Chapter 12
Migrant Youth and Social Policy in Multicultural Australia: Exploring Cross-Cultural Networking

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Abstract This chapter explores the extent to which the direction of Australia's official multicultural and civic integration policies, reflects the social attitudes and networking practices of migrant youth. The chapter pays particular attention to the Federal Government's "Anti-Racism Strategy" announced in 2012 as part of its Multicultural Policy. On a theoretical level, direct efforts to mitigate racism have the potential to augment strategies that reaffirm pluralism and address disadvantage often associated with the migrant experience. On an empirical level, it is important to explore the extent to which such top-level discourses have actual founding in the social lives of migrant youth. Therefore this chapter presents the empirical findings of an empirical longitudinal on "Social Networks, Belonging and Active Citizenship among Migrant Youth" (Australian Research Council Linkage project 2009–2013). Migrant youth in this study pointed to a number of instances of racism, which act as significant barriers to cross-cultural networking. Analysis of the data shows, among other things, that there is a persistent tendency among migrant youth to point to their social distance from the metaphorical "Aussie Aussie" people of Anglo origins who are perceived as symbolising Australia's mainstream. Such manifestations of racial discrimination preclude the emergence of a genuinely inclusive society that supports and nurtures cultural diversity as a significant part of the Australian national identity, as well as the stated objectives of its social policy repertoire.

Keywords Multicultural policy • Multiculturalism • Civic integration • Social inclusion • Anti-racism strategy • Migrant youth • Racism

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12.1   Introduction

Multicultural Policy and the Social Inclusion Agenda were key pillars of the Australian Labor Government's (2007–2013) social policy repertoire.[1] They represent a blended approach to diversity that balances civic integrationist and multicultural perspectives (Banting and Kymlicka 2013) (see also Chap. 10). Broadly, the policies were aimed at fostering positive community relations by supporting cultural diversity and addressing socioeconomic disadvantage (see Chap. 4 for an argument in favour of this approach). Both of these policies identified young people as a critical demographic focus for their implementation (DIAC 2011; ASIB 2012). Despite this apparent focus, little has been done to empirically gauge their actual relevance and efficacy in regards to their key target group, migrant youth. This paper begins to fill this gap by exploring the extent to which top-level social policy discourses reflect and resonate with the social attitudes and networking practices of migrant youth. It is premised on the idea that empirical dynamics are the best touchstone for effective social policy. Specifically, this chapter looks at the extent to which the purported aims of the Labor Government's Multicultural and Social Inclusion policies speak to the cross-cultural networking practices of migrant youth in Australia. The analysis draws upon data collected as part of the ARC (Australian Research Council) Linkage Project (2009–2013) "Social Networks, Belonging and Active Citizenship among Migrant Youth" (Mansouri et al. 2013).

The first part of this chapter briefly outlines the Labor Government's Multicultural Policy and Social Inclusion Agenda, and critically appraises their compatibility, given that they are supposed to act in the context of, and in concert with, one another. Conceding that there is a measure of incompatibility between the two approaches, it goes on to argue that the new "Anti-Racism Strategy" announced in 2012, represents a practical step towards bridging the two policies, and promoting a more socioeconomically inclusive, multicultural Australia. The chapter will then anchor this discussion in an analysis of data from the ARC study. It explores the respondents' cross-cultural networking practices, and considers whether these practices resonate with the Multicultural and Social Inclusion polices. Specifically, the data is analysed in order to gauge community engagement and participation—which are key indicators used to measure civic integration, as espoused by the Social Inclusion agenda—and cross-cultural connections (an important component of the Multicultural Policy) among the migrant youth. The analysis will elucidate migrant youths' perspectives on whether Social Inclusion and Multicultural parameters facilitate actual feelings of belonging and engagement in the Australian social milieu as a whole.

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[1] With the election of the conservative government under Prime Minister Tony Abbott in September 2013 the Social Inclusion Unit was disbanded, but the Multicultural Policy, *The People of Australia*, remains in place. The clear direction to be taken by the new government is yet to be elucidated, and so this chapter will concern itself with social policy under the former Labor Government.

12.2 Multiculturalism and Social Inclusion in Australia

Since the early 1970s Multicultural policy has been applied as a means of addressing cultural diversity in Australia. Over time, multiculturalism as "a set of practical policies aimed variously at improving the absorption of migrants and harmoniously integrating a culturally diverse society around liberal democratic values" (Brahm Levey 2007: 1) has taken on symbolic significance in debates about Australian national identity. Such embroilment in issues of national identity has tended to compromise multiculturalism as a policy agenda and call into question its utility. Political retreat from multiculturalism in the 1990s was backed up by distrust in aspects of multicultural policies by social critics and political analysts who argued that it is divisive (Brahm Levey 2007) and works against the harmonious integration of migrants (Modood 2007). As the Howard conservative government came to abandon its rhetorical use of "multiculturalism" in the late 1990s, civic integrationist notions such as citizenship, social cohesion and integration were touted as viable alternatives for government focus (see Chap. 10). In such an atmosphere, the newly elected Labour Government of 2007 announced the Social Inclusion Agenda as a key social policy with an all of government approach. It did so in concert with a reaffirmation of Multicultural Policy in 2011.

   In recent years, Australia's Multicultural Policy and Social Inclusion Agenda have developed in line with critiques from academics and practitioners, who argue that they fail to work in concert to address the specific disadvantage resulting from the migrant experience (Boese and Phillips 2011). In particular, these critiques point to entrenched processes of racially and culturally based exclusion in Australia. They argue for the need to challenge racism and discrimination directly, in order for the blended policy approach—which layers multicultural policy and a civic integrationist agenda—to remain apace with the needs of such a diverse country (Mansouri 2011; Vasta 2007; Dunn and Nelson 2011; Berman and Paradies 2010). The recent Anti-Racism Strategy was developed in response to these critiques and represents a potentially significant step towards encouraging genuine multicultural inclusion (AHRC 2012b).

12.2.1 Australia's Multicultural Policy

There were many reasons for the introduction of multiculturalism in the 1970s by the Labor Prime Minister Gough Whitlam, and its later implementation under the Liberal government of Malcolm Fraser. A multicultural reality, or what Pardy and Lee (2011: 298) call "descriptive" multiculturalism was one of these reasons. Indeed, in 1967, new immigrants in Australia began lobbying the government for their cultural, ethnic and linguistic rights to be supported by funding for service provision. Also in this year, Australian Indigenous citizens were given full voting rights. By the early 1970s, thanks to movements in the US and South Africa, it had

become untenable internationally and in Australia to keep explicit racial clauses in government policies. At the ceremony proclaiming the Racial Discrimination Act of 1975, the Prime Minister Gough Whitlam referred to Australia as a "multicultural nation" for the first time in the history of federated Australia. And so it was, in 1978, under the Government of Malcom Fraser, that the first Multicultural Policy was implemented. The term multiculturalism, defined as "cultural pluralism" by the Fraser government had "an attendant focus on social cohesion" (Boese and Philips 2011: 190). Yet, despite these developments, race and racism did not cease to exist on a prescriptive level in all of Australia's policies and social institutions, nor at the normative level of the national ethos (Pardy and Lee 2011: 298).

From its inception, multiculturalism as a government policy was concerned with *managing* migrant settlement and cultural diversity. Policymakers adopted an Access and Equity approach as expounded in the Galbally Report of 1978 (see also Chap. 13), which acknowledged the significant settlement needs of migrants and highlighted the need to foster multiculturalism through ethnic communities and all levels of government. It called for a focus on the recognition of heritage culture, equal opportunity and adequate services for migrants (Galbally 1978). In this period, multicultural policy was premised on a broader social justice agenda designed to address the social and economic disadvantages experienced by recently arrived migrants (see Chap. 13). Many support services for migrants were established, including language and social services, workplace and welfare assistance, and access to media in the first languages of migrants (Special Broadcasting Services). In short order, superficial understandings of culture "led to celebrations of exotic food and folkloric traditions in schools, local government services, state-funded cultural production, and many other spheres" (Poynting and Mason 2008: 235; see also Chap. 13). In this context, resentment grew among white Australians of British descent who became concerned with "cultural extinction" (Hage 2003: 61) or "cultural invisibility". A growing popular backlash against multiculturalism started to emerge and with a loss of bipartisan support for the policy during the 1990s, Australian government rhetoric began to shift (see also Chap. 10).

At the turn of the century, in reaction to the symbolic significance that multiculturalism came to have in debates about what it means to be Australian, the conservative Howard government sought to underplay its importance by removing it from government use. As Mansouri noted, the primary, popular critique levelled at multiculturalism at this time was "that migrants have been able to access the rights associated with Australian citizenship and more broadly the Australian way of life without having to assume the social and civic responsibilities necessary to a cohesive society" (2013: 4). In this atmosphere, Australia's social policies for migrants took a civic integrationist turn, beginning to emphasise notions of citizenship, social cohesion and integration. This manifested as the "New Integrationism" (Poynting and Mason 2008) of the Howard government, which focussed on "an assumed core culture that saw it as binding the nation together—western civilization, English language and Anglo-Saxon cultural roots" (Schech and Rainbird 2013; Tate 2009; see also Chap. 10). In this spirit, official multicultural policy faded into rhetorical

obscurity in 2006, and a socially conservative civic integrationist agenda was pursued. This culminated just a year later with the introduction of the citizenship test, representing what some describe as an attempt to tie a national character to the prerogatives of government and "dictate the cultural choices of Australians in civil society in the name of 'our values'" (Brahm Levey 2007: 10).

On 16 February 2011, after more than a decade of the perceived marginalisation of multiculturalism from politics—what has been dubbed a "retreat from multiculturalism" (Joppke 2004; Uberoi and Modood 2013; Banting and Kymlicka 2013)—the Labor government announced "The People of Australia" the country's first official multicultural policy since 2006. This announcement reaffirmed the Federal Government's commitment to multiculturalism. Then minister for Immigration, Chris Bowen, publicly announced in an address to the Sydney Institute, that he is "not afraid to use the word multiculturalism" and is "proud of what it means to Australian life" (Bowen 2011). He also argued for the distinctiveness of Australia's multiculturalism, or what he described as "the genius of Australian multiculturalism" (2011). This latest articulation of multicultural policy is underpinned by four principles: celebrating and valuing diversity; maintaining social cohesion; communicating the benefits of Australia's diversity; and responding to intolerance and discrimination. The five key initiatives of this policy are the establishment of the Australian Multicultural Council (AMC); the National Anti-Racism Partnership and Strategy; Access and Equity Strategy; Multicultural Art and Festivals Grants; and the Multicultural Youth Sports Partnership Program (DIAC 2011).

Whilst welcoming the Government's reaffirmation and commitment to multiculturalism, some critics warn that the increased complexity arising from the plurality of social contexts and negotiations of differences is often absent from policy and programs aimed at supporting cultural diversity (Noble 2011; Walsh 2012). Noble argues that diversity is most often assumed on the basis of the number of ethnic groups born overseas or arriving in Australia, but that there is little examination of the intermingling "that ensues, [so] we are left with the sense of diversity as the juxtaposition of enduring differences" (2011: 830). Academics and practitioners who conceptualise multiculturalism argue that there is a need for deeper multiculturalism; they argue for "recognition" (Fraser 1995) but they also argue for broader, socioeconomic justice and "redistribution" of capital (as per the Galbally report), as well as the need for genuine and substantive political "representation" of culturally diverse and marginalised groups (Mansouri 2013)[2] (see also Chap. 13 on "critical multiculturalism"). A deeper multicultural policy that is cognizant of every migrant's agency, challenges racism and systemic discrimination, and promotes anti-racism initiatives.

In line with this, in August 2012, the Labor government announced the National Anti-Racism Strategy, which was launched under the slogan "Racism. It stops with me" (AHRC 2012a). Its main aim is to encourage all Australians to reflect on racism. It focuses on public awareness, education resources and youth engagement.

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[2] This may be dubbed the three Rs of legitimate democratic governance of culturally diverse or 'multicultural' societies such as Australia.

The Strategy suggests that racism can take many forms, whether it is systemic, institutional or interpersonal. The forward to the strategy states, "we all have a role to play in taking action against racism wherever we see it" (Szoke in Australian Human Right Commission 2012). Essentially, the strategy promotes individual responsibility. It acknowledges the distinct disadvantage resulting from the migrant experience, and that government services and programs must be responsive to the needs of culturally diverse communities. This may be seen as a significant step in bringing discussions of race, racism and issues of difference and barriers to socio-economic inclusion in Australia into the mainstream. Beyond such recognition, however, exactly how this policy is to be executed by the government remains to be seen.

12.2.2   Australia's Social Inclusion Agenda (2007–2013)

The Social Inclusion Agenda was announced in December 2007 by the newly elected Labor government under Kevin Rudd. It was a "whole of government" policy aimed at addressing persistent socioeconomic disadvantage across Australian society. Essentially, this is a civic integrationist agenda, which has conceptual and practical antecedents in Hawke-era "Social Justice", Keating-era "Social Justice cum Cosmopolitanism" and Howard-era "Social Cohesion" (Jakubowicz 2010). The key aspirational principles of this Agenda are to adopt an integrated approach to reduce disadvantage, increase social, civil and economic participation as well as provide a greater voice and opportunity for people. Social Inclusion policy is said to operate in three ways: improving the quality of essential government services particularly in areas like education and training, employment, health and housing; ensuring those services work more effectively in the most disadvantaged communities; and developing partnerships between governments, businesses, not-for-profit organisations and the community and engaging disadvantaged communities to help find solutions to address their particular needs. The indicators used to measure the outcomes of the policy's objectives are: Resources, Participation and Multiple and Entrenched Disadvantage.

The introduction of the discourse of social inclusion by the Rudd and Gillard governments since 2007 marks an attempted third way between the politics of multiculturalism and its implied recognition of ethnic/racial disadvantage and the redistributive logic of the politics of social cohesion associated with the national values so effectively touted in the preceding Howard era (Chiro 2011). Social inclusion as a policy was directed toward encouraging community belonging, with "the emotional force of belonging [becoming] tied to prescribed core national values" (Harris and Williams 2003: 216). In other words, it is argued that implicit in the Social Inclusion approach is the idea that while anyone can potentially belong, "belonging is conditional to 'the Australian way' a standard that cannot be met through passing a dictation test—or even by adopting a prescribed lifestyle, though that comes closer" (Harris and Williams 2003: 216).

The Social Inclusion Agenda focused on undifferentiated citizens/residents and largely ignored or failed to name multicultural issues. Only one of "the eleven aspirational principles elucidated in *Social Inclusion Principles for Australia (2009)*, is concerned with cultural and linguistic diversity" (Chiro 2011: 27). Critiques of Social Inclusion often point to its broad and vague scope and its limited tangible impact. Some scholars argue that the Agenda is "meaningless" and used "as a panacea answer to a myriad of problems, while turning a blind eye to the very processes of racially or culturally based exclusion" (Boese and Philips 2011: 193; Vasta 2007). Overall, while the primary aim of this agenda is to "ensure social and economic outcomes", its approach largely ignores demonstrable processes of racialised disadvantage.

12.2.3   The Latest Buzzwords of Social Policy: Anti-racism and Social Networks

Much scholarly critique posits that the Australian Government's Multicultural and Social Inclusion policies do not speak to one another, nor do they act in concert for a common purpose. Poynting and Mason argue that there has been a "shift from multiculturalism as a state assisted and demanded *by* immigrant communities to 'new integrationism' as a state imposed and demanded *of* immigrant communities" (2008: 232). The fallout from such a shift is supposed to be covered by the Social Inclusion Agenda. Yet, as contributors to this volume Boese and Philips (2011; and see Chap. 13) poignantly ask, what does a Social Inclusion Agenda have to offer multicultural Australia if it is not cognisant, in its premises, of entrenched, racialised processes of social exclusion in the country? Beyond mere lip service in the Social Inclusion Agenda, multiculturalism requires recognition of disadvantages faced by newly-arrived, as well as second- and third-generation migrants. Indeed, the ideal of a multicultural society is to deepen universal solidarity, and celebrate social inclusion, in part, as an achievement of diversity.

On this note, while the Anti-Racism Strategy is an initiative under the Multicultural Policy banner, it is heavily imbued with the premises and aims that inform the Social Inclusion Agenda. Indeed, not only does it call for full recognition of racialised disadvantage, but it also recognises the need to couple this with a focus on employment and education, access and equity. It states that "[Racism] works against our goal of building a fair, inclusive community" (AHRC 2012a: 5). The Government Strategy defines racism in the following way: "It often manifests through unconscious bias or prejudice. On a structural level, racism serves to perpetuate inequalities in access to power, resources and opportunities across racial and ethnic groups" (AHRC 2012a: 4). Such recognition clearly states the need to address racism and intolerance in order to achieve "social inclusion" for all in Australia. In terms of policy, this may tentatively be seen as a theoretical step toward more substantively bridging (and effectively blending) multicultural and civic integrationist approaches.

But as some have argued, a critical reflection on the totality of policies, programs and strategies is needed in order to change the broader social discourse on diversity, inclusion, disadvantage and racism. Such reflection may provide insight into "the overt and covert racism within institutions and in everyday experience" (Berman and Paradies 2010: 221). On a theoretical level, the Anti-Racism Strategy's direct effort to mitigate racism does this; it was borne of critical reflections on the layered multicultural and civic integrationist trends in Australia's governance of diversity, and has the potential to augment strategies that reaffirm pluralism and address disadvantage often resulting from the migrant experience. Yet, while racism has been made explicit in the social policy agenda of the federal government, it remains to be seen how this strategy will be affected at a grass roots level. In saying this, one key strategy of the Government's social policies that has been touted over the past decade at both federal and state levels[3] is encouraging young people to participate in a range of social networks.

In order to explore the relevance of this policy trajectory, and its attendant focus on participation in social networks, on the lives of migrant youth, this paper analyses and discusses data collected on the cross-cultural networking practices of this key demographic. Stemming from a social capital approach to civic integration, which has gained much traction in Australia and elsewhere, there has been a suggested link between engagement in diverse networks and broader social cohesion. Such a premise is particularly visible in the Social Inclusion Agenda, which utilises parameters linked to individuals' abilities to network and act socially, such as participation and engagement, to measure policy outcomes. Policy documents tend to link low levels of participation and engagement to structural and entrenched disadvantage.[4] The Multicultural policy highlights inter- and cross-cultural social networks as a key means to celebrate diversity and encourage substantive multicultural inclusion. And yet, recent reports on network formation and engagement trends amongst culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) populations suggest that migrants and refugees, as well as young people from CALD backgrounds, engage predominantly with ethnically homogenous groups (Willoughby 2007). The 2010 Australian Bureau of Statistics report (2010) also reveals that, in friendship groups, 73 % of respondents have friends of the same ethnic network. For the purposes of this paper, the data is analysed in order to gauge the attitudes of migrant youth toward cross-cultural networking and the behavioural manifestations of these perceptions, that is, their level of participation and engagement.

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[3] In policy terms, engagement with social networks is seen as a key means of promoting and achieving social inclusion, and cross-cultural networks in particular are promoted by the People of Australia Multicultural Policy (as well as at the state level in Victoria in the 2009 Victorian Multicultural Policy "All of Us", which endorses commitment to "bringing together people across cultures and faiths" and in Queensland's Multicultural Policy (2011); particularly the "Inclusive Communities" initiative which advocates for young people's access to and participation in a range of multicultural networks).

[4] After the implementation of the Social Inclusion Agenda in 2009, the Commonwealth Government developed a national Social Inclusion Measurement and Reporting Strategy to monitor social exclusion.

12.3   Methodology

The ARC project *Social Networks, Belonging and Active Citizenship among Migrant Youth*[5] (2009–2013) explored the social "integration" of migrant young people in Australia. For the purposes of this study "integration" is understood in ideal terms as a process through which individuals and groups are able to maintain their cultural identity while actively participating in the larger societal framework (Korac 2003; Ager and Strang 2008). Specifically, the study focussed on the multiple social networks, both formal and informal, and the networking practices of the participants (Mansouri et al. 2013). The project was carried out in collaboration with two industry partners (the Centre for Multicultural Youth and the Australian Red Cross). It employed a triangulated design, using secondary data analysis together with the generation of qualitative and quantitative data sets.

Participants included young people from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds, and who spoke a variety of languages. They had varying lengths of residency and/or citizenship and arrived to Australia via various migration pathways. The participants were residing in Melbourne, Victoria or in Brisbane, Queensland. The project specifically focused on youth of African, Arabic-speaking and Pacific Island backgrounds. These groups have often been linked to a heightened sense of marginalisation (Mansouri 2005; Mansouri and Kamp 2007; Mansouri and Marotta 2012) and have been given negative media attention (Windle 2008; Nunn 2010; Nolan et al. 2011), particularly in respect to crime and public disorder (White et al. 1999) (see also Chap. 5). They have been described as problematic, unable to integrate and potentially a major threat to social cohesion in Australia.

The quantitative data analysed in this study comes from a *Formal and Informal Social Networks* survey, which was designed to elicit data that gives a broad picture of the networking practices of the sample group. The survey was administered to 484 respondents. It includes empirical indicators commonly used in social capital research, and explores quantitative engagement in various social networks, as well as norms of trust and reciprocity. The survey data was subjected to descriptive statistical analysis using SPSS software. In addition to the quantitative surveys, qualitative interviews and focus groups were conducted with 103 young people. The interview questions were designed primarily to elicit data about the meanings that individuals ascribe to their choice of social networking behaviour. The qualitative data was subjected to systematic thematic content analysis with the help of NVivo software. For the purposes of this paper, one specific area of the dataset is explored; the participants' cross-cultural networking practices. First it collates and presents a

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[5] The term "migrant youth" in the project was defined as an age-specific category (15–23 years of age) comprising Australian and overseas-born youth. Such a definition of migrant youth cuts across generational definitions of migrants (Skrbis et al. 2007) and practitioners' requirements for a comprehensive and inclusive treatment of the category of youth that responds to their everyday realities. It is during late adolescence and early adulthood that individuals commence the process of integrating identities into coherent wholes (Damon and Hart 1988) and developing a sense of self.

summary of the relevant survey and interview data. It then analyses the material in order to gauge the most dominant theme espoused by the participants in terms of their attitudes toward cross-cultural networking and the behavioural manifestations of these perceptions.

12.4 Findings

12.4.1 Trends in Cross-Cultural Networking

The quantitative datasets suggest that all three participant groups have a desire for cross-cultural engagement, even if, for the majority, their current social networks are ethno-specific. The survey gauged participants' attitudes to cross-cultural engagement by asking whether they like being involved in activities happening outside of their family or ethnic group. Participants could choose "yes", "no" or "sometimes" as their response. The African and Pacific Island participants displayed the greatest interest in cross-cultural networking. 55.1 % or Africans responded "yes", with 37.1 % responding "sometimes". Of the Pacific Island participants, 55 % responded "yes" and 38.4 % responded "sometimes". Among Arabic speaking youth, interest in cross-cultural engagement was lower. 34.3 % responded "yes" and 47.6 % responded "sometimes", leaving nearly a fifth of the Arabic-speaking survey sample, or 18 %, saying they do not like to socialise outside their family or ethnic group.

Participants' interest in cross-cultural activities increases with the length of time spent in Australia. Overall, 53.5 % of newly arrived participants, 58.6 % of participants who have lived in Australia for 6–10 years and 60 % of those that have lived in Australia for over 11 years indicated that they are interested in participating in cross-cultural networks. As per the findings above, interest among Arabic-speakers was lower yet indicative of this trend; 36.4 % of the newly arrived like taking part in activities outside of their family/ethnic group, this figure increases to 40 % for those that have lived in Australia for 6–10 years, and to 42.9 % for those who have lived in Australia for more than 11 years. A similar trend, but on a smaller scale, occurs amongst Pacific Islanders. Interestingly, only 29.8 % of those Arabic-speakers born in Australia are interested in participating; a finding that will receive further attention in analysis below of the interview and focus group data.

For the Arabic-speaking group, gender also emerged as a significant factor for cross-cultural engagement. Only 26.6 % of Arabic-speaking males indicated that they like to be involved in cross-cultural activities. Among the females however, 41.4 % like to be involved. In comparison, for Pacific Islander and African participants, gender does not represent a significant factor in the participants' desire to engage cross-culturally. The reasons for Arabic-speaking young men—and in particular more recent arrivals to Australia—not forming as many cross-cultural networks as young people in other groups, are multifarious. Lower levels of trust may have influenced this outcome, as Arabic-speakers displayed the lowest levels of

trust of all three groups. The most common response given by the Arabic-speaking participants—38.6 %—to the survey question about trust was that they "can't trust anyone". 33.1 % of the Arabic-speaking participants said that people can be trusted. This is in contrast to the Pacific Islander group, of which a majority of 58.9 % said that "people can be trusted" and only 14.6 % said that they "can't trust anyone".

The qualitative data highlights that young people usually engage in cross-cultural networks strategically, with different reasons and motivations informing their decisions for forming cross-cultural connections. For many African participants, for instance, cross-cultural engagement represents a means to demonstrate what they perceive as their cultural competency or proficiency in the Australian context. That is, the more multicultural their networks are the more "Australian" they feel. This is a case of "multiculturalism" being utilised as a space or notion that can be appropriated by culturally or racially Othered or marginalised people to produce feelings of belonging (Pardy and Lee 2011: 312) (see also Chap. 10). However, it appears that young people also feel like they are first required to "make an effort" in what is considered to be an Australian scene before proceeding to occupy a multicultural space (similar findings are reported in Chap. 10); as if "multicultural" is somehow founded by the designation "Australian". Some young people speak specifically about a desire or effort to "make Australian friends":

> The thing is, since I came to Australia I never spoke to a Sudanese or African. I don't have any Sudanese or African friends. I do interest in that but I was focused on the language first because I don't know how to speak English at all 18 months ago—so that's the thing […]. Yeah, I'm just happy that all my friends are Australian. Even the guys that I live with. (Male, 20, African, Melbourne)

For this young man, creating a space of belonging was premised on the act of distancing himself from his particular cultural or ethnic identity and distancing himself from the language linked to his identity. He arrived to Australia on his own and his decision to network with Anglo-Australians rather than with Sudanese was influenced by the conditions presented to him upon his arrival. He was detained for 7 months on arrival and he made friends with visitors to the detention centre,[6] which continued after his release from detention.

For Pacific Islander youth, their desire for cross-cultural engagement was often a reaction to the perceived homogeneity and insularity of the actual social networks in which they actively engage. Many craved and celebrated intercultural understanding, and felt that "being multicultural" made you a "better person", as evidenced one response:

> I think now looking back, if we had stayed in New Zealand, I think I would have only been hanging out with my kind of people—Pacific Islanders […] but we came here, and Melbourne being a multicultural city, I've learnt about different cultures, and gained understanding about them, and I think that's made me a better person. I have become more multicultural. (Female, 20, Pacific Islander, Melbourne)

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[6] Most of the people who visit detained asylum seekers in Melbourne are Anglo-Australians, who do not know detainees prior to their detention, but get to know them through the volunteer networks that organise these visits.

As the quantitative data suggest, cross-cultural networking appears to be less of a priority for the Arabic-speaking group, as they often felt that their culture and religion is misunderstood in the national milieu. In saying that, participants did feel that cross-cultural engagement was a good way for others to learn about their community, culture and religion. A strategy to counter stereotypes. As one participant offered his idea about a possible interfaith initiative:

> I was thinking we could invite other religions to come and see each other, like for example invite churches to our mosque, like just to talk. (Male, 22, Arabic speaking focus group, Brisbane)

Overall, the data shows that while the majority of participants' desire for cross-cultural engagement is strong, the cultural and/or religious composition of the participants' social networks is relatively homogenous. In trying to understand this discrepancy between the participants' attitudinal patterns and their relatively socio-culturally isolated networking patterns, four major "barriers" to cross-cultural engagement were identified; experiences of racism and exclusion, levels of trust, being too busy and community expectations. While "being too busy" may be seen, for the purposes of this paper, as a more functional reason for non-engagement,[7] the remaining three reasons relate closely to socially constructed, institutionalised and systemic issues, which mediate the relations between culturally distinct persons and groups in Australia. Indeed, racism, trust and community expectation are intimately connected issues, yet it was racism (including stereotyping and discrimination), reiterated in everyday occurrences in the lives of the youth (see also Chap. 10 on this subject), that was consistently cited as a significant barrier to cross-cultural engagement. Participants in all three groups reported a range of "exclusionary practices" ranging from explicit, targeted racism to more implicit or covert discrimination or exclusion, which in turn affects their willingness to participate in cross-cultural networks.

12.4.2   Primary Barrier to Cross-Cultural Engagement: Racism and Discrimination

Analysis of the data elicited in this study showed that the potentiality for cross-cultural networking by migrant youth is foremost overshadowed by experiences of racism. These experiences are most commonly linked to covert rather than overt exclusion from everyday places by dominant groups in schools or on the sports grounds. Compared to all the other places/social groupings/institutions

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[7] Noting that "being too busy" is often used as a general, evasive response when a task or activity seems difficult or unattractive to pursue, and therefore may be bound up with issues of trust racism and identity as well.

listed as options in the survey (ethnic community, recreational, religious, volunteer group and "other"), school represented the site where youth were most likely to feel they did not belong (18.8 % of respondents said that sometimes they feel they do not belong at school). Racist remarks were usually conveyed verbally and in places where young people gathered on a daily basis, such as schools, the streets and on public transport (these findings are repeated in a separate study reported in Chap. 10 of this volume). The survey showed that in terms of belonging, 17.6 % of respondents indicated that sometimes they feel like they do not belong in Australia. More African and Arabic-speaking youth reported feeling a sense of exclusion—19.2 % of Africans, nearly a quarter (22.4 %) of Arabic-speakers and 10.6 % of Pacific Islanders said they sometimes feel they do not belong in Australia.

Even though the indicators reporting general life satisfaction among migrant youth showed that they are generally happy with their lives, and that they are well connected and desire to network cross-culturally as well as within their own ethno-culturally defined groups, reported feelings of belonging showed that their perception of their place in Australia is considerably different to their white counterparts. One participant who was born in Australia and said she goes to school with many "Aussie Aussies", nevertheless noted, "No I don't actually [have any Aussie friends]. I have one friend that's Aussie Aussie […]" (Female, 18, Arabic-speaking, Melbourne). Another young woman says she has "full white" friends, yet that they do not see her as genuinely Australian, despite the fact that she feels no connection with any socio-cultural context other than Australia:

> It is a bit confusing because I think most people consider Australians to be white and so when you have a background but you don't know much about it so you consider yourself Australian […]. I think they see themselves as Australian, the girls in my group who are full white, and then they kinda see me as an islander or someone […] so they don't really see me as Australian. So yeah, I think it will take time for people to kind of […] cause they probably think I don't really feel myself as Australian, that I'm connected to my heritage—but I'm not. (Female, 23, Pacific Islander, Melbourne)

This difference in perceptions between the young female participant and her friends creates a paradox for the former. For while she was born in Australia, and indicates that she feels no connection with another country or culture, her white counterparts nonetheless perceive her as an "other". This suggests a systemic and entrenched rift based heavily on phenotypic attributes, and which naturally acts to empower a sense of white cultural dominance.

In the interviews, instances of overt and covert racism were commonly reported. In line with the survey findings, young people in the interviews talked most often about incidents of exclusion based on race and culture that they came across daily, most often in schools or in public spaces. A 16-year old Cook Islander for instance mentioned:

> Ah […] well it's usually around um […] the Australian kids at school. Like if they're doing something and then I like […] wanna sorta just join in for a bit […] they all say like 'ah no

you can't do that' and I'm like why, they say 'coz do you see the people around you?' and I'm like yeah, and they're like 'you don't belong'. And then I'm like 'oh, bye' and just walk off and talk to my mate about it. (Male, 16, Pacific Islander, Melbourne)

African interviewees reported a range of "exclusionary practices" ranging from explicit racism in public spaces and schools to more implicit racism, provoked by a dialogue between systemic racism (for instance where they felt that they were not successful in obtaining certain jobs or being promoted because of their race) and internalised racism. These forms of racism were usually reported through young people's everyday experience.

In both samples, Melbourne and Brisbane, verbal assaults on the participants most often occurred while using public transport or while occupying public spaces (see also Chap. 10 on this issue). For instance, certain African participants reported being told to "go home" or that "sickness comes from Africa". Some African interviewees talked about experiences of more hidden, covert racism, based on a confluence of systemic, interpersonal and internalised racism, not based on overt verbal slurs or assaults as such, but nevertheless experienced in everyday situations.

I feel like any time I want to get a job in a retail job and I walk in […] it's really […] I dunno. Maybe it's my colour. (Male, 19, African, Melbourne)

Yeah. If I feel like I go to an area that's like, I dunno, full of white people or full of other races besides mine, I feel very awkward. I don't feel comfortable going through the shopping centres or the streets or anything alone without someone from my ethnicity or cultural background. (Male, 19, African, Melbourne)

Some Arabic-speaking interviewees also spoke about racist attitudes that made them feel uncomfortable, patronised and excluded.

There are a lot of racial issues going on. It's a stereotype thing basically […] some people look at us like terrorists or something like that. (Male, 19, Arabic Speaking, Brisbane)

Nothing direct, like name calling or group labelling, nothing direct. But there was always that feeling that there was prejudice and a bit of, I don't know, yeah, you never felt—I never felt accepted with that guy. There was always something different between me and the other players in the team. (Male, 21, Arabic speaking, Brisbane)

Another instance of discrimination based on visible difference was obvious for Muslim, Arabic-speaking women wearing the *hijab*. A number of participants said they felt excluded in certain spaces or in certain suburbs. They felt people looking at them weirdly or assuming they don't speak the language.

I think it's harder for girls wearing *hijab*. I find it with mum, like whenever we go shopping people assume that she is somehow dumber or deaf […] that's rude, offensive. (Female, 18, Arabic-speaking, Melbourne)

The Arabic-speaking focus group in Melbourne involved three young women, with very active lives and high-achieving academic performance. They pointed out that it is not the existence of stereotypes in itself that is problematic, but the fact that almost all stereotypes hold negative connotations. Pervasiveness of negative stereotypes in schools and the constituent systemic racism, from which such stereotypes

are generated and maintained, can place constricting pressures on the academic achievement of young people. One young woman noted:

> Even if you do do well, they [teachers] don't try extra hard with you, because they think that you can't achieve more than that. They think you've come from an awful place with no technology, no information at all, that you just don't know anything apart from farming. (Female, 19, Arabic-speaking, Melbourne)

Opposing and countering stereotypes is difficult for young people, and it is a slow process. Often the situation remains unchanged, not only because systemically engrained racism does not permit changes, but also because it is "easier to just fit into that stereotype, because you can't find anything more". Culturally homogenous networks thus are a reality for these participants, because there is a strong desire to fit in somewhere, not because groups would draw boundaries around their ethno-racial groups with the aim to isolate themselves. Cross-cultural networks, even though desirable, are often still impossible in practice for many of the migrant youth participating in this study.

12.5 Conclusion

Reports focusing on the outcomes of network engagement and measuring success of integration for so-called "marginalised" or "at-risk" groups are often parochial in scope, largely ignoring that networks and network engagement are situational and depend on all parties involved. This chapter has shown that there is a desire for cross-cultural engagement and cross-cultural networks among migrant youth, yet this does not necessarily translate into cross-cultural network engagement. Furthermore, there are different motivations for young people to engage in cross-cultural networks.

Policies and reports often assume that Australian society is primarily and fundamentally multicultural and that multiculturalism is a virtue one needs to aspire to in order to be Australian. However, what the studies, programs and policies focusing on settlement outcomes, such as Social Inclusion and Multicultural Policies, often misread is that multicultural society is not only premised upon distinctive cultures and groups, but also that these cultures and groups can never be essentialised. Inclusion approaches and parameters usually overlook the first and second steps in achieving a productive and integrative multicultural model. The first is the ease and certainty of belonging to one's own culture. Until this comfort of belonging is achieved, until the surety about it is attained, the road towards multiculturality is little more than a road towards assimilation. The second step that is often overlooked in inclusion approaches is the discourse of inclusion/exclusion, which promotes an essentialised social and political understanding about what constitutes the Australian state and identity. Attendant to this are the micro-level, situational, communicative inclusion/exclusion norms played out in everyday social life. When policies promote migrant backgrounds they often for-

get about complexities engrained in the process of belonging to a place one has left and a place that one has arrived to. As many researches have shown, there are no homogenous national migrant identities, as much as there isn't one single Australian identity. Negotiation of identities depends on factors that are beyond outcomes of essentialised models of integrative approaches. This is especially true for migrant youth.

While it is argued that the National Anti-Racism Strategy, as one of the key initiatives of "The People of Australia" multicultural policy, will seek to consult expertise, establish networks, enhance leadership capacities of government and civic society and have common commitments in the development and implementation of social policy in this area, it is unclear how these points will actually tackle racism and everyday racist practices, especially among young people. Even though youth are one of the focus demographics of the Anti-Racism Strategy, and some of the priority settings of the Strategy include schools, the online environment and sport, which are three areas where young people participate heavily. While research in this area exists (Greco et al. 2010; Beelmann and Heinemann 2014), it remains unseen how the Strategy and the Multicultural policy more broadly will come up with effective practical measures to deal with racist practices that many young people experience on an everyday basis in schools and public places.

In terms of designing the direction and implementation of policies like the Anti-racism Strategy, the findings of this study suggest that to successfully support migrant youth in fostering cross-cultural engagement, the service design (and service providers) must be cognisant of specific reasons behind young people's mistrust or lessened desire to network cross-culturally. These reasons often arise from specific situations linked to discrimination, exclusion and a denied sense of belonging. As Philomena Essed argues in her exploration of everyday racism and its reproduction through habitual practices, everyday racism concerns repetitive practices and consists of practices that can be generalized (1991: 3). As noted by Bhavnani et al. (2005), ethnoracial discrimination is a social phenomenon reproduced through social and institutional practices and discourse and as such is multidimensional, context specific and changing. Ethnoracial discrimination and its manifestations are fluid (Hollinsworth 1998), defined and intimately embedded in the historical and contemporary context. It is both the social (discourse/institutional processes) and cognitive (stereotyping) that reproduce ethnoracial discrimination (Van Dijk 1989).

As the findings of this chapter suggest, migrant youth are largely happy with the multicultural status quo in Australia and are indeed "socially included", even when appraised according to the Social Inclusion measurement tools. There is a tendency among young people in this study, however, to experience social distance from "Aussie Aussies" in the Australian social context. This represents an inclusion/exclusion binary along racialised lines that is systemic and chronically manifest in many social settings. Such systemic racialisation does not necessarily negatively impact on the overall wellbeing of migrant youth and their day-to-day life, but persists and lingers as a barrier to cross-cultural

networking, participation and full active citizenship for some. The question for many young people remains as to how one can be socially included in Australia despite being culturally and ethnically different from the "Aussie Aussies". This highlights the importance of the nature of the social space into which people are to be included, and adds to the argument that it is not only social inclusion that should be a whole-of-government approach; what is also needed is a more pro-active multicultural state.

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