, but also instantiates practices which change, resist or 'complicate' this hierarchy, it will remain at best an elaborate theoretical device

that ultimately explains the reproduction of the field and not the moments of its transformation. In other words, not all position-takers in the field of ethnicity engage in the ultimate reproduction of its power hierarchy. Some of them, such as the youth, the *dabki* dancers and the *Ashura* practitioners, end up challenging this hierarchy by advocating a newer sense of Lebanese-Australian identity that may undermine the value of the ethnic capital circulating in the field. By emphasising more the practices of these categories of position-takers in the field of 'ethnicity', we can ensure that 'habitus' is expanded to include not only moments of reproducing the dominant hierarchy of the 'ethnic field' but also its adaptation and subversion.

The struggle to exist in contemporary society for migrants and their children, to make their lives habitable, is a complex and contradictory one. A wider social environment of 'fear and incivility' delimits their capacity to function as 'Australians' – understood as a cultural as well as economic and political entity. People of Lebanese background in Australia struggle to be recognised, but their struggle is multifaceted: it is not just about being recognised as culturally different, but also about being legitimate citizens, workers, customers, locals, and so on, all the things that add up to us being 'fully human'. Unless we grasp the complexity of the 'torment' of the ethnic habitus, we will forever repeat the clichés of cultural conflict.

ENDNOTES

Introduction

¹ An early version of chapters 1, 2, 3, 4, 6 and 8, had been published in the *Journal of Cultural Studies*. These are respectively: Tabar (2002), Tabar (2005), Tabar (2007), Poynting (2009), Tabar, Noble and Poynting (2003) and Noble (2007). Also, a different version of chapter 7 (Poynting, 2005) had been published in *Internet Journal of Criminology*.

² In contrast, some other large ethnic communities in Australia have been the subject of insightful research in this area, as studies of the Greek and the Italian communities show. See, for example, Baldassar (1998, 1999 and 2001), Bottomley (1979) and Castles, S., Alcorso, C., Rando, G. and Vasta, E. (1992).

³ We use here the term ‘Lebanese Australian’ because it is a fair shorthand term for Australians of Lebanese ancestry. But it is cumbersome, and so throughout the book we will often simply refer to the “Lebanese”, whilst acknowledging here it is problematic precisely because it retains the emphasis on ethnic or national origin and marks the erasure of citizenship status in Australia. We will also often use the term “migrant” to refer not just to those who migrated but their children, the so-called “second generation” of migrants. There is no straightforward technical language that we can use unproblematically, because these categories refer to social experiences which are themselves necessarily contradictory.

⁴ On (Lebanese) migrants’ transplanting of roots, and experiencing rootedness, see Hage, G. (2008).

⁵ Just as with ethnic descriptors, terms such as White and “Anglo” will be used here, but in a way that acknowledges their problematic status. Other terms – such as Anglo-Saxon and Anglo-Celtic – are often used, but while this attempts to capture something of the complex relations between Englishness and other British identities (especially the Irish) we prefer the broader notion of “Anglo” precisely for its vagueness – it is clearly, like White, meant here as a metaphoric marker of social and cultural dominance.

Chapter 1

¹ Gilsonan (1993) had previously conducted a study on *Ashura* as practiced in Iran and Lebanon, using the same perspective found in this paper.

² In 1997 Pauline Hanson, an ex-member of the conservative Liberal party in Australia, was elected to the Australian parliament as an independent candidate on a racist platform. In 1997 she founded the One Nation party. The party has adopted an anti-immigration policy and is known for its racist views, especially against Aborigines, Asians and Muslims. The party platform argues that “economically immigration is unsustainable and socially, if it continues as is, [it] will lead to an ethnically divided Australia”. Moreover the platform declares that multiculturalism leads to “our people [being] divided into separate ethnic groups” and to a destruction of “our unique Australian culture and identity” (One Nation, 1998, pp. 2-3, 10). The

party leaders claim that they want to prevent Australia from being “swamped with Asians”. In 1997 the polls indicated that around 12% of the Australians supported the One Nation party. In the 1998 federal election, 8.43% of the Australian voters gave their primary votes to One Nation, and in the following federal election the level of their support dropped to 4.30%. However, the swing against One Nation could partly be attributed to the ultra-right stand that was taken by the conservative Liberal-National Coalition government before and during the 2001 election campaign. An account of Pauline Hanson’s defeat in her Queensland seat of Blair during the 2001 federal election can be obtained from Margo Kingston (2001).

³ In 1978 Israel invaded the south of Lebanon to create a buffer zone between northern Israel and the southern region of Lebanon which was the area from which the Palestinian fighters and their left-wing supporters carried out their attacks against Israel. In 1982 Israel executed a second invasion of Lebanon. This time the Israeli soldiers reached the capital, Beirut, and managed eventually to expel the Palestinian fighters from south and west Beirut. During these two invasions many Lebanese *Shi’is* were killed and their villages were destroyed. Within this context, many *Shi’is* from the south migrated to Sydney. The armed resistance of *Hezbollah* (a *Shi’i* party) to the continuous Israeli occupation of Lebanese territories resulted in the killing of more civilians and the destruction of more village homes. In 1993 and 1996 the Israeli government carried out additional attacks against Lebanon targeting civilians and *Hezbollah* fighters. During the 1996 attack, Israeli planes bombed Kana, a village near the city of Tyre, and killed over 100 civilians, mostly *Shi’i*, who were hiding in a UN compound. In August 25, 2000 Israel withdrew its troops from Lebanon under the increasing attacks of *Hezbollah*. It is worth noting too, that during the resistance of the Israeli occupation, *Hezbollah* used the tactic of suicide bombing. This involves sending a fighting member of *Hezbollah* on a mission to blow up an Israeli target by using himself or the vehicle that he drives as a carrier of the bomb. To further deceive the enemy, the suicide bomber would carry out his mission under the guise of being a civilian. *Hezbollah* called these missions “Husseini” acts of martyrdom after the name of the greatest martyr, Imam Hussein.

⁴ See Manning (2004).

⁵ Both *ghurbah* and the affective construction of homeliness, such as through food, are usefully discussed in relation to Palestinian exiles by Victoria Mason (2007a, 2007b).

⁶ We would instance specifically Turner’s discussion of the concept of “liminality” in Turner, Victor. 1974. *Drama, Fields, and Metaphors*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press.

⁷ Despite the unity among the *Shi’i* participants manifested in *Ashura* ceremony, unequal relations of power are still present during the enactment of this ritual. This is mostly revealed in the segregation between female and male participants and the fact that female *Shi’is* are denied any substantive role in the event apart from the task of preparing votive meals and baked bread for the participants and the neighborhood. Also among the male participants a relatively higher status is assigned to the religious sheikh and the *muqri’* for their possession of religious knowledge not necessarily accessible to other *Shi’is*. For this reason, the sheikh, the *muqri’* and any participant who is known in the community for his wealth or high social status, are seated at the forefront of the *majlis*.

⁸ Most anthropologists argue that legends serve “to instruct and inspire or bolster pride in family, community, or nation” (Haviland, 1999, pp. 421-423).

⁹ Stigmatisation and cultural erosion are also caused by forces of globalisation which are characterised, among other things, by demonising Muslims and considering Muslim migrants a threat to “Western culture and way of life”.

¹⁰ The motivation to generate a sense of pride in being a *Shi’i* in Australia has led some of the interviewees to claim that “many of the ideals for which Hussein sacrificed his life are presently in practice in Australia.... Hussein’s ideals are embodied in the Australian system of social justice”.

¹ Canetti (1984, p. 35) makes a similar point in relation to his analysis of the rhythmic crowd in general.

Chapter 2

¹ One of the authors of this book is of Lebanese background. He and his family (i.e., his mother and his two sisters and one brother) arrived in Sydney in August 1971. Being a member of the Lebanese community put him in a position of an ‘insider’ while conducting our ethnographic work. This resulted in “freeing” him from linguistic and cultural barriers that would otherwise face a non-Arab and non-Lebanese researcher. The fact that he was also active in community politics for more than 20 years, enabled him to witness numerous community occasions in which the *dabki* was performed, and to take part in its performance after he acquired the skill to do so.

The process of collecting field notes for this chapter started back in 1990. These notes were later used in the writing of this chapter. As a field research strategy, we also relied on the numerous remarks that we collected over the years from talking to a large number of community members who participated in the dance and came from different age groups and from both sexes. Furthermore, the long duration during which these notes were collected allowed us to map out the various trends found in the way the dancers perceived the *dabki*. It also enabled us to examine the extent to which these trends repeatedly manifested themselves in the physical performance of the dance. Apart from this, we relied on the semi-structured interviews that we conducted with a random sample of five male and two female *dabki* dancers. In short, therefore, we used “respondent and informant interviewing, direct participation and observation and introspection” (Silverman, 1985, p. 105).

² Synchronising the moves of the group is primarily the task of the *sandeh*, the support-dancer who comes second in the order of the dancers after the *qyadeh*, the lead dancer. For further details see, Trabulsi (1997, p. 155) and Moubarac, (1984, pp.549-554).

³ For a choreographic description of a number of *dabki* dances, see Moubarac, 1984, pp. 550-554.

⁴ For the role which group dancing plays in generating community solidarity, see Boas (1972); Radcliffe-Brown (1964); Rust (1969); Lange (1975).

⁵ Trabulsi (1997, pp. 156-157) argues that basically there are seven categories of *dabki* in Lebanon. These are defined according to: geographical location, landscape (e.g., the plains versus mountain *dabki*), the district, social or religious events, gender, songs and rhymes.

⁶ At a socio-psychological level, Hage argues that the migrant is intensely implicated in the act of reading the newspaper from Lebanon in a cafe in Australia to overcome his feelings of guilt induced by leaving his country and failing to pay it back for the “gift” of communality it had given him originally (Hage, 2002, pp. 192-205).

⁷ See Trabulsi (1997, pp. 159-160) for an insightful analysis of the *dabki* as a way of asserting and exhibiting gender differences between males and females in the context of rural Lebanon. Trabulsi argues that in this context, the *dabki* offers men the opportunity to assert their sovereignty over women. In addition, Bottomley (1992) shows the link between gender and the Greek dance, and how the latter is enmeshed with sexual conflict, rites of passage such as the wedding event and the celebration of female fertility and virginity (p. 82). To show the specific symbolic meaning of the male dance in Lebanon, see also Trabulsi (1997, pp. 163-164) where he argues that in rural Lebanon male leaping into the air takes the meaning of a symbolic call for rain to fall and for plants to grow higher.

Chapter 4

¹ The 2006 census showed that of the state of New South Wales has the largest number of first- and second-generation Lebanese migrants, and, within NSW, the Local Government Areas (LGAs) of Bankstown and Parramatta have the highest number of first- and second-generation Lebanese migrants. According to the 1996 census, Bankstown LGA had the highest number of first-generation (9,294) followed by Canterbury LGA (9,063) and Parramatta (5,936). These are relatively stable numbers, as comparison with 1996 and

2001 show. The 2001 census also shows that 90.6 per cent of the Lebanese-born people in Australia had Arabic as their main language spoken at home. (McDonald 2000, and Department of Immigration and Indigenous Affairs, http://www.immi.gov.au/media/publications/statistics/comm-summ/_pdf/lebanon.pdf).

² ‘Wog’ is an offensive slang expression used in Australia from the 1950s onwards to refer to immigrants of non-English-speaking background and their children, as well as non-resident foreigners, from southern Europe, and later Turkey, and Lebanon and other Middle Eastern origins. We have heard it applied to Latin American immigrants and foreigners, but it usually does not denote most Africans or Asians from North, East, or South or South-East Asia. From the 1980s, the term began to be adopted humorously or as a ‘badge of pride’ by some, mainly second-generation, immigrants of the included categories though its use by White Australians is still considered offensive.

³ More recently, the image of a *habiib*’ as a member of a gang has been appropriated by the Australian television and cinema industry, such as in the TV show *Fat Pizza* which was later turned into a comic film. In this show/film, there is a Lebanese character called *Habiib* who is depicted as “a drug dealer, car thief and a gang member who is currently on work-release from jail”. He also delivers pizzas for Bobo, the chef and owner of *Fat Pizza*. *Habiib* has a long-standing relationship with Toula, “his overweight, Greek, donut-munching girlfriend”. *Habiib*’s best friend is known as Rocky the Lebanese Rambo, who acts as “the muscle for [*Habiib*]’s hustle. He is big, strong and ready to call the cousins for any brawl, anytime”. This image of a *habiib* as a show-off who relies on other friends when a real challenge is posed reinforces dramatically the meaning already found circulating among certain Lebanese youth. Although this parodies *Habiib* as a stereotype for Lebanese youth, it fails to capture its polysemous character.

⁴ For a discussion of ‘try-hards’ and ‘wannabes’ among youth of Lebanese background, see Collins et al., 2000, pp. 136-170).

⁵ Bakhtin observes that when “sacred languages [and Australian English is certainly seen as being “sacred’ by ethnics] are spoken by the accents of vulgar folk [read ethnic] language, they are seen in a new light, their artificiality is highlighted” (1981, pp. 41-83). “Lebspeak” can be described as a “novelisation” of Australian English in the Bakhtinian sense. Bakhtin describes the features of novelised genres as follows: “They become more free and flexible, their language renews itself by incorporating extra-literary heteroglossia [i.e., that which insures the primacy of context over text] and the ‘novelistic layers of literary language, they become dialogised, permeated with laughter, irony, humour, elements of self-parody and finally – this is the most important thing – the novel inserts into these other genres an indeterminacy, a certain semantic open-endedness, a living contact with unfinished, still-evolving contemporary reality (the open ended present).” (1981, pp. 6-7). Lebspeak is clearly “dialogised”, i.e., it is “relativised, de-privileged and aware of competing definitions of the same things”. Its ironic and creative character evinces its dynamic relationship with everyday realities.

Chapter 5

¹ In research currently being carried out by one of the authors on patterns of marriage between Lebanon and Australia using the northern Beirut suburb of *al-Menieh* as a case study, the evidence shows a high rate of marriages happening between cousins.

Chapter 6

¹ In 1996 the anti-immigration independent candidate Pauline Hanson was elected to the Australian parliament. She later formed the right-wing populist political party, One Nation, which won almost 9% of the vote in the subsequent (1998) federal election, and over 22% of that vote in that year’s Queensland state election. Though ostensibly shunned by the major political parties, with each of them courting the One Nation vote, the ideology and policy of Hanson’s party was taken to a considerable extent into the Australian political mainstream for most of the following decade.

² A slang and originally offensive term used in Australia for immigrants of non-English-speaking backgrounds, generally from southern Europe or the Middle East. In recent years, the word has been adopted as a badge of pride by some, especially younger, such immigrants.

Chapter 7

¹ “Branch stacking” is the recruitment to a political party branch of numbers of spurious new members for the purpose of voting with a particular faction or for a certain candidate or resolution.

² The authors would like to thank Selda Dagistanli for her summary of this program.

³ Rugby league, rugby union and Australian rules.

⁴ Doof doof refers to music with a very loud bass.

Conclusion

¹ Understood here in Bourdieu’s sense that ‘strategic’ does not necessarily mean a conscious calculation of benefits and costs, but suggests a social practice which ‘understands’ what it needs to do to exist in a social space as embodied or implicit ways of doing things.

² Bourdieu distinguishes between institutionalised, embodied (or physical) and objectified or material cultural capital. That debate is not so relevant here, but of course we are focusing on aspects of physical capital.

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ON BEING

LEBANESE IN AUSTRALIA

Identity, Racism and the Ethnic Field

"This book is exactly what its title says it is. It is about being Lebanese in Australia. Some experiences are very clearly Australian specific such as the Lebanese racialised integration in the culture and club structure of rugby league football. Some experiences are transnationally Lebanese such as dancing dabke, celebrating 'Ashura or enduring racism, but the book still manages to capture the Australian specificity of these experiences. What's more, the book constantly moves between the theoretical and the specific whether dealing with the circulation of 'ethnic capital' or with related questions of Lebanese youth and the quest for respect. All of this is much harder to achieve than some might suspect. Today, there are many publications in Diaspora Studies where one drowns in endless theoretical generalisations about transnationalism, mobility and identity. Such works make the reader feel that they can be about any diaspora anywhere. This is why this book is an important accomplishment: while being very savvy and subtle in the deployment of general theoretical arguments, one is always kept aware that one is learning something about the specificity of the experience of Lebanese people as such, and the particularities of their Australian experience. Paradoxically, this allows for a much richer knowledge that equips the reader to better understand all kind of diasporas. I strongly recommend this book."

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"This book is timely and illuminating. Well written and very interesting, it tackles questions of agency and marginalisation of Lebanese-Australian immigrants, focusing particularly on the their children. The work interrogates the everyday societal and institutional practices of Australian multiculturalism and "whiteness", arguing that one of the common experiences of these migrants is that they are constantly "misrecognised", instead of being "recognised". The authors have written a scholarly work which is erudite and informed by keen observation of Lebanese migrants in Australia over many years. The chapter on Habiibs, for example, constitutes one of the rare contributions to the field of socio-linguistics of the Arab world and its emigrants.

The work is enriched by extensive knowledge of the theoretical literature and sharp sensitivity to the texture of daily life. The lively nature of the source material is skillfully used to enhance and invigorate the more general investigation of identity, racism and the "ethnic field". The breadth of the ideas and the theoretical concepts discussed in this book, not to mention the soundness of its main arguments, takes the topic out of the all too commonly encountered essentialist (ideological) metaphysics and their superficialities, to a further and more engaging level of analysis that will undoubtedly be of interest to the scholarly community."

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