Chapter III

Migrant youth, cultural identity and media representations

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Introduction

The current social climate of heightened intercultural tensions in culturally pluralist societies such as Australia highlights the need to develop a more nuanced understanding of the complex cultural adjustment processes encountered by migrant youth in developing and articulating a sense of national belonging. To this end, this chapter examines migrant settlement experiences as a 'process by which individuals and groups ... maintain their cultural identity while actively participating in the larger societal framework' (Korac 2001). Research into these critical aspects of integration and acculturation examines identity formation as a cultural process of renegotiating individual and group identity, and focuses on concepts of belonging, recognition and self-respect (Berry 1997). While cultural factors are considered critical indicators of successful integration into the host community, insufficient research has been conducted into the particular processes of group and individual identity formation that take place amongst migrant youth. In the case of Australia, this process has been made particularly difficult for some cultural groups due to the contemporary resurgence of populist and exclusionary discourses of national identity. In such a context, the construction of identity amongst migrant youth is all the more challenging, especially when this process exhibits notions of dual

attachment, hybridity and difference. For migrant youth, the engagement with different social institutions such as family, school and wider societal networks often affects the processes of identity formation that are inherently dynamic and 'necessarily multiple and fluid' (Noble & Tabar 2002, pp.128). Negotiating life in-between cultures, youths from migrant backgrounds experience identity construction as a highly contested territory.

Cultural identity is a central issue for immigrants, regardless of how much time has elapsed since leaving their country of origin. This issue is particularly salient for first- and second-generation[1] migrant youth, who negotiate identity space comfortably alongside, in opposition to, or more commonly, somewhere in between, their immigrant parents' conceptions of culture and the receiving culture in which they live. Unlike their native peers, the children of immigrants are exposed to intra-ethnic *and* inter-ethnic dynamics and experiences in their journey towards cultural identity formation. These experiences are complex and diverse, and are navigated within multi-layered ethnic, racial, familial, gendered, socioeconomic and educational contexts.

The chapter begins by providing theoretical frameworks for conceptualising cultural diversity and cultural identity. It then examines how migrant youth negotiate cultural identity in the public realms of family networks and school environments and how these translate into key educational and behavioural outcomes. It will draw on some qualitative snapshots as a way of illustrating shifting migrant youth attitudes towards society, school and culture.

Conceptualising cultural identity

Cultural identity is best understood in terms of difference – through the juxtaposition of the identity of 'self' and 'other' in relation to wider society, as well as in relation to the group in which individuals participate by subscribing to certain forms of behaviour and ways of thinking (Browne 2006). Given that cultural identity is such an integral part of oneself, it is often difficult to understand and interpret our own cultural worldview (Lei 2006, p.91). Nonetheless, even limited cross-cultural contact can alter individual values, behaviours and attitudes, which shape how first- and second-generation migrant youth interpret and negotiate their present, past and future conditions and circumstances. How individuals see themselves lays an important foundation for future self-perceptions and forms of behaviour, as conceptions of identity shape imaginings about what constitutes 'the good life' or 'subjective well-being' (Diener, Oishi & Lucas 2003). Similarly, a core element in the concept of cultural identity is 'subjective perception'

1.While acknowledging that some scholars have been critical of the term 'second generation', this chapter does not intend to infer that the second generation are 'people under investigation' or perpetual foreigners, as John Hutnyk (2005), amongst others, suggests.

and intergenerational perceptions of a shared heritage community (Abdelal et al. 2005, p.58).

In conceptualising 'culture' amongst migrant youth, then, cultures should be understood as 'neither monolithic nor necessarily historically continuous', as the cultural values a migrant community claims to have in common 'might be a contesting issue within that community', especially in the second generation (Stivachtis 2006, p.2). While migrant communities culturally influence first- and second-generation youth in central or distal ways, it is misleading to assume a 'common culture' by lumping multiple cultural identities together with race or ethnicity. One reason for this is that culture, when conflated with race and ethnicity, is 'conceptually and methodologically dubious' (Park 2005, p.7), given that race and ethnicity are traditional demarcations of difference, or 'otherness.' Another is that cultures always co-exist within cultures, and so-called common cultures are typically further divided along generational, gendered, socioeconomic and geographic lines to form overlapping cultures, or subcultures.

Because multiple cultural influences can and do exist within one person, culture is most constructively conceptualised in individualistic terms. In this way, culture could be understood as a source of identity that 'gives people a sense of who they are, of belonging, of how they should behave and what they should not be doing' (Harris & Morgan 1991, p.12, cited in Friedman & Antal 2005, p.71). This does not mean that culture should be viewed as static, autonomous or bounded, as it 'develops through constant interconnection rather than in spite of it, and some form of multiculturalism, hybridity, and change is the normal state of human beings', rather than a recent phenomenon (Feinberg 2006, p.168). From an agency perspective, individuals are 'culture-and-meaning makers, constantly trying to understand and explain the environments we live in' (Duffy 2006, p.20). For the children of immigrants, cultural meaning is negotiated by the extent to which they embrace their cultural heritage and by their selective absorption of the cultural values and beliefs of wider society, or some aspects of it. These processes of understanding and interpreting culture(s) are extremely diverse, not least because they invariably involve degrees of reflection and confusion.

Hybridity is often presented as the optimal model for conceptualising the role of culture in identity formation, especially in second-generation youth. The concept refers to the mixed cultural traits of individuals, the fusion of cultural elements from dissimilar sources, and/or the spatial quality of culturally overlapping border zones. It is within these borderland areas that different cultures meet, to either negotiate the processes of intercultural cohabitation to produce new cultural reservoirs and ways of belonging or to compete for hegemony and control. At the most positive end of the cultural spectrum, hybridity includes an ability to competently navigate between two cultures without having to choose one over the other or feeling compelled to relinquish part of oneself. This constructive hybridisation assumes a global, cosmopolitan or transnational identity that has outgrown traditional 'othering' constructs of race, nation and gender that are often

based on negative forms of assimilation. At the opposite, negative end of this spectrum, hybridity may be regarded with fear, distrust and as a challenge to notions of cultural authenticity. Indeed, hybrids have historically been excluded from mainstream society; the etymological Latin term *hybrida* means 'the bastard child of a Roman and a slave' (Clothier 2006, p.19).

Much of the recent literature on hybridity has drawn from the work of the postcolonial theorist Homi Bhabha (1994, pp.37, 218) to conceptualise the navigation of cultural identity in terms of an ambiguous 'third space', or a 'zone of identity processing' (see, for example, Benitez 2006, p.190; Zhao 2005, p.23). In this sense, 'third space' denotes the site of negotiation and translation between the 'discursive space of "identity" and the discursive space of "identification"' (Aoki 1996, p.5, cited in Donnelly 2006, p.696). This fluid conceptualisation of hybridity views third spaces as being essentially constructive in the sense that they challenge binary and polarised distinctions by creating greater opportunities for 'sensemaking' and constructing cultural 'identity in a new light, reflexively' (Fougere 2003, p.2). As a dynamic, borderless realm, the third space thus presents hybridity as a paradox that transforms just as it renews cultural elements. This fluid borrowing, interpenetration and reinvention of culture assumes that today's 'hybridisation will simply give way to tomorrow's hybridisation' (Stewart 1999, p.41, cited in Munasinghe 2006, p.551), as hybrid identities are always in a state of becoming but never complete, shifting and reassembling as they do at different stages in a migrant's life cycle.

Negotiating cultural identity in the public sphere

The experiences of migrant youth in negotiating cultural identity formation are complex and diverse and vary from one generation to the next. In the burgeoning body of literature on migrant youth issues, there is general consensus that first-generation immigrant children, especially those from non-English-speaking backgrounds, often experience adjustment difficulties, or a 'negative entry effect', due to language and cultural barriers and/or socioeconomic difficulties if their parents' foreign-acquired education and skills are non-transferable (Reitz & Somerville 2004, p.3). While first-generation migrant youth are largely concerned with adjusting to their new context and may experience 'adverse reactions following the multiple losses of migration' (for example, anxiety, depression and grief), the challenges facing the second generation are quite different and are mostly not straightforward (Suarez-Orozco 2003, p.2). There is a lot of disagreement in the literature, however, about how second-generation youth negotiate cultural identity. Assimilationists would argue that migrants gradually gain economic parity and become culturally similar to the native population over successive generations. This narrow perception has changed considerably over recent years, not least because of the large number of visual and written accounts produced by multi-generation migrants themselves. Rather than emphasising assimilation, integration and equality, many of these writings have highlighted such problematic issues as racism in schools, the

treatment of second-generation migrant children as 'perpetual foreigners' by students and teachers (Lee 2006, pp.17, 21) and intergenerational cultural conflict as the result of acculturation amongst friends and peers. There have also been a growing number of studies about the processes of inclusion and exclusion (see, for example, Alba 2005; Allen 2006) and of the 'hybrid', 'hyphenated' or 'multiple identities' of second-generation migrant youth (Golash-Boza 2006; Seynnaeve 2006; Suarez-Orozco & Qin-Hilliard 2006).

There are at least two approaches in the literature towards examining how migrant youth and second-generation migrant youth negotiate their cultural and intercultural identities in the public realm. The first 'bicultural' approach focuses on identities that 'are constructed and articulated across difference' (Baldassar 1999, p.1). This difference is manifested in the form of the migrant youth's parents, family and community on one hand, and their friends, peers and wider society on the other. Bicultural identities are navigated and formed by people who continually try 'to make sense of two sets of cultural patterns that are very often opposites' (Meleis 1991, p.367). Many recent studies on biculturalism have focused on the extent to which second-generation migrant youth have maintained 'transnational' connections with their parents' country of origin through their daily activities and familial, social, religious and professional networks and relations that operate between the boundaries of two nation-states (Fouron & Glick-Schiller 2002, p.171).

By emphasising individual flexibility and 'multiple identities', the second approach to analysing migrant youth negotiations of cultural identity departs from the traditional sociological assumption that people automatically acquire an identity on the basis of their ethnicity or cultural affiliation. While the bicultural model is 'heuristically useful, in multicultural societies it can quickly become less applicable', especially in cases where people have two or more cultural backgrounds, an increasingly common phenomenon in 'the new "global village"' (Cote 2006, p.32). Migrant youth tend to form dynamic identities that are continually renegotiated across complex conflicting spaces within multi-layered ethnic, cultural, gendered, racial, linguistic, familial, educational and social contexts. As such, their multiple identities may manifest in hybrid and dynamic ways in the analogous process of 'identity re-evaluation' (Butcher 2004, p.216).

How first- and second-generation migrant youth navigate the path to cultural identity formation in the public sphere is contingent on a number of variables. While some authors emphasise the importance of family networks, others stress socioeconomic background, gender, race, or wider social influences such as school environment, friendships and the mass media. Although there is no clear consensus on the relative importance of each variable in cultural identity formation, 'ethnic and racial statuses' that closely resemble the mainstream, strong social relationships and 'access to social resources' (or social capital), are generally considered to be central to positive self-identity and feelings of belonging amongst children of migrant heritage cultures (Pahl & Way 2006, p.1403).

Media influences and responses

In Australia, like most other parts of the Western world, the media plays an important role in shaping public opinion about multiculturalism and national identity, and to a lesser degree, in challenging mainstream attitudes. Young people are especially susceptible to media influences, because while they recognise that media representations are in a sense idealised, their perceptions of reality are nevertheless influenced by them. For first- and second-generation migrant youth, television, the internet and other media sources are the sites where 'the borders of hybridised and multicultural identities can be explored' (Bauer 1998). It is within these non-territorially demarcated 'mediascapes'[2] that migrant youth develop an understanding of how their cultural heritage and position within a multicultural society are represented in mainstream and minority media, and where 'discourses on belonging and exclusion are produced and consumed' (Appadurai 1996, p.32, cited in Collin 2006, p.24).

There is no consensus in the literature about the precise roles of the mass media in shaping a sense of cultural belonging amongst first- and second-generation migrant youth or the extent to which media-related images accurately portray their daily realities. However, there is general agreement that the media can have negative or positive cultural influences on migrant youth.

Negative cultural influences

In a negative sense, mainstream media may render the layers of complexity in minority cultures invisible by failing to report 'the struggles between good and bad, tolerance and intolerance, orthodoxy and moderate', or by simplistically focusing on 'happy dancing minorities' who are segregated from the wider society within which they live (DeSouza & Williamson 2006, p.1). This may have a disempowering or disabling effect on young migrant audiences if they feel bombarded by media messages that represent 'only a few voices with assumed particular agendas' (Ang et al. 2006, p.9). In other words, the perceptions of minority youth about their own cultural heritage may be tarnished if media commentators collude with rigid discourses on what McCauliffe calls 'national multiculturalisms' (McCauliffe 2007, p.1) or assume popular understandings of difference that are premised on monocultural norms and assumptions.

Mainstream media can also exacerbate feelings of exclusion and lead to self-segregating behaviours when their reporting on cultural identity issues sensationalises the spectre of unruliness that is often associated with

2. Scapes denote what Appadurai calls the 'building blocks' of 'imagined worlds' (Appadurai 1996, p.32, cited in Collin 2006, p.24)

migrant youth. Many immigrant youth are deeply resentful of media biases that treat them as a singular entity without an individual identity and 'present an untrue picture' of themselves (Bartels 2003, p.156). For example, the British media's extensive coverage of Vietnamese youth gangs not only reinforced racial stereotypes among sections of the wider population, it also divided the Vietnamese community, as recent immigrants struggled to avoid a 'misleading reputation of criminal activity' (Sims 2007, p.8). In Australia, too, the racial vilification of young Lebanese youths and youths of Middle Eastern appearance by right-wing shock jocks that culminated in the December 2005 riots on Sydney's Cronulla Beach exacerbated pre-existing feelings of exclusion amongst non-European migrant youths whose primary source of identification was with their own social marginalisation. As one Indian Australian teenager explained, 'when they're bagging [Lebanese] out in the media, you feel protective [because it's] ... like they don't see where you're coming from' (Butcher 2004, p.223).

On the other hand, a preference for mainstream media by first- and second-generation migrant youth may attest to their secure cultural identity and sense of belonging. In their study of ethnic identity in German migrants, Constant Gataullina & Zimmerman argue that

> people who equally prefer the German media and the media of their country of origin are culturally integrated, those who are only involved in the German media are culturally assimilated, the readers of media only from the country of origin are culturally separated, and those who do not read any media are culturally marginalised.

> (Constant, Gataullina & Zimmerman 2006, p.13)

The obvious problem with this neat categorisation, however, is that it undoubtedly masks and distorts more complex realities. That is, migrant youth may embrace mainstream media culture for a range of reasons other than feeling 'integrated' or 'assimilated'. Some young migrant audiences may prefer mainstream media because they feel embarrassed about their cultural heritage and do not wish to draw attention to their own distinctiveness. The 'overwhelming acculturative powers' of North America's mass media and public schools have pushed migrant youth there to 'proffer their unhesitating allegiance to those aspects of the American cultural system which are visible to them', with the result that they tend to establish a singular American identity and become alienated from their migrant heritage (Barda 1964, p.245). Other second-generation migrant youth may prefer to consume mainstream media because they do not understand their migrant parents' native language, especially if their parents discourage bilingualism in the familial context out of a desire to see their children assimilate.

Positive cultural influences

In its most positive form, the mainstream media occasionally serves as a 'key cross-over point for intercultural exchange' and 'a primary vehicle for promoting inter-cultural awareness and understanding' (Williamson &

DeSouza 2006, p.20). When this happens, mainstream media organisations actively collaborate with migrant communities to promote intercultural awareness and communicate their aspirations. For example, the Asia 1 TV digital television channel in Birmingham has established partnerships with ANI/Reuters in Delhi and Star (India), which has enabled young South Asian-Britons to '"cross over" into mainstream charts' through their 'post-Bhangra' and 'Asia Kool' music to form an 'emergent and vibrant British Asian urban youth culture' (McEwan, Pollard & Henry 2005, pp.925, 927). This consumption and digestion of fusion South Asian music has provided many young South Asian-Britons with a valuable 'cultural resource for reflecting on and appreciating their Asian identities and their origins' within a hybridised cultural context (Lindridge, Hogg & Shah 2004, p.231). In Australia, SBS Radio broadcasters have also worked closely with migrant communities to produce 255 hours of programs for specific language groups, with a further 21 hours aimed at youth.

To some extent, media convergences and transnational media flows have also reduced intercultural cleavages by generating new regional and global youth subcultures. Second-generation migrant youth have been able to realise their potential for transnational or diasporic communication by capitalising on their cultural capital to negotiate hybridised or cosmopolitan identities that offer greater diversity in cultural expression. The 'mass-mediated youth culture' on the United State's West Coast, for instance, has inspired a 'GenerAsian' subculture amongst second-generation Chinese American youth that is characterised by its 'unashamedly' upward mobility and transnational consumption of 'Asian popular culture, American popular culture, *and* Asian-disseminated American popular culture' (Wong 2006, pp.3–4). Such diasporic identities, or what Vertovec describes as identities 'involving the production and reproduction of transnational social and cultural phenomena' (Vertovec 2000, p.153), may equally take various forms of resistance by young people in their engagements with their local and wider communities. For example, many second-generation Dutch Moroccan Muslim youth have reacted against divisive mainstream media representations of 'us' non-Muslims versus 'them' Muslims by refusing to access Dutch media, instead choosing Islamic media sources such as *The Computer Clubhouse* website that implicitly and occasionally explicitly promotes a pan-Islamic identity through social resistance (Brouwer 2006).

Like mainstream media, the minority/ethnic media may culturally influence migrant youth in positive and negative ways. The good news is that improved technologies via satellites and cable networks have increasingly enabled migrant youth to learn about, and stay in touch with, their heritage language and country of origin. For many first- and second-generation youth, ethnic media is an important resource in 'mediating between native place ties and the environment of the host society' (Chan 2006, p.23), especially if it can be accessed at the international, national and sub-national levels to offer a wide cultural repertoire of identity options. In fact, the capacity of migrant youth to access media that reflects their interests is a key determining factor in 'the politics of ethnic identity' (Alam & Husband

2006, p.12). Because first- and second-generation migrant youth must navigate many cultural worlds of meaning, it follows that minority media organisations that create multiple pathways towards identity formation facilitate a sense of belonging in the younger generation. By contrast, migrant youth are likely to reject ethnic media organisations that offer only a limited cultural repertoire that assumes they belong to a single ethnic group without accommodating the other spatial dimensions of their bicultural or multiple identities.

Mainstream and minority 'mediascapes', then, can either assist or impede the processes of cultural identity formation in first- and second-generation migrant youth. The cultural influence of minority media organisations is heavily contingent on their capacity to offer a diverse repertoire of programs that young migrant audiences can culturally relate to and identify with. While most mainstream media outlets rarely venture outside the supercultural 'box', however, minority audiences may still find the mainstream culturally palatable if they are unable to identify with ethnic media or if they desire acceptance by the dominant societal culture.

This is why regional and transnational media are becoming increasingly important cultural reservoirs. For migrant youth who reject or feel 'othered' by mainstream media messages, or who want to explore their cultural heritage without entirely embracing their parents' cultural values, the transnational media offers new opportunities for creative cultural production and discovery. It is within these eclectic new cultural niches that migrant youth can explore their hybridised identities and normatively feel that their views and aspirations are being represented by new media discourses on inclusion while concurrently negotiating opportunities for cultural invention and reinvention.

Arab Australian migrant youth

Having identified some of the complex and multi-layered networks within which cultural identity processes are negotiated by migrant youth, it is useful to examine how these influences affect Arab Australian migrant youth. Arab Australian secondary school students were selected for a study on cultural diversity in schools because of the increased challenges faced by them in the wake of the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States, which has been accompanied by an increase in Australian mainstream racial identity constructions of the Arab and Muslim 'Other'. This situation raises difficult questions about the extent to which young Arab Australians feel 'othered' or disconnected from the mainstream, and how their attitudes and cultural perspectives are accordingly negotiated, defined and circumscribed.

The rationale for focusing on secondary school students is that mid- to late adolescence is commonly regarded as the most formative period in identity development. It is during adolescence that a 'crisis of identity is most paramount in the mind of the young person' and children of

immigrants are especially likely to ask 'Who am I?' (Padilla 2006, p.471). Secondary school students also typically have higher cultural identity levels than younger children of migrants. As An Vo explains, first- and second-generation migrant youth 'do see cultural identity as an issue, especially in the years covered by secondary school' (Vo 2003, p.3). The capacity of second-generation youth to develop a positive cultural identity during adolescence 'strongly influences school to workplace transitions', because cultural 'deficits and disadvantages confronted by second generation youth at age eighteen or twenty are far more difficult to overcome' than those amongst their native peers (Miller 2006, p.17).

The qualitative data used in this chapter forms part of an ongoing study (Mansouri & Trembath 2005) aiming to identify, understand and address the cultural needs and expectations of Arab Australian migrant secondary school students in the northern region of Melbourne. As discussed, current literature on cultural diversity suggests that there are numerous factors contributing to successful multicultural policies and practices, which extend from individual attitudes and responses to family networks and ethnic, gendered, socioeconomic, racial and school environments. That is, current theorising about multiculturalism tends to take a holistic approach, highlighting the importance of all of these factors and the way they interlink with each other. As this study has adopted a multidimensional approach to investigating the needs of Arab Australian migrant youth, it has therefore been necessary to go beyond academic research and secondary textual data by eliciting primary source data in the form of interviews with young Arab Australian secondary school students (with the necessary consent from their parents being a condition of participation).

Throughout the focus group discussions, students argued that political events as covered and represented by the mainstream media had changed the way Arab Australians were perceived and treated by the wider community. An oft-repeated sentiment referred to populist racial connections made between their ethnicity and terrorism. The criminalisation of Arab and Muslim identity in Australia was also a common theme in their discussions. Some youth were highly attuned to the radicalisation of crime in the Australian media (Collins et al. 2000; Poynting et al. 2004). In the following discussion, a group of boys discern a stark contrast between media treatment of crimes committed by Arab Australians as opposed to Anglo-Australians. They make reference to recent coverage of a 'gang rape' case in Sydney involving young men of Lebanese, Muslim background:

Especially the media, 'cause the media, they show us as bad people through the news.

And they always refer, 'they are Lebo'.

Yeah, 'they are Lebo' and they mention our religion.

'Oh, they're Muslims.' See, they don't go, 'oh, a Christian man raped this girl', it's all 'a Muslim man raped this girl'.

Yeah, and every time a Lebanese or someone Muslim does something they get jailed, and [for example] if some Aussie would go kidnap a baby, they'd get ...

It [the media] would just say 'A man kidnapped a baby'. If it was a Muslim, 'an Arab kidnapped this kid', they wouldn't say 'a man'.

Boys in particular expressed high levels of distrust of police, often as a direct result of their experience, having found themselves under close police surveillance as potential criminals. This finding concurs with other qualitative studies that have identified a positive correlation between gender and cultural self-construals in terms of feelings of social exclusion. For instance, boys have been found to be more concerned than girls about 'differences in status and prestige which are related to groups in general and ethnic groups in particular' (Klinket & Verkuyten 1997, p.351, cited in Khanlou 2005, p.11). As a result, first- and second-generation migrant boys are statistically more likely to report and respond negatively to racism than girls, and to 'check out' of school after 'hostile' interactions with teachers and school administrators (Suarez-Orozco & Qin-Hilliard 2003, p.10).

Overall, the students interviewed moved fluidly from discussing abstract processes of radicalisation to relating personal narratives of racism. This pattern of conversation indicates the complexity of the way the youths make sense of their social experiences. They appear able to see and make connections between their personal experiences of racism on the one hand, and structural exclusion and institutional exercises of power on the other. They are aware of, and disturbed by, the tendency to use political events to construct stereotypical representations of Arabs and Muslims in Australia as a homogeneous, racialised, threatening 'other', a powerful image that the mainstream media has perpetuated in its coverage of national and global political crises (Poynting et al. 2004). Not surprisingly, such perceptions and everyday experiences of racism appear to have had considerable impact on their sense of identity and belonging, as illustrated by the following student's observations:

You can see it [racism] in various ways. I mean, you can see it on the streets, you can see it through media, and I mean news reporters, you know, they always talk about discrimination, and how things can be like, really unfair, where you're from, and where your cultural background is, you know?

... the 9/11, what actually happened there, the media was blaming the whole Arabic community, and that's not actually true. I'm not Arabic but ... you shouldn't judge people, like you shouldn't judge the whole community just because one or two people done it, you haven't got the right to, so ... that's actually what America and Australia were saying in the news that they were blaming all Muslims and Arabs and that's not actually true. Not every single one of them went there and drove a plane into the buildings. It was only like twenty or thirty people, so you can't blame every single person.

Such references to judgment and 'blame' underscore the common perception amongst young Arab Australians that they are being collectively stigmatised by the mainstream media in particular, and by Australian society at large. These feelings of marginalisation and social exclusion are reflected in their descriptions of experiences of racist attacks in their daily lives, from being 'spat at' and told to 'go back to your own country' to girls wearing head scarves being given 'the evil eyes' (also called 'greasies' in Melbourne

schools). How young Arab Australian migrants negotiate cultural identity in the public sphere, then, depends on their exposure to these different forms of racism. Recent studies of 'liminal hybrid' racial category or the racial 'halfie' have produced divergent findings about the impact of racism on cultural identity formation in the second generation. According to Elsa Germain (2004, p.134), 'minority culture adolescents who have experienced racism are more likely to engage in cultural identity exploration' than their native peers who have not been subjected to such discrimination. The inference here is that awareness of racism may potentially produce positive outcomes in the form of increasing self- and group awareness about 'in-group' and 'out-group' perceptions of racism and developing coping strategies to respond to negative stereotypes. Most authors agree, however, that racism usually produces negative outcomes as the feelings of anger, shame, confusion and cultural loss that result from the internalisation of racism among young victims often lead them to display 'a marginalised personality' and a diluted cultural identity as they find themselves 'on the margins of each [culture] but a member of neither' (Kim et al. 2006, p.168). In such cases, migrant youth may either deny that racism exists, avoid discussion of racism to deflect attention away from their own sense of 'otherness', or embrace 'the ideals of White superiority and the acceptance of racism whether it is in a blatant or cloaked manner' (Burgos-Aponte 2004, pp.11–12).

The Arab Australian student interviewees in this study responded to their experiences of racism in different ways. While some youths claimed (somewhat unconvincingly) that racism 'doesn't matter', others said they 'don't think you get used to it, but once they keep saying it you take it'. Still others stated that they 'punch [their victimisers] in the face'. This finding is supported by previous studies that have reported wide-ranging responses to racism in the media and in daily life. As Muslim Youth in Europe explained when publicly responding to negative mass media representations of themselves there, 'alienation can lead to different outcomes, including apathy, drug taking, involvement in gangs', or at the extreme end of the 'bad behaviour' spectrum, terrorist activity (Muslim Youth in Europe 2005, p.5). However, while some children of migrants who grow up feeling like stigmatised strangers develop an adversarial cultural hierarchy with the non-conformist values of an unassimilable underclass (Waldinger & Feliciano 2004, p.377), others emerge as model minorities, who strive to fulfil their migrant parents' dreams and aspirations. Still others, who develop an identity based on their own educational, social and economic achievements, become increasingly detached from their cultural heritage (or consciously reject it) as higher education and better job opportunities provide a more protective buffer against 'an often hostile homogenising and discriminating dominant host society' (Franchi & Andronikof-Sanglade 2001, p.117). That is, just as negative racial stereotypes in the mainstream media and in society at large could potentially lead to a negative self-segregated or combative relationship with the hegemonic culture, it could more positively disrupt or break down rigid monocultural cultural hierarchies and contribute towards the construction of hyphenated spaces of inclusion and belonging.

Conclusion

This chapter has argued that cultural identity formation can only be properly understood in individualistic terms because of the multi-layered familial, gendered, socioeconomic, ethnic, racial and educational cultural contexts and mediascapes within which immigrant youth live, and the varying social and behavioural outcomes engendered by them. This individualistic approach has emphasised the dynamic quality of cultural identity as a construction that is constantly shifting and being renegotiated. As a perpetual state of 'becoming', cultural identity formation has been viewed as a process that is navigated within borderless third space zones of reflexive cultural transformation. In this, media representations of race are a particularly potent factor in the negotiation of cultural identity amongst first- and second-generation migrant youth. Children whose physical appearance differs from the hegemonic racial configuration often find that racial beliefs and stereotypes amongst the dominant ethnic group shape how they think about their own identities and deflect stigma away from members of the dominant group.

In Australia, it has been argued that the degree of cultural heterogeneity in the mass media can either positively influence young migrant audiences or negatively reinforce mainstream racial stereotypes about ethnic minorities. While minority youth who lack access to culturally diverse ethnic/minority media are less likely to consume it, even limited mainstream media messages that are centred around monocultural values may be accepted by migrant youth if they feel disconnected from their cultural heritage or desire mainstream acceptance. This does not mean that immigrant youth who embrace mainstream media norms and dominant cultural values will necessarily develop more secure cultural identities than those who reject it, or who feel rejected by it. What it does suggest, however, is that the media and other cultural preferences of migrant youth are closely linked to the central issue of cultural identity, or, more accurately, to their *search* for identity and a sense of belonging.

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