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‘YOU HAVE TO BE ANGLO AND NOT LOOK LIKE ME’: IDENTITY CONSTRUCTIONS OF SECOND GENERATION MIGRANT-AUSTRALIAN WOMEN

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ABSTRACT

My thesis explores the social construction of identity of 50 second generation migrant-Australian women aged 17 to 28 years using a qualitative methodology. I conducted in-depth semi-structured interviews with 25 women from Latin American backgrounds and 25 women from Turkish backgrounds. My study investigated the intersections of ethnicity, gender, sexuality and nationality. I found that the Latin women constructed their ethnic culture in reference to their country-of-origin traditions, and that they also identified with a pan-ethnic Latin culture that included migrants from other South and Central America countries. I found that the Turkish women constructed Turkish culture in reference to their religious practices, and they saw themselves as ‘Muslim-Turks’ who identified with an Islamic pan-ethnic culture that included Muslim migrants from different national backgrounds.

The women in both groups drew upon Anglo-Australian culture when it came to their gender and sexuality constructions. The Latin and Turkish women did not see themselves as ‘typical’ women from their migrant communities. Instead, their sense of femininity was informed by what they saw as Australian egalitarianism. The women in both groups saw Anglo-Australians’ gender relationships as an ideal, and as one woman said of Anglo-Australians, ‘how much more equal can you can get?’

The women’s social construction of the nation was equally influenced by multiculturalism and an Anglo-Australian identity. They highly valued their Australian citizenship and felt positive about their lives in Australia. At the same time, they had faced ongoing racism and they reported that other people judged their Australian identities through racial characteristics. One woman said that in order for people to be accepted as Australian, ‘you have to be Anglo and not look like me’. Despite this sense of social exclusion, the majority of my sample held hybrid migrant-Australian identities. I develop a threefold typology of the women’s identities, and I found that 13 women did not see themselves as Australian, 36 women saw themselves as partly-Australian, and one woman held an exclusively Australian identity.

I argue that narratives of multiculturalism and Anglo-Australian identity influenced the women’s social construction of identity. Their belief that Australian identity was multicultural was at odds with their experiences of racism and their own self identities, and so I examine the women’s beliefs in reference to an ‘ideology of
multiculturalism’. This ideology supported the women’s contribution to the nation as second generation migrants, and ultimately, they expressed an unwavering support for Australian multiculturalism.
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DECLARATION

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma, except where due reference is made in the text of the thesis. To the best of my knowledge, this thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text of the thesis.

Signed

Dated
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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

The worst birthday I ever had, by far, was my eighth birthday. It was December 11th, 1986, and my family and I had arrived in Melbourne from Lima, Peru just two days before. We had immigrated to Australia, as many migrants do, in search of a better life. I had left behind all my friends, my beloved cousins, my school, and most importantly, the house in which I’d lived in all my life. Now, I was surrounded by a legion of new relatives I’d never met before who wanted to make me feel at home in a country where I didn’t speak the language and whose culture I knew nothing about. (I still remember my friends in Peru had asked that I send them some ice from Australia as soon as I got a chance, because they thought Australia was like Antarctica.) On the night of my eighth birthday I felt overwhelmed. I feigned extreme exhaustion and went to bed early. All I kept thinking was that I wanted to go home.

Looking back, it seems that almost immediately I came to see Australia as home, and so I quickly took on an identity that encompassed both of the cultures that influenced my everyday life. I recently asked members of my family how they think I think of my ethnicity and they all tentatively said, ‘Australian?’ My family mostly see themselves as Peruvian. Although it now seems impossible, I actually cannot remember a time when I didn’t think of myself as Peruvian-Australian. My personal interest in my research topic is obvious: I am a migrant-Australian. I consider myself to be a first generation migrant, although by the definition I use in my study, I could also be seen as a second generation migrant because I have lived here for 17 years, which is more than half of my life. Additionally, I could be seen as a first generation Australian.

My thesis investigates the social construction of identity of two groups of young second generation migrant women in Australia: the first group came from South and Central American (or ‘Latin American’) backgrounds, and the second group came from a Turkish background. A second generation migrant is defined in Census statistics as a person with at least one parent who was born overseas (Khoo et al, 2002: iv), but other studies have a broader definition, and these studies include overseas-born individuals who came to Australia during their childhood (Butcher and Thomas 2001: 6-7; Seitz and Kilmartin, 1987: 14; Vasta, 1992: 155; 1994: 21-22). My sample includes both types of second generation migrants. My study employed a qualitative framework. I conducted 50 in-depth semi-structured interviews in total with women aged 17 to 28
years, and there were twenty-five women in each sample group. All 50 women were heterosexual and tertiary educated, and the majority of them were not married. Thirty-one women were Australian-born and the rest came to Australia between the ages of 6 months to ten years, but all of these women had spent at least half of their lives living in Australia.

The two groups interviewed are studied as separate ethnic groups, but the reader should note that one group is a national ethnic group (Turkish), and the other is a poly-ethnic or ‘pan-ethnic’ group (Latin). The Turkish women all share one ancestral homeland, but the Latin women originate from six different Spanish-speaking countries in South and Central America: Argentina, Chile, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Peru and Uruguay. These women, however, equally identified with both a national ethnic identity and pan-ethnic Latin identity, and so they spoke about these identities as being complementary and interchangeable. For example, they might say, ‘I’m proud to be Salvadoran. I’m proud to be Latin’. The concepts of ethnicity and pan-ethnicity have considerable impact on both the Turkish and Latin samples, but issues of pan-ethnicity are more immediate to the Latin participants. Throughout their interviews, the South and Central American women represented themselves as belonging to a singular Latin ethnic ‘culture’ and, for this reason, my analysis refers to them as a singular ‘Latin’ ethnic group. In the chapters that follow, I discuss the women’s blurry distinctions of their national (or ‘country-of-origin’) ethnicities and their pan-ethnicities, as well as the significance and complications that such distinctions have on my findings.

All 50 women’s identities were influenced by their migrant cultures and by Australian culture, but the women sometimes discussed these influences in an ambivalent way. This is best exemplified by the women’s discussion of sport, namely (Aussie Rules) footy and soccer, as the women often discussed their identities in relation to these sports. Not many women liked footy, as this was seen as an ‘Aussie’ sport, but some women, such as Kumru, who was a Turkish participant, said, ‘I love the football, I’m just a typical Australian’. In contrast, most of the Latin women talked about their love of soccer, which was seen as a ‘wog game’. One such woman was Rosa. Rosa migrated to Australia when she was four years old. When I asked her if she thought of herself as Australian, she used her discussion of soccer as a metaphor for her identity. Rosa said:
Yeah! Yeah I think of myself as Australian. Yesterday I went to the Australia versus France soccer match and [smiling] we had some people tell us that it was so good to see people like us – err, immigrants [laughs], non-Australians, going crazy and cheering for Australia. I thought that was nice of him to say something like that. When you think about it, it’s our country that we don’t belong to – not ‘not our country’ – but that we don’t belong to, and everyone’s sort of cheering for it, and he was Australian, he said it was really nice for people to be cheering for our country like this. I love living here, I think it’s a great country; it’s really good compared to other countries where I’ve been to and lived. It’s so peaceful and it’s a great country to live.

I went on to ask Rosa whom she would cheer for if her family’s country-of-origin was playing soccer against Australia. She replied:

I guess El Salvador [laughs] because of that great influence that we have. But then again, we wouldn’t feel as down if we lost because we know that Australia’s a great country too, so it doesn’t matter.

Identities require ongoing negotiation and they are constantly constructed and reconstructed through social interaction. In particular, minority ethnic identities involve a sense of ambivalence, especially in reference to the majority culture, and this ambivalence must somehow be managed. Rosa saw herself as Australian, but at the same time, she hesitated to call Australia ‘our country’ because of her migrant background. Instead she referred to herself simultaneously as Australian and ‘non-Australian’. She described the man in her story as an ‘Australian’ who was happy to see ‘people like us’ cheering for Australia during the soccer match. In Rosa’s case, her migrant culture draws a deeper sense of loyalty because of ‘that great influence’ it provided her; and yet Australia’s influence on Rosa can still be seen when she praised Australia as ‘a great country’. Rosa described Australia as ‘our country that we don’t belong to’, a description which simultaneously points to her claim to, and rejection of, belonging to the nation. My thesis will explore how the women’s cultural influences from their migrant and Australian cultures are negotiated in relation to their identities, and their sense of belonging to their migrant communities and to Australian society.
My research draws upon social constructionist theory as it relates to identity. Richard Jenkins’ work on social identities and the social construction of ethnicity is influential in this study. In *Social Identity* (1996), Jenkins described the concept of ‘social identities’ as the dialectic between similarity and difference, meaning that individuals form their sense of self through their social interaction with people whom they think are similar to themselves, as well as their interaction with people who are seen to be different. He extended this notion in *Rethinking Ethnicity* (1997) by exploring the notion of ethnicity as a social identity. Jenkins argued that the social construction of ethnic identities involved four main processes: cultural differentiation, social interaction, flexibility, and individual and collective influences (1997: 14). These four processes described the way that an individual’s ethnic identity is centrally concerned with their understandings of the concept of culture, and also how their social interaction with others gives meaning to this understanding.

Manuel Castells has observed that sociologically, it is ‘easy to agree’ that identities are socially constructed (1997: 7). The analytical point of departure refers to the sources, meanings and social contexts that are historically framed which enable identities to be socially constructed. Castells writes, ‘How, and by whom, different types of identities are constructed, and with what outcomes, cannot be addressed in general, abstract terms: it is a matter of social context’ (1997:10). Castells’ analysis is defined through the social context of the network society. The social context of my thesis is primarily the Australian context, but my analysis of identity is *theoretically contextualised* through the concept of ethnicity. In other words, the primary social identity that this thesis discusses is ethnic identity.

Given the social constructionist framework which guides this study, my theoretical assumptions are twofold. First, I assume that ethnicity, like all social identities, is socially constructed rather than being innate or biologically driven, and therefore that ethnicity is learned through social interaction with family, friends, communities, and other agents of socialisation. Second, I assume that ethnicity *intersects* with other primary social identities, such as gender, sexuality, nationality, religion and class. The reader should be keenly aware of my role as researcher in the study on which this thesis is based; I am both an insider and outsider. I belong to one of the groups I interviewed (the Latin group) but beyond this, I share a number of similarities with both groups, namely my gender, sexuality, age, and educational background and, in addition, my experiences growing up in Australia as a person of
migrant background is comparable to the women I interviewed in many ways, but not in others. I will be discussing the implications of being an insider/outsider and the benefits and limitations that these dual roles had on the collection of my data in greater detail later in this thesis.

My thesis is based upon earlier research I conducted for my Honours project, which explored the ethnicity, gender and sexuality of 13 Australian women of South and Central American origin (Zevallos, 2000). The theoretical framework of my Honours research was developed in the first year of my postgraduate candidature, when I wrote a journal article based on my Honours thesis (see Zevallos, 2003a), and this has influenced the writing of my PhD.

Three research areas are under investigation in this thesis, and these relate to the social construction of identity: first and foremost, I investigate the theme of ethnicity; second, I investigate the themes of gender and sexuality; and third, I investigate the theme of nationality. Furthermore, I examine how the women I interviewed engaged with narratives of multiculturalism and Anglo-Australian-ness in their constructions of their ethnic, gender, sexuality, and national identities. Ellie Vasta, using Stephen Castles’ work, identified four broad meanings of multiculturalism: it is a descriptive term; an ideology; a state-monitored principle for social policies and also a set of special institutions (1993: 212-213). In my thesis, I focus on the multicultural policies which concern only migrants’ issues, and I examine multiculturalism as an ideology, as a set of ideas describing that Australian national identity should be organised around its cultural diversity (Lopez, 2000: 3; Vasta, 1993: 212). The term ‘Anglo-Australian’ refers to Australia’s ‘core culture’, which is centred on a hybrid identity encompassing Australia’s British, Irish and Scottish ancestries and history (Dixson, 1996).

The content of my thesis is as follows. The second chapter reviews the literature that informs my analysis, and it focuses on three themes. First, I review the literature on the social construction of ethnicity, and I focus on the debates regarding the separation of the concepts of ethnicity, culture and race by social scientists. I also review key empirical studies on the ethnic identities of second generation migrants in Australia. Second, I review the literature on the social construction of gender and sexuality, and how ethnicity is tied to these two concepts. Third, I review theoretical debates about Australian national identity, which are centred on multiculturalism and ‘Anglo-Celtic’ institutions. Fourth, I describe empirical studies on Latin American and Turkish migrants in Australia.
The third chapter describes the methodology of my research study. First, it outlines the theories on qualitative methodology which have influenced my study. Second, it describes the sample, data collection and data analysis, and discusses the strengths and limitations related to my sample and methodology. Third, I reflect on my role as researcher, especially given my similarity with the groups studied, and I critically assess how my insider/outsider perspective has influenced my study.

The next three chapters describe my findings. Chapter Four is concerned with the women’s construction of Latin and Turkish ethnicity in the Australian context. For each sample group, I look at the cultural and religious practices that shape the participants’ construction of ethnicity. I also look at the way that the participants position themselves in relation to Anglo-Australian ethnicity. Chapter Five is concerned with the construction of the women’s gender and sexuality in relation to their ethnicities. I outline the women’s understandings of femininity and masculinity in their migrant communities and in the wider Australian society, and how the women negotiate notions of appropriate sexual behaviour in light of their ethnic and religious identities. Chapter Six connects the women’s negotiation of their migrant and national identities to broader social issues such as race, racism, and multiculturalism. I present a typology that encompasses the women’s identities in regards to their ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and nationality. Chapter Seven makes conclusions about my study and it brings together the themes of my thesis.

Australian identity is rarely treated as an ethnicity; instead, it is mostly theorised by social scientists as a national identity grounded in social institutions that influence culture from the top down. In other words, ethnicity is ‘something’ that migrants have and need, but ethnicity is something that Anglo-Australians, as the ‘dominant group’ in Australia, do not possess or have moved beyond. Admittedly, the ethnic identity of ‘Anglo-Celtic Australian’ is problematic because it rests on the amalgamation of three ethnicities (British, Irish and Scottish). Nevertheless, multicultural advocates see this identity as blocking or marginalising the ethnic and national identities of migrant Australians (Hage, 1998; Stratton and Ang, 1998; Vasta and Castles, 1996). My study attempts to fill this void on constructions of Anglo-Australian ethnicity by examining the ways in which my second generation participants understood it.

I have not interviewed any Australians of Anglo-Celtic background. Even so, Anglo-Australians are treated as the third group in my thesis. While this is an ‘imaginary group’ constructed by the Latin and Turkish women I interviewed, these
women referred to non-migrant Australians as Anglo-Australians. The category of ‘Anglo-Australian’ (which the women also referred to as ‘Australian’, ‘Anglo’, ‘Anglo-Saxon’ and ‘white Australian’), was pivotal to the construction of their own identities. The women had a sense of their own ‘otherness’ as second generation migrants living in Australia, but at the same time, the women also saw Anglo-Australians as the other. For this reason, I have chosen to include this imaginary third group of Anglo-Australians in my analysis, and I discuss them according to the way my participants constructed Anglo-Australian ethnicity, gender and sexuality, and nationality.

Most of the women I interviewed saw themselves as ‘partly Australian’ but at the same time, they said that in order for them to be seen as Australian by other people, ‘you’d have to be Anglo and not look like me’. My thesis focuses on the subjective constructions of migrant, ‘Anglo’ and national cultures by the women I interviewed in order to further our understanding of second generation migrants and their everyday experiences in Australian society.

In this thesis, I argue that the women I interviewed constructed their ethnicity, gender and sexuality, and nationality in relation to two narratives of national identity: Anglo-Australian identity and multicultural identity. These women’s social construction of their migrant cultures and of Anglo-Australian culture was influenced by the social context of Australian policies of multiculturalism. The women held an ideological belief in multiculturalism. They believed that multiculturalism was a positive aspect of Australian society, and they also believed that most people participated in multiculturalism by embracing and valuing our cultural diversity. This ideology was sometimes contradictory in practice, particularly in terms of their experiences with racist constructions of Australian national identity. Nevertheless, the women’s strong support for multiculturalism lent sustenance to their identities, cultural practices and beliefs, and it allowed the women to resist their marginalisation and social exclusion in the face of Anglo-Australian institutions. In the women’s understanding, multiculturalism created a social landscape where cultural difference was an asset to them and to the nation, but this sense of difference meant that they simultaneously adopted and rejected Anglo-Australian culture in order to create a place for themselves in Australian society.
CHAPTER TWO: SOCIALLY CONSTRUCTED IDENTITIES

The concept of identity can be defined through many processes. Some identities matter more than others to specific people, and the social significance of these identities is subject to change according to history and culture. People construct identities in order to draw meaning from their lives, and so that individuals and groups are better able to make social connections with other people, whether this is a connection of similarity or difference. Currently, patterns of migration and globalisation are reshaping the expression and meanings attached to collective and individual identities. The theoretical discourses on the concept of identity are as varied as the academic disciplines that study it. In my thesis, I focus on the social constructionist perspective and the concept of social identities.

Two symbolic interactionist theorists, Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann, have heavily influenced the social constructionist perspective. They argue that individuals negotiate their everyday reality through their social interaction with others. The ways in which individual actors create knowledge, objectify their everyday experiences and value their social reality is through language. Each person will have their own sense of reality. So, in society there is no one reality, but multiple realities, and yet at the same time, reality is shared with others (1967: 43). Berger and Luckmann write:

The reality of everyday life further presents itself to me as an intersubjective world, a world that I share with others… I know that I live with [other people] in a common world. Most importantly, I know that there is an ongoing correspondence between my meanings and their meanings in this world, that we share a common sense about its reality (1967: 37).

Vivien Burr, a social psychologist, developed a model of social constructionism that is applicable to my work. She writes that there are four ‘things you would absolutely have to believe in order to be a social constructionist’ (1995: 3-4). First, is a belief in critically evaluating taken for granted knowledge; second, a belief in the historical and cultural specificity of people’s reality, and of the categories and concepts we use in order to understand the world; third, a belief that knowledge is sustained by
social processes, and so social interaction is an exercise in sharing our versions of
knowledge about reality with others; and fourth, a belief that knowledge and action go
together. This means that we negotiate our understandings of reality through social
interaction, but ideas will sometimes mean different things to different people.

Jenkins’ (1996) review of the sociological literature on the concept of social
identities is pivotal to my thesis. Jenkins’ work draws heavily from George Herbert
Mead and Erving Goffman. Jenkins argues that social identities are forged through our
understandings of ourselves, our social interaction with others, and our sense of
similarity and difference to other people. ‘Social identity, is, therefore, no more
essential than meaning; it too is the product of agreement and disagreement, it too is
negotiable’ (1996: 5).

Jenkins’ primary point is that social identities are socially constructed by
negotiating the dialectic of similarity and difference that each of us feels in relation to
other people. Social identities necessarily involve notions of reflexivity, which implies
the agency of social actors, but identity equally concerns the negotiation of power
relationships, which address the contested meanings, ideologies and resources tied to
specific identities (Callero, 2003; Okolie, 2003). In other words, the content and the
representation of social identities are affected by political ideologies and social
discourses (Callero, 2003: 124).

Given the dimension of power embedded in social identities, the concept of ‘the
other’ is equally vital to the concept of social identity. The concept of otherness is often
used to define a social relationship that is built upon a sense of difference, specifically
where one person is seen different to the other. Zygmunt Bauman outlines that the
concept of other is, in its simplest form, concerned with binary opposites or with
notions of difference. Bauman writes, ‘Woman is the other of man, animal is the other
of human, stranger is the other of native… foreigner the other of state subject…’ (1991:
8). Andrew Okolie argues that social identities have purposes and consequences which
relate to the power of othering, or to put it another way, there is an element of power
involved in being able to ‘other’ somebody else. He writes:

Social identities are relational; groups typically define themselves in relation to
others. This is because identity has little meaning without the ‘other’. So, by
defining itself a group defines others. Identity is rarely claimed or assigned for its
own sake. These definitions of self and others have purposes and consequences.
They are tied to rewards and punishment, which may be material or symbolic. There is usually an expectation of gain or loss as a consequence of identity claims. This is why identities are contested. Power is implicated here, and because groups do not have equal powers to define both self and the other, the consequences reflect these power differentials. Often notions of superiority and inferiority are embedded in particular identities (2003: 2).

In the early 1950s, Simone de Beauvoir wrote: ‘Otherness is a fundamental category of human thought. Thus it is that no group ever sets itself up as the One without at once setting up the Other over against itself’ (1993: xl). De Beauvior argued that as human history evolved, women became the ‘universal other’ of men who struggled for social and political recognition against dominant discourses dictated by and favouring men. Similarly, social scientists often contrast the concepts of culture, ethnicity, and race, with the concept of other, in order to highlight unequal power relationships. For example, Stuart Hall (1997) argues that the mass media offer visual representations of the otherness in relation to ethnic and racial minority groups. Power is quintessential to such representations of otherness, because whether difference is portrayed positively or negatively, the other is always constructed against a hegemonic ideal of whiteness in societies where ‘white’ people are the dominant majority. The concept of hegemony describes how subordinate classes come to accept the ideas of the dominant class through consent rather than domination or physical coercion (Femia, 1981: 24). Although Hall argues that people can actively contest hegemony, his work shows that hegemonic constructions of race still have a deep impact on minority groups.

The notion of otherness is problematic for at least two reasons: first, because it is a ‘black box’ academic concept that almost exclusively refers to minority groups, migrants, or specifically, ‘ethnic’ people who belong to a minority group. Second, the concept of otherness often suggests a one-way power relationship, where minority groups are seen as the only other. The minority group’s sense of difference is set up against the dominant group (of which, supposedly, there is only one), and so this dominant social group is never subject to the process of otherness, and the minority group has little power to ‘other’ themselves or other people.

Despite the problems with the concept of otherness, it is possible for this concept to be useful when it is frameworked in terms of a specific point of view; that is, we should ask ourselves, who is othering whom and why? The concept of otherness is
problematic because it is premised upon an essentialist logic, and yet this essentialism can be advantageous in the study of identity because, as Gillian Bottomley put it, ‘The idea of identity as sameness requires an Other who is different, a drawing of boundaries that exclude challenges, a refusal to recognise the dissonances within those boundaries’ (1997: 44, my emphasis). If the concept of otherness is to be useful, it must be explored in terms of meaning from a specific point of view – the author’s, the social actor, someone who is in a minority or in a majority group, or someone who holds multiple positions of otherness (for example an Aboriginal woman). Similarly, the concept of otherness must not be set up as a one-way street: minority ethnic groups are not the only others in society and majority groups are not the only groups who ‘other’. Majority groups may have more social resources and institutional power which backs up the othering process, but minority groups mobilise on the notion of fighting marginalisation, which may include an awareness of being ‘the other’. One cultural resource for battling against this marginalisation might be to turn the othering process around towards the group causing the social oppression – so the majority group becomes the subject of the othering process. At the same time, minority groups may purposefully ‘other’ themselves; that is, they may want to keep their distance from the majority (for example, the Amish). Finally, if the concept of othering is to be useful in an analysis of identity, we must explore the contradictions and ambivalences of the othering process. These ideas about otherness will be developed in the course of my thesis, as I explore the social construction of second generation otherness, how these migrants in turn construct the otherness of Anglo-Australians and the limitations of such constructions of otherness.

In this chapter, I review literature regarding the social construction of identities, and I focus primarily on literature from the Australian context. This chapter is structured in four parts. The first part focuses on ethnicity. I develop a ‘working definition’ of ethnicity and I discuss some criticisms of this concept. Next, I outline the social constructionist theory on ethnicity and discuss the construction of second generation identities in Australia. The second part of the chapter focuses on gender and sexuality, and I outline the social constructionist theories in relation to these concepts. The third part of the chapter focuses on nationality. This outlines how the concepts of ethnicity and citizenship are used to construct the nation, and then I examine two dominant narratives of the nation, first in regards to multiculturalism and then in regards
to the Anglo-Celtic identity. The fourth part of the chapter gives a demographic outline of Latin American and Turkish migrants in Australia.

The discussion of the literature begins by outlining theoretical issues pertinent to ethnicity, gender and sexuality, and nationality, and then describes empirical studies which have investigated each of these areas. In this chapter, I argue that Anglo-Australian narratives of the nation and ideological understandings of multiculturalism impact upon constructions of identity of individual migrant communities and the nation.

2:1 ETHNICITY

2:1:1 DEFINING ETHNICITY

Jenkins argues that ethnic identification is based on ‘the belief shared by its members that, however distantly, they are of common descent… people come to see themselves as belonging together – coming from a common background – as a consequence of acting together’ in political and social life (Jenkins, 1997: 10). Aside from the belief in shared ancestry, Jenkins writes that ethnic groups are formed through the interdependent relationships between cultural groups. By this he means that the cultural differences usually attributed to ethnic groups are created by the group’s members to bind an ethnic group together. Thus cultural traits are only socially meaningful if and when we want them to be. Jenkins reiterates this notion when he writes that everyone participates in ethnicity:

[E]thnic relations involve at least two collective parties, they are not unilateral. Identity is a matter of the outs as well as the ins… we should not, for example, study a minority group – which is, after all, a relational notion – without also studying the majority (1997: 11).

Fredik Barth’s (1969) model of boundary maintenance highlights the contingency of ethnic boundaries. Barth argues that ethnicity is constructed through interpersonal ‘boundary transactions’. Ethnic boundaries are imaginary, but social actors believe that their ethnicity is defined through their content, or what Barth terms the ‘cultural stuff’.
Barth goes against this conventional understanding, and he argues that more important than this cultural stuff is the social interaction signalling group membership and affirming ethnic boundaries. In this connection, Jenkins explains that the significance of ethnicity comes from ‘the social processes which produce and reproduce, which organise, boundaries of identification and differentiation between ethnic collectivities’ (1997: 12).

Building upon Jenkins’ (1997) and Barth’s (1969) analyses of ethnicity, my working definition of ethnicity has three dimensions. First, the term ethnicity describes a social group where members share a common culture, a belief about their common ancestry, and a sense of commonality between group members. Second, social interaction re-enforces ethnic group boundary maintenance. Third, ethnicity is continually constructed and reconstructed through the social interactions between minority and majority groups. This definition of ethnicity is not novel, but it expands upon the idea of ethnicity as a ‘shared culture’ by highlighting both the subjective and objective dimensions of ethnicity.

The subjective dimension of ethnicity encompasses the way people come to see themselves as belonging to a particular ethnic group. This forms their subjective notions about what constitutes group membership and the meanings that they attach to cultural symbols and their everyday practices. The objective dimension of ethnic identification derives from people’s political actions which affirm their collective boundaries, and, by implication at least, excludes non-members. Individuals may identify with a particular ethnic group because they are pursuing collective interests, and they may adopt an ethnic identity because there are social and political benefits. On the one hand, ethnic identity provides people with group membership, status and personal meaning, and on the other hand, it provides them with the grounds to seek socio-economic resources and to combat social exclusion. Ethnicity, however, is not always constructed in defence against marginalisation. It can also be constructed as a way to celebrate difference: minority groups may want to emphasise their otherness in order to set themselves apart from the majority. Some groups, therefore, are able to claim their ethnicity on their own terms, while others have their ethnicity imposed upon them by groups with greater socio-political power (cf. Jenkins, 1997: 47).

My thesis is concerned with four types of ethnic identifications: migrant ethnic identities (which relate to specific migrant groups, such as ‘Turkish’ people), pan-ethnic identities (such as ‘Latin’ people), national ethnic identities (specifically ‘Australian
ethnicity’ and religious identities which become ethnic identities (specifically ‘Muslim’ people). The pan-ethnic and religious identities warrant further clarification as types of ethnic identification.

First, ethnic and pan-ethnic labels can obscure the political and historical differences within and between individual ethnicities (Langer, 1997). In the American context, Alejandro Portes and Dag MacLeod have argued that ‘pan-ethnic’ labels such as ‘Hispanic’ are especially problematic, because they describe a number of different ethnic/racial groups under one unifying category and are often imposed by researchers on categories of people who do not necessarily have a subjective sense of belonging to a common group. Portes and MacLeod believe that the researchers who use such pan-ethnic labels neglect to examine the consequences of pan-ethnic group formation (1996: 524). In their study, they showed how second generation children in the United States who identify with the pan-ethnic label ‘Hispanic’ resist assimilation and acculturation, and as a result, are socially and economically disadvantaged relative to children who adopt hybrid migrant-American identities (such as ‘Cuban-American’). In a previous study, I found that my participants actively constructed a pan-ethnic Latin identity, whose basis comes about ‘as a direct result of migration’:

The participants’ experiences led them to believe that people who migrate out of Latin America overlook differences and rivalries that might attach to identities based on their countries of origin, in order to identify with a larger group. The participants believe that this [pan-ethnic identity] stems from the small overall Latin-American population in Australia… (Zevallos, 2003a: 88).

In my PhD thesis, I argue that pan-ethnic labels are strategically constructed as a response to social marginalisation (cf. Noble, Poynting and Tabar, 1999). Pan-ethnic labels allow members of minority migrant groups to belong to a wider collectivity that gives them an added sense of social empowerment than could be achieved by identifying solely with their country-of-origin migrant communities. In the chapters that follow, I will also consider how Australian identity might be conceived of as a pan-ethnic identity from the point of view of my participants.

The second ethnic identity that requires discussion relates to religion. Clifford Geertz argues that beyond kinship, ethnicity rests upon shared culture and shared religion (1973: 259). While constructions of religion and ethnicity can be linked, many
researchers disagree about the ways in which these links are created. Religion is a socially constructed process that evolves from a shared belief system and a set of social practices that work together to create social meaning and organisation (Bouma, 1992: 17). Religious groups, however, are heterogenous – and so, while their members share a belief system, they do not always share ethnicity. For example, throughout most of Australian history, Catholicism was almost exclusively linked with Irish ethnicity (Corish, 1985), but since the arrival of other migrants in the 1960s (especially Southern Europeans) this is no longer the case (Dixon, 1996). Catholicism has been linked to the ethnicities of Latin migrants in Australia (Moraes-Gorecki, 1988) and the United States (Goizueta, 2004), although on a wider level, researchers tend to neglect the question of religion as it relates to Latin ethnicity (Warner, 1998: 196, 200). There is, however, a growing body of research on the link between Islam and the construction of second generation migrant ethnicities (see Butler, 1999; Jacobson, 1997; Jacobsen, 2001; Schmidt, 2002).

Jessica Jacobson conducted field research among young Pakistani youth in Britain and found that many of her participants spoke of their religion as an ethnic identity. As one of her participants said: ‘[I would identify myself] hopefully as a Muslim! That’s how I’d like to be recognised – not as a Pakistani – or a British person or anything. As a Muslim’ (1997: 245). Another researcher, Garbi Schmidt, interviewed Muslim youth in Sweden and Los Angeles. She found that her participants had come to see their religion as an ethnic category, and she labelled this process the ‘ethnification of Islam’ (2002: 1-2). Schmidt argues that her participants’ adoption of religion as an ethnicity was ‘both an answer to the “in-betweenness” of hybrid migrant identities and a means to define performative qualities of a global Islam’ (2002: 15). This suggests that, irrespective of their national backgrounds and their cultural differences, young Muslims become unified through their religious connection, rather than being fractured through national differences. Loyalty to their parents’ country-of-origin is therefore not perceived to be as important as their devotion to the Islamic lifestyle. Religion does not always translate into an ethnic identity, but my study investigates the influence of Islam on the Turkish women’s ethnicities, and the influence of Catholicism on the Latin participants’ constructions of ethnicity.

While I have provided a working definition of ethnicity, it is important to understand the wider sociological critique of this concept, which is centred on the blurry distinctions academics and policy makers make between what is meant by ‘ethnicity’,
‘culture’ and ‘race’ (de Lepervanche, 1980: 24-25; Eipper, 1983: 438-43). These three concepts often overlap and while race may seem to be more of an essentialist concept they are, in fact, all socially constructed. Cultural and phenotypical differences only become significant in social contexts; their meanings are culturally and historically defined (Eipper, 1983: 442-443; Jenkins, 1997: 81-84). At the same time, while the concept of ethnicity is centrally concerned with the idea of culture (Jenkins, 1997: 13), social scientists continue to argue that the concepts of ethnicity and culture are not analogous (Bottomley, 1997; Eipper, 1983; Langer, 1998; Morrissey, 1997; Vasta, 1993).

Essentially, culture encompasses broader processes than just ethnicity. This is because culture can refer to civilisations, social institutions, the distinction between high and popular culture, and whatever else is seen to be ‘the definitive characteristic of human beings’, including ‘social differentiation based on language, religion, cosmology, symbolism, morality and ideology’ (Jenkins, 1997: 14). Bottomley writes that ethnic cultures can be understood as ‘the ideas, beliefs and practices through which people negotiate their conditions of existence... in a wide range of contexts’ (1997: 42). Vasta pushes this definition further when she argues:

Culture is not simply ideology but is embedded in material practices and struggles. It is both enduring, that is, historical; and it is flexible in that it incorporates new political practices.... Equally, culture operates through class, gender and ethnic consciousness, which provides [sic] the basis for cultures of resistance (1993: 218).

Popular understandings of ‘migrant culture’ see the concept of culture in a homogeneous way, as an uncomplicated reproduction of customs and traditions from another homeland in a new environment (Vasta, 1993: 218). This view of culture arguably reflects Australian multicultural policies that implicitly conceive migrant cultures as ‘some static item of baggage, imported into this country and susceptible to “maintenance” so long as this activity does not conflict with “society at large” which, presumably, has its own, different culture’ (Morrissey, 1997: [3]). Empirical studies of second generation migrants have challenged static notions of culture, by showing the interaction between the country-of-origin, Australian society, and the migrants who make sense of these cultures in flexible, but often contradictory, ways. Second
generation ethnic identities encompass ‘both “reproductions and reformulations” of shared beliefs and practices that are handed down from the parents’ generation’ (Baldassar, 1999: 5, my emphasis).

The absence of ‘race’ from discussions on ethnicity is problematic. Analyses of ethnicity and culture that neglect race deny the institutional influences and the role of racial categorisations on the construction of ethnic identities (Banks, 1996; Jenkins, 1997; Zevallos, 2003a). Although racial categories seem self-evident and natural because they are based on observable physical characteristics, the concept of race is socially constructed.

The term ‘race’ is usually used to refer to specific groupings of people who share certain characteristics (often said to be genetic in origin) the combinations of which allow them to be distinguished from other such groupings. We tend to take the existence of such categories for granted. In the same way, we uncritically accept the process by which the defining characteristics of such categories are chosen and applied in order to place individuals within their racial group. That is, it seems a natural, logical process and one which is universal (Hollinsworth, 1998: 29).

A critical theoretical distinction between the concepts of race and ethnicity is that individuals can claim ethnic identities on subjective grounds, on the basis of group belonging and personal meaning (so a person might say, ‘I am Turkish because I share the same culture as these Turkish people’). Racial categorisations, however, are often – though not always – imposed by others. ‘Membership in an ethnic group is usually voluntary; membership in a racial group is not’ (Banton cited in Jenkins, 1997: 81). Racial characterisations are more about the objective elements of how a person looks, and not necessarily how that person feels about their identity. Racial categories ‘are abstractions, explicit bodies of knowledge that are very much more the children of specific historical circumstances, typically territorial expansion and attempted imperial or colonial domination’ (Jenkins, 1997: 77). Constructions of race are used to justify social stratification and systemic domination around the world (Hall, 2002; Wetherell and Potter, 1992; Winant, 1994). Although there is no scientific validity to support the construction of racial categories, the social and political consequences of race do have real effects, and we see this clearly through the concept of racism.
There are three definitions of racism that are generally studied in sociology: individual, institutional and everyday racism. First, racism can be defined at the *individual level*, and this refers to the way in which individual people express racist ideas. Under this model, individuals are either racist or ‘not racist’, and racist ideas are articulated as a conscious ‘set of organised beliefs’, values or attitudes about racial difference (Jenkins, 1997: 83; see also Hollinsworth, 1998: 47).

Second, racism can be defined at the *institutional level*, where racial categories are based less on individual and consciously held beliefs, but more on the institutional processes that systematically discriminate against racial or ethnic categories of people. This includes the distribution of power and the social consequences of racial inequality. In this sense, racism is more wide-ranging than deliberate individual acts of racial intolerance, and so, ‘racism involves categorisation on the basis of any set of criteria which will allow difference to be asserted’, and so beyond discrimination on the basis of physical appearance, racism might also include religious as well as cultural intolerance (Jenkins, 1997: 83).

Third, Philomena Essed has identified *everyday racism*. She criticises the concepts of individual and structural racism and the distinctions between them, and instead, fuses the two together in a complex manner. Everyday racism examines the *lived experiences* and knowledge of racism, which people experience or know. It connects individual, routine experiences of racism with racism at the institutional level and it ‘links ideological dimensions of racism with daily attitudes and interprets the reproduction of racism in terms of the experience of it in everyday life’ (2002: 177).

Everyday social exchanges in Australia, when examined critically, reveal the way in which race is an important, but often unacknowledged, aspect of the everyday social construction of ethnicity. Essed sees the power dynamics of racism as socially reproduced in taken-for-granted ways, even when people are unaware of them, through the repetitive or familiar practices of everyday situations (2002: 190). For example, the question ‘where are you from?’ is one that ‘ethnically and racially marked people living in Australia are confronted with over and over again’ (Ang, 1996: 42-43). This question can be seen as an opportunity to learn more about another person’s ethnicity and therefore promote multicultural tolerance. At the same time, this question can also be seen as problematic because it operates through notions of race (it is only asked of people who look or sound different) and, in this way, it reproduces racist constructions of national identity (cf. Zevallos, 2003a: 88-90, 94-95). Ien Ang believes the question
reflects the ‘pervasive ambivalence’ experienced by non-white migrants under multiculturalism, because they continue to be seen as ‘the other’ rather than as Australian. She sees the question as stemming from ‘simple binaries of acceptance and rejection, tolerance and intolerance, racism and anti-racism’. She explains:

‘White’ friends I have spoken to about this subject generally deny any racist motivation implied in this question and defend it as a sheer expression of interest; but then, what triggered the interest in the first place, if not a certain curiosity about otherness – a curiosity which is implicated in our very construction and positioning as other? (1996: 43).

Perceptions of physical ‘difference’ and racial categorisations play a critical role in ethnic identity construction, and such processes are of particular concern to my thesis. My study does not focus on race as a separate form of identity because the women I interviewed did not directly identify themselves in terms of race (for example, they did not say ‘I belong to the Latin race’). Most women did, however, discuss racial issues indirectly, by discussing Anglo-Australians as a racial group (as ‘white people’). The women also discussed how their physical attributes (such as having dark skin colour) affected the way in which other people understood their ethnicity, and how their experiences of racism affected their ethnic identities. Given that the women did not adopt race as a social identity, I study race as a social construct that affected the women’s ethnic identifications.

Constructions of culture and race inform constructions of ethnicity. The term ethnicity refers to the belief shared by members of a group that they share culture and a common ancestry. This sense of belonging, together with a heightened consciousness of group boundaries, is reinforced by social interaction between minority and majority groups. The term culture refers to the ideas and material practices relating to a group’s way of life. Race can influence ethnicity, but the two concepts differ in the way that ethnicity is subjectively claimed while race is objectively imposed. Though racial categorisations may not have personal meaning to an individual, the act of being labelled as a member of a racially defined social category can have very real social consequences for individuals, including a feeling of social marginalisation.

In the following section, I set out the theoretical model of the social construction of ethnicity in more detail.
2:1:2 SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIONIST THEORY OF ETHNICITY

In *Rethinking Ethnicity* (1997), Jenkins discusses the ‘basic’ social constructionist model of ethnicity. While his work is located within the anthropological tradition, it has a significant influence on my thesis. Jenkins argues that:

A social constructionist approach to ethnicity and cultural differentiation involves, of necessity, an appreciation that ethnic identity is situationally variable and negotiable. It also involves recognising the central emphasis which must be accorded to the points of view of actors themselves if we are to understand how processes of social construction and negotiation work (1997: 50).

Jenkins outlines four main ideas about the social construction of ethnic identity: cultural differentiation, social interaction, flexibility, and individual/internal and collective/external influences. First, Jenkins writes that ethnicity is an *ideology* concerned with *cultural differentiation*, which is centred on the dialectic of perceived similarities and differences between groups and individuals. In other words, ethnicity is constructed through the *idea or belief* that one group is different to another due to the tangible or imagined differences in their cultural practices. Ethnicity is heavily reliant upon the ‘cultural stuff’ that Barth (1969) identified as being peripheral to ethnic group identity.

Second, ethnicity is constructed through *social interaction*. Jenkins advocates the Barthian view that ethnicity is transactional and he writes: ‘Identification is never a unilateral process: at the very least there is always an audience’ (1997: 57). Ethnicity then, is created and recreated though a social process that emphasises shared meanings within an ethnic group, and the interpersonal communication with people outside our particular ethnic group. Our everyday social interaction continually reaffirms group belonging and ethnic group boundaries.

Third, constructions of ethnic identity are potentially *flexible*: ethnicity is situational, and thus contingent, variable and manipulable. Ethnic identity, like the culture it seeks to reflect, is neither static nor monolithic. Most social scientists place a heavy emphasis on the malleable aspect of ethnic identities, and Homi Bhabha’s (1990, 1998) work on hybridity is centrally concerned with such reflexivity. Jenkins is quick
to point out, however, that the flexibility of ethnicity does not mean that ethnicity is always variable and flexible for everyone at any given time. He writes:

To say that ethnic identity is transactional and changeable is really to say that it may be; it doesn’t mean that it always is, or has to be. The recognition that ethnicity is neither static nor monolithic should not be taken to mean that it is definitively and perpetually in a state of constant flux. There are questions to be asked about how and why ethnicity is more or less flexible in different places and times (Jenkins, 1997: 51).

At the same time, because ethnic identities are not always important to everyone in any one social group at any given time, the voluntary aspect of ethnicity – the ability to opt in or out of an ethnic group – further highlights the flexibility of ethnicity as a general social category. It is much more difficult to opt out of racial categories within any given society because physical ‘differences’ are more rigidly constructed in the eyes of others, and so race is much less flexible than ethnicity. Notwithstanding the flexibility of ethnic identities, Jenkins argues that because ethnicity is a primary social identity that becomes established during early socialisation, it has the capacity to ‘really matter when it matters’ (1997: 77; my emphasis).

Jenkins’ fourth and final contention about the social construction of ethnicity is that ethnic identities are equally impacted both by collective (external) and individual (internal) exchanges. As Jenkins often reminds us, we learn who we are because other people – whether they are included inside or outside of our ethnic boundaries – tell us from our early childhood, and they continue to do so throughout our lives. Accordingly, Jenkins argues that members of minority and majority groups reciprocally participate in ethnicity. We participate in ethnicity whether we are being categorised as ‘the Other’, or whether we ourselves are doing the categorising (1997: 14). In this sense, ethnic identity is influenced by our interactions with other people as well as by the ways in which we internally make sense of our social exchanges with others. Jenkins writes that: ‘Individual identity is located within a two-way process, an interaction of “ego” and “other”, inside and outside. It is in the meeting of internal and external definition that identity, whether collective or individual, is created’ (1997: 54).

A sense of otherness, then, is central to categorisations of ethnicity. On the one hand, social scientists place great emphasis on the individual actor’s subjective
categorisation of ethnicity. Indeed, social actors must identify themselves as belonging to an ethnic group in order for that identity to be meaningful to them, whereas (potentially) they need not do so with race. Jenkins writes, ‘analytical priority is accorded to identification within the ethnic boundary’. On the other hand, in order for our identification with our ethnic group to be meaningful there must also be others who stand outside our ethnic group. Jenkins writes:

A claim to ethnic identity must be validated by an audience of outsiders or Others – because without such an audience the issue would not arise – but it seems to make little sense to talk about an ethnicity which does not, at some point, and no matter how weakly or tenuously, recognize itself as such (199: 61).

Theorists such as Herbert Gans (1979; 1994) have critisised social constructionist theories of ethnicity. Specifically, Gans argues that symbolic expressions of ethnicity and religiosity are evidence of acculturation and assimilation. Gans defines symbolic ethnicity as ‘a nostalgic allegiance to the culture of the immigrant generation, or that of the old country; a love for and a pride in a tradition that can be felt without having to be incorporated in everyday behaviour’ (1979; 9). Gans argues that the children of migrants do not participate in an ‘ongoing ethnicity’, or rather, that ethnicity does not play an influential role in their everyday sense of self. Instead, they use cultural and religious symbols (such as food or specific religious holidays) as a way of nominally identifying with their ethnic/religious group, but they do this instead of participating in formal or informal ethnic/religious organisations or practicing their culture in an everyday sense.

David Bennett and Bhabha would disagree, and instead, they argue that the ‘survival’ of ethnic communities and their constructions of group identity depended largely on ‘imagined and creative’ expressions of culture and cultural practices of ‘historical revision and the (re)invention of tradition’ (1998: 37). So in this light, cultural practices that are no longer emphasised in the ‘home’ countries of migrants exemplify shared symbols of ethnicity, and these in turn express meanings about a shared identity. Examples of this include the Greek-Australian practices of dowry (Bottomley, 1979), the celebration of Italian holy days and saint days in Australia (Vasta, 1993), the wedding rituals of bouquet and garter of Italo-Australians (Baldassar, 1999) and emblematic representations of Latin culture in Australia (Zevallos, 2003a).
Constructions of cultural symbols help to establish context-specific ethnic group boundaries that signify a ‘community’ that is as much about difference as it is about similarity. Emblems of ethnicity are symbolic of ‘the need for attachment to common history and origin but they also symbolise the need for reference groups when one’s cultural confidence is diminished’ (Vasta, 1993: 221).

In the American context, Mary Waters (1990) analysed how racial constructions limited the ways in which individuals constructed their ethnicity, and her work is pertinent to my analysis of second generation migrant-Australians. In the late 1980s, Waters interviewed 60 third and fourth generation ‘white ethnics’ in two middle-class suburbs. Her participants came from Roman-Catholic, European backgrounds including Irish, Polish, and Italian ancestries. Waters described her participants as identifying with a ‘symbolic ethnicity’; that is, they claimed (often multiple) ethnic identities, but their ethnic identities were seen as voluntary, and so their ethnicity was claimed on terms that would not compromise their sense of individuality. So for example, one American woman claimed a Scottish-Irish ethnicity, which might mean she participated in St Patrick’s Day celebrations, but this ethnicity did not shape her everyday life and her everyday sense of self. She claimed this identity because it made her feel ‘special’ and made her feel a part of a cohesive community in a way that American society did not. This identification though, was predicated on choice. The woman said, ‘…I would like to be in a rich cultural society… Maybe that is what draws me to some rich, thick, culture. [Laughs] But flexible too, open to new ideas. [Laughs again]’ (1990: 152).

Given that Water’s participants saw ethnicity as voluntary, they were unable to understand the influences and constraints that race had on minority Americans’ ethnic identities. This lack of understanding fed ideological racist beliefs in American society, because the participants believed that if racial minorities stopped blaming their misfortunes on their ‘ethnic’ identities, they could overcome their social disadvantages. They did not see that these disadvantages stemmed from racial discrimination and social stratification, and instead, they begrudged the ‘reverse discrimination’ of affirmative action policies (1990: 161). Ethnicity was optional for these white ethnics – they could decide when to melt into American society and when to highlight their ancestral heritage, and they could mark specific practices they engaged in as ‘ethnic’; but for the most part, their everyday cultural experiences were not seen in terms of this ancestral ethnicity. Significantly, Waters argues that ethnicity was not so optional for non-white
Studies of second generation migrant-Australians show that constructions of ethnicity, race and national belonging are *not always* a matter of choice: racism impacts the social construction of ethnicity. In the following section, I describe empirical studies of the social construction of second generation identities in Australia, and how the notion of otherness affects the construction of these identities. First, I outline a brief sketch of the second generation’s socio-economic outcomes in order for the reader to understand the social factors that influence second generation Australians (for a more detailed review see Zevallos and Gilding, 2003).

2:1:3 THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF SECOND GENERATION ETHNICITIES

Bottomley argues that there are three ways to define the ‘second generation’: statistically, socially and subjectively (1992: 155-156). A *statistical* definition of the second generation is provided by Census information on birthplace. Specifically, it defines a second generation migrant as a person born in Australia with at least one parent born overseas. A *social* definition of the second generation includes Australian-born second generation migrants as well as people who migrated to Australia during infancy and early childhood. A *subjective* definition takes into account the individual’s own construction of identity, and this definition includes people who hold ‘multiple identities’, for example, ‘Greek-Australian’.

Siew-Ean Khoo, Peter McDonald, Dimi Giorgas and Bob Birrell’s (2002) research refers to statistical definitions of the second generation. Their study provides the most comprehensive and up-to-date statistical information on second generation migrants in Australia. They primarily used data from the 1996 Census, at which time 3.4 million (19.1 percent) of the national population of 17.8 million people were second generation Australians (Khoo et al., 2002: 9). Khoo and her colleagues reported that, of the second generation migrants living in Australia in 1996, 56 percent had one parent born overseas and 44 percent had both parents born overseas. Almost half (just under 1.5 million) of the second generation were of British origin, reflecting the fact that, until 1995, the UK
was the largest source of migrants to Australia. The second largest group were those of Italian origin (334,000), followed by those from New Zealand (200,000), and Greek (154,000) backgrounds.

The researchers found that, in comparison to their third generation counterparts, second generation Australians were more likely to be enrolled in education, more likely to have tertiary qualifications and to be in managerial or professional occupations, and that they moved more quickly into home ownership (2002: 117). The second generation from Southern Europe, Eastern Europe and Asia generally had better educational and occupational outcomes overall; those of English-speaking and Western-European origins were more similar to third generation Australians in their socio-economic outcomes; and people from Lebanese, Turkish, Macedonian (former Yugoslav) and Oceanic (excluding New Zealand) background groups had relatively high unemployment levels (2002: vii, 143). Significantly, the researchers concluded that most non-English-speaking background (NESB) second generation groups were more upwardly mobile and more likely to overcome class disadvantage than third generation Australians (2002: 65).

Khoo and her colleagues found that the family formation of second generation Australians of English and Western European backgrounds was similar to third generation Australians in relation to age at first marriage, independent living before marriage, intermarriage, cohabitation, divorce and fertility. The second generation of Southern European and Asian origin differed substantially in these respects from other groups. For example, people from Greek and Italian origin maintained high rates of in-marriage for the second generation, and the authors attributed this to the cultural maintenance efforts of the first generation, the geographical concentration of these groups in Melbourne and Sydney, and group-specific activities available to young people via their ethnic communities, such as Saturday language schools, and sporting and recreational clubs (Khoo et al. 2002: 127).

A national survey by Ang, Jeffery Brand, Greg Noble, and Derek Wilding (2002) measured attitudes towards immigration and multiculturalism, and they also included data on the identities and sense of belonging of second generation Australians. Their survey drew upon three groups: a national sample of 1,437 Australians; 2000 people

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1 All figures rounded off to the nearest thousand.
from five NESB groups (Greek, Filipino, Lebanese, Somali and Vietnamese), with around 400 participants per group; and 56 Indigenous Australians from diverse communities. The researchers found that the majority of their representative national sample was positive towards immigration (67%), cultural diversity (59%) and multiculturalism (52%) (2002: 16-19). Interestingly, while migrants were significantly more supportive of multiculturalism than the national sample, 75 percent of second generation migrants supported multiculturalism, in comparison to 84 percent of the first generation. A similar proportion of the second generation (68%) considered immigration a benefit to the nation in comparison to the national sample (67%), but this support was notably less enthusiastic in comparison to first generation migrants (81%). The authors observed that ‘second generation Australians occupy a position in between first generation migrants and the national average’:

Presumably, second generation Australians tend to become less supportive of immigration and multiculturalism because it is mostly first generation migrants who are (or have been) the beneficiaries of these policies (2002: 22).

The researchers also found that the combined NESB groups were more satisfied with life in Australia (76 percent) than the broad national sample (71 percent), and that, in the wake of September 11, all of the NESB groups were more likely to regard Australia as a ‘tolerant’ or ‘very tolerant’ society than the national sample (2002: 40, 23-24). Of the total national sample, 89 percent considered Australia home, while 58 percent of the first generation and 84 percent of the second generation saw Australia as home and, in comparison, the entire Indigenous sample felt Australia was their home (2002: 43). Ang and her colleagues found that the majority of NESB Australians did not adopt Australian identities despite their sense that Australia was home and their positive views about their lives in Australia: only eight percent of all first and second generation did so (2002: 40). The researchers concluded that NESB Australians, including the second generation, still believed ‘that the dominant image of the Australian is still that of the stereotypical Anglo-Celtic Aussie’. Their findings suggested that ‘there is a paradox in contemporary Australia’:

On the one hand Australia is obviously a plural society with an increasingly diverse population, most of whom thrive well in their lives. On the other hand,
Australian *culture* is still not as open and inclusive as it could be: it is still strongly dominated by a core, Anglo-Celtic culture from which people of other cultural backgrounds are marginalised. In essence, some of these people experience themselves as in Australia, but not of Australia. Their sense of belonging is incomplete (2002: 48).

Qualitative studies which focus on social and subjective definitions of the second generation shed light on the social construction of ethnicity by second generation migrants and their sense of belonging to the nation. Below I describe the findings of a few key studies of second generation migrant-Australians and then, by way of concluding this section, I discuss the significance of these studies in relation to recurring theoretical themes. Briefly, these studies show that the second generation’s constructions of ethnicity intersect with other social identities, including gender, sexuality and nationality.

In the 1970s Bottomley (1979) conducted pioneering research concerning second generation identities. She conducted fieldwork in Sydney, interviewing 23 second generation Greek Australians, 12 women and 11 men. Her participants strongly identified with Greek ethnicity. This identity was forged through a tight-knit network that ensured that the second generation’s ‘life spaces’ – that is their social circle and activities - were ‘predominantly Greek’ (1979: 465). For example, there was heavy emphasis upon attending ‘Greek school’ and celebrating Greek Easter. In close connection, Bottomley emphasised the importance of kinship. For example, relatives were chosen to be *koumbaroi* (the best man and maid of honour at one’s wedding), thereby ‘doubling’ the ties of those involved. Alternatively, friends were chosen, who were then seen as ‘relatives of choice’ (1979: 139). Kinship expectations and obligations sometimes resulted in conflict, but were overwhelmingly seen as a positive resource. These tightly-knit social boundaries were enforced by the migrants themselves not so much out of a sense of social exclusion from the majority, but more due to their desire to preserve their sense of ethnicity.

Bottomley described her participants as ‘living in two worlds’. Most (17 out of 23) saw themselves as ‘more Greek than Australian’. At the same time, they distinguished themselves from Greeks in Greece and newly arrived Greek immigrants, whom they described as noisy people with ‘bad manners [and] bad language’ (1979:
166). They also saw themselves as having more scope for personal choice than their parents. In the words of one male participant:

> I have more options open, I’m more mobile. I can operate on a number of levels whereas they [parents] could not. Their style was confined, their path clearly defined and easy to follow. It’s harder to make something of life when you haven’t got the pressures guiding you in a specific direction. (1979: 172)

In the late 1990s, Greg Noble, Scott Poynting, and Paul Tabar conducted seven interviews with men aged 16 to 19 years of Arabic-speaking backgrounds, four men were Christian and three were Muslim (Noble and Tabar, 2002; see also Noble, Poynting and Tabar, 1999; Poynting, Noble, and Tabar, 1998; 1999). All participants were high school students who lived in the south-western suburbs of Sydney, with four of the Christian youth attending a Catholic school and the remaining three Muslim youth attending a public school. The authors found that multiculturalism played an important role in the participants’ ‘strategic essentialism’. The authors write:

> Although these youths see themselves as half Lebanese and half Australian, and therefore already hybrid, they nevertheless articulate quite rigid notions of their ethnic allegiance. For them, ethnic identity is essentialised and taken as a given, although they find it hard to articulate because it often lacks a clear content…. This strategic essentialism rests firmly on a process of mapping, whereby identification of the group’s Lebanese-ness is secured only by positing it against others (Noble, Poynting and Tabar, 1999: 35, 37).

The participants’ identities were ‘essentialised’ identities: they saw their friendship groups as being an all-encompassing and singular category of ‘Lebanese’, despite the national differences (between Syrians and other Lebanese) and sectarian differences (between and within Christians and Muslims). The young men ‘each equated Lebanese-ness with honour, respect, morality, courage and the idea of the family, as well as particular customs, and these were usually cast in opposition to Anglo-Australians’ lack of these things’ (Noble and Tabar, 2002: 135). This essentialism was *strategic* because it empowered them in the face of the racism they encountered in the wider Australian society. As one participant said: ‘At school, if
anyone called me a wog, they wouldn’t be speaking to me alone’ (Noble and Tabar, 2002: 139).

Even so, the participants ‘happily identify with certain things they see as “Australian”: sport, hanging out, driving around, the beach’ (Noble and Tabar, 2002: 141). Their identities were contingent and flexible, especially in relation to their parents. As one boy said:

[I]f I asked my mum and dad which country you would like to live in? They would say Lebanon. I would say Australian. They would say Lebanon is your homeland. I was born here and I am an Australian citizen. Everything else apart from [his Lebanese ancestry] is Australian (Noble and Tabar, 2002: 142).

In 2001 Melissa Butcher and Mandy Thomas (2001) conducted over 50 in-depth interviews as well as focus groups and group outing activities with second generation youth from Asian and Middle Eastern backgrounds in Western Sydney. Their participants held dynamic identities that were challenging and reshaping ideas of Australian culture. The authors called this process ‘living migration heritage’ (2001: 10-11). They write: ‘Youth culture is perhaps multicultural in the truest sense of the word… Youth demonstrate a flexibility in their everyday lives to deal with the multiple cultural spaces they have to operate in’ (2001: 14).

While the participants conveyed a strong attachment to both their parents’ culture and shared a sense of being Australian, their Australian identity was mostly based around civic attachments. For example one 16 year old female participant of Filipino-background said:

I’m Australian because I take an interest in the running of Australia, I’m concerned with the issues that affect the people in Australia, that’s what makes me Australian. I listen to Australian music, I watch Australian movies, the Olympics, so I would say I am part of that culture (2001: 14).

While there was diversity in the way the participants perceived their identities, there was a great deal of ambiguity about Australian identity itself, given that most of them conceived it in ‘stereotypical’ ways (2001: 25). Wider structural forces (such as
the media) limited the extent to which the second generation felt a sense of belonging to Australian national identity. The researchers note:

While several young people described Australian culture as being multiculturalism itself, it was a significant finding that many did not have a sense that their own cultural background was valued as being part of what it is to be ‘Australian’, and that the stereotype of Australian culture as being about ‘Anglo’ culture was continuing to have a hold over perceptions of national identity (2001: 29).

Having described some empirical studies on the second generation, I will now draw together the themes emerging from the aforementioned studies in reference to theory. Contemporary explorations of second generation identities describe the dual processes of hybridity and strategic essentialism. The second generation are not ‘stuck’ between their parental and community expectations of ethnicity. Instead, they negotiated Australian and migrant cultures and created new ways of navigating their identities (Butcher and Thomas, 2001; Noble and Tabar, 2002; see also Baldassar, 1999).

But this literature shows that, despite the celebratory and empowering aspects of symbolic reconstructions of culture, the second generation’s identities are limited by social constructions of race. Although Australia’s multicultural identity is embraced by the second generation, and they often take on hybrid migrant-Australian identities, the second generation nevertheless evoke ‘stereotypical’ ideas when they describe Australian identity. Hegemonic constructions of Australian national identity, which depict this identity in reference to Anglo-Australians, limited the flexibility and choices involved in maintaining second generation ethnic identities. The second generation often saw themselves as Australian, but at the same time, they identified dominant representations of Australian identity in terms of an Anglo-Celtic identity. In relation to Water’s (1990) study on the ‘ethnic options’ of white ethnics in America, we can see that the second generation migrants interviewed in the Australian studies above also participated in an optional ethnicity through their strategic essentialism. Sometimes they adopted some Australian cultural practices, at other times they emphasised their parents’ cultural practices, and sometimes they blended the two and created new ways of enacting their ethnicities. At the same time, despite their cultural mixing and their flexibility, the second generations’ ethnic options were limited. To reiterate: they could
choose to be Australian, but that choice was not always reinforced in their social interaction with other Australians. Studies on second generation migrant-Australians show that constructions of ethnicity, race and national belonging are not always a matter of choice: racism is a mechanism that limits the social construction of ethnicity.

The next section will examine the social construction of gender and sexuality, and how ethnic identities intersect with these constructions.

2:2: GENDER AND SEXUALITY

2:2:1 THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF GENDER

As a social identity, gender describes a dialectical relationship of similarity and difference between social actors who define themselves as men and women (cf. Jenkins, 1996). Sociologists generally downplay the role of biology when they use the concept of ‘gender’ and instead, argue that gender is socially constructed and that gender constructions change according to historical and cultural contexts (Lorber and Farrell, 1991). Much like the theoretical debates about ethnicity and race, sociology makes a distinction between sex as the biological distinction between men and women, whereas gender describes the social differences and the social stratification that follows on from these perceived sexual differences. Sociologists generally accept that gender identities and gender roles are learned during childhood socialisation but that the management of these gender identities and gender roles is an ever-evolving process. Thus, our everyday social interaction with others is an ongoing exercise in the presentation of ourselves as gendered beings (Goffman, 1969, 1976). R. W. Connell writes, ‘The terms “masculine” and “feminine” point beyond categorical sex difference to the ways men differ among themselves, and women differ among themselves, in matters of gender’ (1995: 69). Connell defines gender in a way that ‘escapes the paradoxes of [biological] “difference”’ (2002: 10). He sees gender as a social structure which is continually being reproduced socially and is constrained by power relations in society: ‘gender concerns the way human society deals with human bodies, and the many consequences of that “deal” in our personal lives and our collective fate’ (2002: 10).

Social constructionist theory focuses on the social influences on our ideas of gender and how our gender identities shape our social interaction with others. More
specifically, this theory focuses on the way individuals create meaning and reality through the idea of gender categories, and how we understand our everyday lives through gendered processes. Judith Lorber and Susan Farrell write that within the social constructionist perspective on gender,

[W]omen and men are not automatically compared; rather, gender categories (female-male, feminine-masculine, girls-boys, women-men) are analysed to see how different social groups define them, and how they construct and maintain them in everyday life and in major social institutions, such as the family and the economy (1991: 1).

Lorber and Farrell argue that while constructions of gender change over generations and across cultures: ‘What stays constant is that women and men have to be distinguishable’ (1991: 1). In this binary dialectic of similarity (within genders) and difference (between the two genders), it is difficult to challenge the ‘culturally prescribed rules for “doing gender”… although sex and gender are mutable for individuals, the social categories are far more intractable’ (1991: 8). The social construction of gender implies reflexivity, but at the same time, our creation of gender is shaped not only through our interaction with other gendered individuals, but also through social structures that are gendered. In the authors’ words: ‘We can “do” gender in ways that maintain existing gender relations, or we can challenge them’ (1991: 11).

Candace West and Don Zimmerman (1991) spearheaded the notion of ‘doing gender’, and their work incorporated the influence of hegemony and structural power in the reproduction of gender. They write that gender is ‘a routine, methodical, and recurring accomplishment’:

We contend that the ‘doing’ of gender is undertaken by women and men whose competence as members of society is hostage to its production… participants in [gender] interactions organise their various and manifold activities to reflect or express gender, and they are disposed to perceive the behaviour of others in a similar light (1991: 13-14).

West and Zimmerman use Goffman’s (1976) theory of gender display to develop their discussion of doing gender. The accomplishment of gender is ‘not so easily
regimented’, and instead it is a fluid, situational, and therefore changeable process. The authors write:

To be successful, marking or displaying gender must be finely fitted to situations and modified or transformed as the occasion demands. Doing gender consists of managing such occasions so that, whatever the particulars, the outcome is seen and seeable in context as gender-appropriate or purposefully gender-inappropriate, that is, accountable (1991: 22).

Although many sociologists emphasise the flexibility of doing gender, gender constructions are embodied and enacted through power relations (see Butler, 1990, 1993). West and Zimmerman write that gender ‘is a powerful ideological device, which produces, reproduces, and legitimates the choices and limits that are predicated on sex category’ (1991: 34). Gender constructions are deeply connected to gender inequality. In doing femininity and masculinity, we are, by and large, also doing gender inequality (Natalier, 2003; Yodanis, 2000; Wearing, 1996). For example, when we do housework, we are not merely producing goods and services in the private sphere; we are doing gender and affirming an institutionalised gender order that is sanctioned through the public sphere. ‘Thus if, in doing gender, men are also doing dominance and women are doing deference, the resultant social order, which supposedly reflects “natural differences”, is a powerful reinforcer and legitimator of hierarchical arrangements’ (West and Zimmerman, 1991: 32).

Gender constructions are subject to negotiation through our choices and understandings of our every day lives, but they are equally constrained by heterosexist notions of masculinity and femininity. Betsy Wearing argues that femininity is constructed through patriarchal ‘mechanisms of male power’, but she also argues that women can actively challenge hegemonic ideals of femininity by reconstructing their femininity (1996: 83). Women can go against the cultural assumptions about women’s gender through, for example, entering male-dominated sports such as bodybuilding, or rejecting the unachievable notions of romantic love disseminated in films and novels (1996: 89-90). One feminist woman interviewed by Wearing rejected the ideals of femininity when she said, “Feminine” is a word dreamed up by men to keep women out of responsible positions’. Another woman identified femininity as a social construction when she said:
I think what ‘feminine’ implies is that the woman fits the female role very well or tries to fit it and succeeds…. I think it’s society that makes ‘feminine’ women. And it won’t be until we have a society where human values are important, where there are enough jobs to go around that everyone will have the right to develop themselves fully (1996: 89).

Constructions of femininity are forged in relation to constructions of masculinity. In his analysis of the construction of masculinity, Connell defined masculinity as a broad set of ‘processes’, which include gender relations and gender practices between men and women and ‘the effects of these practices in bodily experience, personality and culture’ (1995: 71). Just as femininity is a social construction that reflects a set of dominant cultural ideologies, Connell argues that culture dictated ways of being masculine and ‘unmasculine’ (1995: 67). He argues that there are several masculinities operating within any one cultural context, and some of these masculinities are hegemonic, subordinate, compliant and marginalised (1995: 76-80). In Western contexts, power is held by white, upper-class heterosexual men whose masculinity has become a hegemonic ideal to which other masculinities must conform to and interact with, but expressions of masculinities are contested, and so there is potential to reconstruct hegemonic ideals of masculinity.

Following Connell’s work, Poynting, Noble and Tabar’s (1998, 1999) research on Arabic-speaking youth in Australia, which I earlier reviewed, shows that the youths’ ethnicity was also a way of enacting a ‘protest masculinity’. The racism these youths encountered from ‘Aussies/Anglos’ was resisted through their enactment of a masculinity that fought against the negative stereotypes of them as criminals, troublemakers, ‘wogs’ and ‘dumb Lebs’, and it was also influenced by notions of class. Lebanese male youth constructed a hierarchy of masculinities where:

[T]he Anglo boys appear to be ‘below’ both themselves and the Asians: they cannot stick together, they cannot fight. Violence compensates for the words that are not available; it ameliorates the humiliation of racism. The meaning that the youth attach to this violence, ‘resolves’, in ideology, really unresolved contradictions occurring at the ‘intersection’ of masculinity and ethnicity, as well as class relations (1999: 71).
The boys resorted to violent clashes with ‘Anglos’ and they denigrated the masculinity of Anglo-Australian boys as a way of asserting their own masculinity and as a way to win back some of the power they lost whenever they were subjected to racism by Anglo-Australians.

In connection, respect is a key feature of doing Lebanese masculinity. The youths identified numerous sources where they invested their respect, but more importantly, they emphasised filial respect, respect for their ethnic and cultural traditions, and self-respect. While other fellow ‘wogs’ could be granted some respect, ‘Aussies’ were not respected because they were perceived to hold little respect for the Lebanese community. One participant said, ‘In this area no one respects them’ (1999: 73). The youth also had a sense of disrespect towards Anglo girls, because they were seen to lack ‘morals’. Lebanese girls were seen as sexually unavailable because of the ‘shame’ that would bring upon their families and the ruining of their ‘reputation’. In stark contrast, one participant said of Anglo-Australian girls:

Oh I found them very easy, you know what I mean? …Like you can do anything with them… Some people don’t have their morals. They just do it. With me I can’t. I have morals… [I] flirt around, but when it comes to doing the sin, that’s when I stop (1998: 89-90).

The authors argue that the youths’ denial of respect towards Anglo-Australians and their actions of defiance towards Anglo authorities (which is a signal of their disrespect) restored a feeling of power given their social exclusion and the racism they encountered. The youths’ sense of respect was, however, ‘a gendered, a masculine, reassertion of dignity in the face of racist affront…. It is as if, in experiencing diminution as humans, through racism, these young men are experiencing diminution as men: offence to their humanity is an affront to their manhood’ (1999: 73).

2:2:2 THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF HETEROSEXUALITY

Anthony Giddens coined the term ‘plastic sexuality’ to describe the separation of reproduction from human sexual practices, which he argued led to the decentralisation
of sexuality. Giddens argues that sexuality has greater social significance in postmodern times than in it did during the period of modernity because it is now connected with the ‘sequestration of experiences and the transformation of intimacy’ (1992: 180). In other words, sexuality had been transformed because it is pursued for pleasure, self-fulfilment and to strengthen our intimate relationships and it is not necessarily linked to reproduction. In effect, the concept of plastic sexuality described not an actually fully-realised process, but instead, it highlights a shift in social attitudes in the expression of sexuality.

Social constructionists question the taken for granted assumptions about the biological imperatives of sexuality. Sociologist Stevi Jackson writes:

Sexuality per se is neither inherently oppressive to women nor inherently liberating. It has no intrinsic qualities – good or bad. Since it is a social phenomenon, it is particular, culturally and historically rooted, forms of sexuality which are oppressive. Thus for social constructionists sexuality is not definable as a fixed object of analysis. It encompasses all those acts, desires, identities and relationships understood as in some sense erotic – but erotic is itself a fluid concept… What is erotic, and hence sexual, depends on what is defined as such, by whom, in specific social contexts – hence the very definition of the sexual is a social act (Jackson, 1999: 4-5).

Jackson argues that the social construction of sexuality is flexible within any given culture – to a point: ‘Despite the mutability and variability of human sexual desires and practices, this variety is not, in practice, limitless; there is order here, but a social rather than a natural order’ (1999: 5). According to Jackson sexuality is constructed through four processes: institutions, meaning, everyday social practices, and subjectivity (1999: 5-6). Gender constructions – specifically through hegemonic notions of masculinity and femininity – regulate and normalise social understandings of sexuality. West and Zimmerman argue that gender and sexuality are socially constructed around the dichotomy of being either male or female, and so an individual’s choices are limited by the social convention that our bodies are the dominant way of doing gender as well as doing sexuality. ‘The physical reconstruction of sex criteria pays ultimate tribute to the “essentialness” of our sexual natures – as women or as men’ (1991: 32).
Social norms about heterosexuality influence the social construction of sexuality as a whole, and notions of gender drive heterosexuality. Heterosexuality is a relational concept. That is, the heterosexual subject is defined against sexual others – especially ‘the homosexual’: heterosexuality inscribes difference; it is a construction of “otherness” in gendered terms’ (Richardson, 1996: 6). Heterosexuality is socially institutionalised and it has material consequences because heterosexuality itself ‘is not merely a matter of specifically sexual desires and practices, but also entails divisions of labour, power and resources’ (Jackson, 1999: 6).

Gay, lesbian and queer theorists have long engaged with a deconstruction of heterosexuality (for example see Rich, 1980; Wilkinson and Kitzinger, 1994). More recently, the study of institutionalised heterosexuality examines not only the social repression of homosexual individuals and of women, but also of heterosexual men. The concept of heteronormativity describes this repression. Myra Hird and Sue Jackson write:

Heteronormativity manufactures a set of oppositional relations between femininity and masculinity… As a discourse, heteronormativity is sustained by a number of assumptions including; heterosexuality is biologically derived; men persistently desire sex; sexual desire is always directed towards an ‘end goal’ of coitus and ejaculation; and men initiate sexual activity (2001: 27-28).

Qualitative studies on heterosexuality show that two interrelated notions influence the social construction of heterosexuality: virginity and the sexual double standard. I am especially interested in how these two concepts shape female sexuality and how these concepts are tied to heteronormative narratives of sexuality. First, I consider the way virginity is socially constructed in relation to heterosexuality. During 1988 and 1990, Janet Holland and her colleagues (2000) interviewed 148 young women and 46 men aged 16 to 21 in Manchester and London about their sexual behaviour. The authors found that the mechanism of the double standard of male versus female reputations impacted negatively upon women, but positively on men (2000: 225).

Holland and colleagues found the young women’s stories of virginity loss were contradictory. Generally, the women did not recount positive experiences, but instead, they saw first-time sex as an altruistic act: their virginity was a ‘gift’ a woman can ‘choose to give to a partner’ (2000: 228-229). One woman was asked if her loss of
virginity meant ‘lots of things’ to her, and she responded, ‘No. It just meant that – um – I’d give him anything – Oh, it sounds sick this – I’d give him something I could never give anyone else, something special, and that’s why I did it’ (2000: 228). The participants reported that sex did not live up to their own expectations of ‘love, romance or earth moving’ (2000: 228). Instead, ‘As she takes him into her body for his pleasure, she confronts problems of how to manage this experience in terms of successful femininity, to protect both her body and her reputation, and to make sense of the experience for herself’ (2000: 227). The authors argued that, ‘the asymmetry of heterosexual gender is reproduced through the dominance of masculinity within sexual relationships. Young people have to manage the way the public values of male-dominated sexuality are encountered in their intimate relationships’ (2000: 222).

The second way in which heterosexuality is socially constructed is through notions of the double standard. Michael Gilding’s historical review of the concept of sexual morality and its relation to the family showed that the sexual double standard was institutionalised early in Australia’s history, but that the rise of feminism, birth control technologies, and changing attitudes towards sex outside marriage challenged the double standard (1984: 316-345). Recent empirical research into sexual behaviour however, shows that the sexual double standard continues to guide the gendered experience of heterosexuality. In the 1990s, Sue Moore and Doreen Rosenthal reported that, ‘while the double standard may in fact be disappearing, it has not died altogether’, most notably in specific ‘cultural’ groups or groups from a lower socio-economic class. They added, ‘Even among groups who pay lip service to sexual equality, if one scratches the surface, there are still subtle – and not so subtle – pressures for girls to restrain their sexuality’ (1993: 99). Furthermore, the recent Sex in Australia researchers postulated that sexual double standards might have influenced men and women’s reports of their sexual experiences, with men perhaps overestimating and women underestimating their lifetime sexual partners (de Visser et al., 2003: 152).

Qualitative studies show that heterosexuality is tightly bound with a discourse of the sexual double standard. In 2001, Hird and Jackson published their combined findings from two separate studies on adolescent dating and sexual coercion; one study was conducted in New Zealand and another in Britain. Their research strategies and samples were complimentary, with both researchers using group interviews with high school students aged 15 to 18 years. The researchers’ combined studies revealed that a discourse of heteronormativity guided adolescent dating behaviour in ‘Western society’.
Their research suggested that ‘traditional constructs’ of gender and sexuality reinforced the double standard (cf. 2001: 28). Their male and female participants believed that expressions of heterosexuality were supposedly driven biologically for men, while women’s sexual desire relied upon romantic ideals. For example one man said:

I think guys want it more than girls. Girls don’t seem to be driven by their hormones half as much as guys… girls are just doing it out of being asked to do it. They don’t have the drive to do it [sexual intercourse] (2001: 31).

The young women acknowledged sexual double standards and they were critical of them. One woman said, ‘It’s not normal for girls to want sex’, and another woman added, ‘Girls are little petite angels, la-de-da and guys are macho – “yeah man”, you know’ (2000: 34). At the same time the women also reproduced double standards because they upheld notions of women as the sexual ‘gatekeepers’ who must control men’s sexuality. Women had some power, but it was limited to their self-control and the control of male desire. As one participant said: ‘[W]omen have power over men. Men have strength but women have their bodies’ (2000: 34). Hird and Jackson observed that despite the different national contexts of their studies, their male and female participants placed women in,

a no-win situation. [Girls] can deny their sexuality in order to conform to expectations of ‘angelic purity’, or girls can be sexual and risk being labelled ‘slut’. Consistent with the ‘angel’ identity, girls are the gatekeepers of male sexuality… as ‘angels’ they are expected to apply the brakes to rampant male sexual desire (2001: 34).

Irrespective of age, when younger women and older women try to assert their agency and power to challenge heteronormative assumptions about their sexuality, especially regarding the notion of the double standard, their efforts are only partially successful, and these women tend to fall back on conventional constructions of feminine sexuality (Harris, Aapola and Gonick, 2000; Jackson and Cram, 2003; Renold, 2000; Ussher, 1994). For example, in 1991, Jane Ussher conducted over 90 interviews in Britain with men and women aged 23 to 59 years. Her women participants espoused a ‘Madonna/whore discourse’ when describing their need to control their sexual desire.
They described their unwillingness to take control during sex in terms of needing to protect men’s fragile ego and in terms of their agency as individuals. For example one woman wryly acknowledged the ‘double standard’ of the Madonna/whore dichotomy, even though she followed this pattern of ‘good behaviour’ through her own choice:

Well, if there’s a rampant woman, well, of course she’s going to be out of place, and she’s going to be a slag and a whore… she’s going to be labelled as something, and that’s going to put her down. But, if a man’s virile and rampant, he’s something completely different, he’s macho, he’s fulfilling his masculinity… How does that make me feel? I don’t know, I’m not sort of hindered by it. No, it doesn’t affect me personally; if I want to do something I’ll do it, and that’s up to me. But obviously it has ramifications for other women and women who are concerned about how they’re perceived by other people and what sort of image they put across. *The fact that I don’t sleep around is because I make that choice, not because I can’t if I want to* (1994: 167; emphasis in original).

In the field of ethnicity studies, heteronormative notions of virginity and the double standard are also apparent, especially in social constructions of the honour/shame model of sexuality, where women’s and their families’ reputations are supposedly tarnished through premarital sexual relations but men’s reputations are enhanced. Maria Pallotta-Chiarolli and Zlatko Skrbis (1994) reported on their combined findings from separate studies on the second generation from Southern Italian, Croatian, Slovenian and Yugoslav backgrounds. Their participants included heterosexual women and men and homosexual women. Their pooled results showed that these second generation individuals had to manage three sets of external expectations about marriage alongside their own ideas about sexuality: their parents’ authority, the ‘voices of normality’ from their ethnic communities and Australian societal expectations.

The youth employed two strategies in their management of these three external expectations: acceptance or resistance. First, they could accept their parental and communal codes of sexuality, which invariably led them to in-marry. This acceptance could be passive due to coercion or it could be active due to choice (1994: 267). Second, they could resist external expectations, and the lesbian women who were openly homosexual embodied this rebellion most notably. For example, one Italian
woman said that her Italian community was ‘insulated’ and ‘trapped in their own culture’, and so she chose specific aspects of her Italian culture to keep and others she chose to abandon (1994: 269).

The authors did not see these second generation ethnic communities as the binary opposite of Australian society. Instead, they saw an interplay of power between the two:

It appears that the second generation’s sexual behaviours and marital choices may be monitored by parents and the ethnic community in order to maintain ethnic purity, family cohesion and the continuation of community strength. We also found that this is framed by the wider society’s need to monitor sexual behaviours and choices in order to maintain the established patriarchal heterosexist structures… Shared patriarchal and heterosexist constructs and norms frame individual choices and negotiations (1994: 270).

In the 1980s, Loretta Baldassar (1999) conducted an ethnographic study on second generation Italo-Australian youth living in Perth, who were aged 17-25 years. Baldassar found that the family domain and the community emphasis on marriage were highly valued by the young Italo-Australians as important ‘traditions’ that gave structure to their Italian identities. Baldassar’s participants rejected what they perceived to be ‘Australian’ – for example, pubs, beer, jeans – as unacceptable within the informal youth networks, and they defined themselves, ‘in opposition to the perceived identity pattern of gender relations and sexuality of their “Australian” peers’ (1999: 2).

Traditional understandings of sexual morality guided the Italo-Australian youth’s negotiation of sexuality. The young Italo-Australian women noted the ‘double standard’ regarding sexuality in relation to maintaining virginity before marriage within their own friendship networks, but at the same time, the women also complied with community expectations of honour and shame and what it meant to be a ‘good woman’ (1999: 14-15). Although the Italo-Australian women did not enjoy the same social freedoms as their male counterparts, Baldassar noted that her participants appeared to feel morally superior to their Australian female cohorts. Several participants observed that the network men (the Italo-Australian men who belonged to the friendship group studied) believed that ‘Australian girls’ (which included all non-network women) were
sexually available and may be ‘used’ for casual sex, but ‘Italian girls are for marrying’ and therefore they should be respected. Baldassar writes:

The so-called ‘Australian’ women are not seen as being socially and sexually ‘free’ at all, nor are they perceived to be in a better position – one of more equality… Obviously, the network women enjoy their position which does command much respect from the men. They see themselves as having pride, a very important concept in Italo-Australian conception of self (1999: 12).

While the Italo-Australian men and women conformed to traditional gendered codes of sexual morality, Baldassar found that the women were also critical of community expectations of being a ‘good Italian girl’, or a ‘Maria’, and their attempt to break out of this role and increase their social freedom did not fit neatly into a model of patriarchy. Baldassar argues:

The ambiguous nature of the network women’s sexual and social freedom does not mean that they are passive recipients of traditional value structures. The ambiguity is instead representative of complexities inherent in the construction of gender, sexuality and ethnicity. This ambiguity allows for change and negotiation (2001: 18).

On the one hand, second generation migrant women are doubly disadvantaged by heteronormative constructions of female sexuality. They are expected to refrain from sexual relationships and they face added social stigma if they are exposed as being sexually active to their families and ethnic communities. On the other hand, these second generation women can achieve a morale boost (if they are ‘good’) from their superiority to Anglo-Australian women. So, by repressing themselves and conforming to their ethnic community ideals, they can increase their self-esteem along both the ethnic and gender dimensions.

The next section explores the social construction of nationality in reference to citizenship and narratives of national identity.
2:3: NATIONALITY

2:3:1 CIVIC AND ETHNIC NATIONALITY

For the purposes of this thesis, nationality is a broad term I am using to refer to the social construction of national identity and national belonging. I define nationality as belonging to a nation state and the subjective conceptualisations that make up an individual’s sense of national belonging, and so it could include notions of ancestry, upbringing, and cultural attachment. More specifically, my discussion of nationality includes the meanings attached to citizenship, and the discourses regarding Australian national identity.

Benedict Anderson (1991) argued that all nations are ‘imagined communities’ because it is impossible for members of any given society to know one another intimately. National identity, then, refers to a collectively imagined (or socially constructed) identity that includes symbolic interpretations of national traditions, a sense of shared history, norms about culture or ‘our way of life’, and political as well as ideological beliefs about national belonging (cf. Jenkins, 1997: 142-147, 159-163). A nation, therefore, refers to a collectivity who shares a sense of belonging and a common territory and political system. The ideas about what should make up this sense of belonging to the nation are sometimes contested. There are two main ways to think about Australian nationality: the ‘ethnic nation’ and ‘civic nation’.

First, Australian society can be thought of as an ethnic nation. As outlined earlier, ethnicity refers to a collectivity who shares a belief about their shared culture and a belief about common ancestry. I also outlined how members of ethnic groups must share a sense of similarity and belonging with other group members in order for that ethnicity to be meaningful to them. The ethnic nation model of nationality could be thought of as a majority ethnicity. A nation can be seen as a large ethnic group who shares a belief about shared culture and a common ancestry. Some researchers offer a modified version of the ethnic nation, which is based on the concept of ‘peoplehood’. British political scientist Margaret Canovan argues that a sense of nationhood, of national belonging, is fostered through a combination of political power (which in the
case of nations such as Australia includes a participation in democracy) and community kinship, which she terms ‘the familial’: ‘The fusion of the political and the familial creates an enduring “we” that can form the basis of a strong and stable body politic and give the state unity, legitimacy and permanence because it is “our” state’ (1996: 71). Canovan believes that this sense of peoplehood drives collective action and makes us care about the welfare of our fellow national members (most of whom we will never meet), especially during times of crises, and it encourages us to care about the future of the nation.

In the Australian case, the ideas of a majority Australian ethnicity and a sense of Australian peoplehood are problematic because they rely on a sense of common identification, belonging and commitment, and such ideas are controversial in light of our cultural plurality. For example, Alastair Davidson writes: ‘These [migrant] newcomers share a present. If they stay a long time, they may share a future. But they almost never share a past. They have no common histories or cultural memories, and frequently… do not share a language or a religion’ (1997: 6).

The second way to think about Australian society is through the concept of the civic nation. Belonging to a civic nation is not a question of bloodlines, but of allegiance to constitutions and procedural roles. Civic nations include a more open-ended and inclusive notion of national belonging, and they are more easily adaptable to outsiders such as migrants because there is no emphasis on common ancestry. Australian scholars advance a version of ‘multicultural citizenship’ which argues for an inclusive national identity that is receptive to Australia’s multi-ethnic population (Castles, 1997; Davidson, 1997; Kalantzis, 2000). Supporters of multicultural citizenship advocate that migrants whose ethnicity differs to the majority are marginalised by models of the nation which focus on belonging and national commitment. The civic model of the nation, then, focuses on procedural democracy, and emphasises that citizens have no obligations to the nation; their loyalty is to political system rather than to a sense of peoplehood. The civic nation does not emphasise common bonds of history that bind citizens together nor does it emphasise that citizens have responsibilities to fellow citizens that they have not freely agreed to undertake, and so citizens are seen as ‘unencumbered selves’ (Betts, 2001: [2]).

Narratives about national identity mirror the debate between the ethnic and civic models of the nation. The next section explores the social construction of Australian national identity.
Potentially, there are multiple constructions of the nation operating at any one time. I concentrate on two narratives of Australian nationality that are currently operating simultaneously and feeding off one another: the Anglo-Celtic narrative and multicultural narrative.

‘Australian multiculturalism’ is a term that describes the public policies that address Australia’s cultural pluralism. Multicultural policies were introduced during the 1970s following the former assimilation and integrationist stances. In the past three decades, the meanings and objectives of multiculturalism have undergone a number of contentious transformations both politically and socially (for exceptional histories of multiculturalism see Lopez, 2000; Jupp, 2002). The government has stated that Australian multiculturalism addresses all Australians, not just migrant ethnic communities, and that it celebrates Australia’s cultural diversity. Australian multicultural policy is underpinned by four principles: responsibilities, respect, fairness and benefits for all Australians (Commonwealth of Australia, 2003: 6).

The multicultural narrative of the nation promises to ‘remake’ a distinctively Australian national identity ‘freed from its British origins and its “backward-looking nationalism”’ (Jupp, 1997: 143; see also Castles et al., 1992). In connection to the civic model of the nation, advocates of the multicultural narrative of national identity believe that blending multicultural ideals of nationhood with a citizenship founded upon civic values will expand the way in which the nation develops in the future. Multicultural advocates believe that supporting a mono-cultural vision of national identity based on Anglo-Celtic culture (the ethnic nation model) is damaging to the nation under the multicultural narrative (see Betts, 2001: [3]).

Recent empirical studies show widespread support for multiculturalism and a growing support for a cosmopolitan national identity (Ang et al., 2002; Jones, 2000, 1998; Pakulski and Tranter 2000). At the same time, although multicultural policies in Australia have been liberating by opening up a celebration of cultural diversity, they have not dealt adequately with the marginalisation of migrant Australians who are perceived as ‘different’. Consequently, multiculturalism is criticised for not going far

As I see it, the multicultural narrative is built upon not just a celebration of cultural diversity, but it is also a critique of the Anglo-Celtic narrative of the nation. Critics argue that Australian history still fails to fully integrate what Jean Martin (1978) termed the ‘migrant presence’ as part of its ‘heritage’ and national identity (see Bottomley, 1997; Castles and Vasta, 1996; Kukathas, 1993; Stratton and Ang, 1998; Vasta, 1993). Vasta argues that despite the emphasis placed on diversity by multicultural policies, multiculturalism is centred on the ‘dialectics of domination’ and because of this, multiculturalism has failed to overcome Anglo-Celtic hegemony. She writes: ‘Multiculturalism has been adopted because the old racist identity can no longer work, yet in its present form it does not in itself provide an adequate framework for a new identity’ (1996: 49; for an alternative view, see Lopez, 2000). Ultimately, Vasta sees multiculturalism as simultaneously racist and anti-racist.

On the one hand, there is a level of social control and containment of difference and, on the other hand, multiculturalism includes many anti-racist programs. This contradiction also operates in our drive towards a transformation of national identity… [I]t is still a myth to think that Australian national identity is multicultural. It is predominantly Anglo, but also unstable as it is constantly challenged by the realities of multiculturalism. Nevertheless, there is still a dominant ideology of Anglo-ness as well as an official but unrecognised overstay racism… (1996: 70-71).

The second narrative of national identity is defined through Anglo-Celtic culture. While multicultural advocates see Anglo-Celtic identity as a hegemonic ideal, there is very little empirical research on who exactly is an ‘Anglo-Australian’, and we do not know whether they knowingly construct this identity. As it stands in the literature, the Anglo-Celtic narrative of national identity rests on a problematic amalgamation of three ethnicities: British, Irish and Scottish. The Anglo-Celtic narrative of national identity creates a ‘myth’ that, ‘white Australia could be easily characterised as “Anglo-Celtic”, a uniform and unchanging monocultural society from 1788 to just before the present’ (Docker, 1994: 41; see also Hirst, 1994: 5; Thompson, 1994: 49-91).
Generally, the Anglo-Celtic identity is broadly located in its egalitarian and democratic values, which emphasise ‘mateship’ and ‘a fair go’ (see NMAC, 1999: 7; Thompson, 1994). Miriam Dixson described this identity as an ‘imagined’ ideal type, but she also described it as a very real ‘complex form of ethnicity’ (1999: 7). Dixson described the ethnicity of Anglo-Celtic Australians through, ‘their authority ways; work ways; freedom ways (ideas of liberty, of individualism and community, of equality); and their gender ways’ (1999: 24). Dixson also identified Australian-Irish Catholicism, Irish and British values, and the ‘blue-singlet working-class stereotype’ as central to this core Anglo-Australian culture (1999: 29, 36-37).

According to Dixson, Anglo-Celtic ethnicity has its basis in ‘old identity Australia’ and a ‘core culture’ that holds Australian society together. In this way, the ethnic nation model would rely on the Anglo-Celtic narrative of national identity. An Australian notion of peoplehood would, therefore, be primarily located within an ‘old Australian’ (or Anglo-Australian) culture, while accommodating migrants (Betts, 2001: [4-5]). Dixson argues:

[O]ver a period of transition and consolidation, the Anglo-Celtic core culture must continue to function as a ‘holding’ centre for an emerging and newly diverse Australia. But this does not imply new issues of political power. The practical policies and spirit – not the ideology – of existing poly-ethnic policy (realistic and generous as these are) must remain constant (1999: 8).

In the mid 1990s, John Hirst argued along similar lines. He argued that Anglo-Celtic values were essential to the success and acceptance of multiculturalism, and that Anglo-Australian ‘society’s instincts are inclusive’:

It is uneasy with sustained and systematic exclusion. Migrants, too, were to have a ‘fair go’. When we take pride in multicultural Australia, we are celebrating the virtues of old Australia (1994: 6).

Hirst believes that this point about ‘old Australia’ has been obscured by debates about multiculturalism. He writes that multiculturalism created the ethnic identity of the ‘Anglo-Celt’, and problematised it to the point where it ‘became the most suspect of all ethnic groups given its atrocious past; its desire to perpetuate itself was denounced as
Anglo-conformism in contrast to the migrants’ virtuous wish to preserve their cultural identity’ (1994: 2).

Despite our multiculturalism and immigration intake, the Anglo-Celtic identity has a broad basis. In 2001, most of our population (72.6%) was born in Australia and almost 22 percent of Australians arrived here as migrants (ABS, 2002a: [2-3]). At the same time, almost 80 percent of Australians spoke only English at home and the largest groups of first and second generation migrants were of Anglo-Celtic origin (arriving from the UK and New Zealand) (ABS, 2002a: [3]; Khoo, 2001: 9-10). Additionally, the 2001 Census collected data on ancestry, and while Census questions on ancestry are traditionally riddled with problems, these figures were nevertheless striking in the indications they gave about the Anglo-Celtic foundations of Australian society. Around 44 percent of Australians cited their ancestry as being Anglo-Celtic – that is, English (34%) and Irish (10%), and almost 36 percent of people said their ancestry was ‘Australian’ (ABS, 2002a: [3]). Although it remains unclear what those 36 percent of Australians meant when they reported their ancestry as ‘Australian’, the ancestry figures tell us that most people in Australia connected their ethnicity with a British and Irish heritage. These findings on Anglo-Celtic ancestry lend support to the ethnic model of Australian national identity.

In connection, Tim Phillips and Phillip Smith’s studies on constructions of the ‘Australian identity’ and the keyword ‘UnAustralian’ found that all six focus groups they interviewed (including a total of 49 participants) endorsed discourses of Australian-ness that did not refer to multiculturalism. Instead, they referred predominantly to an Anglo-Australian personality (Phillips and Smith, 2000: 210). The antithesis of Australian identity (the ‘UnAustralian’) was constructed partly in terms of the ‘foreign’, such as the Americanisation of Australian society or ‘the ethnic’. More specifically:

Participants, including NESB women, considered that the ethnic was potentially valuable, but only as long as it did not take an inward looking form or come to dominate the broader ‘Australian’ society. As one participant in the elderly group put it: When you’re in Rome, do as the Romans do’ (Smith and Phillips, 2001: 336).
Empirical studies on whiteness reflect that race is a taken-for-granted ‘centre’ of national culture for ‘white Australians’, and so constructions of race influence the Anglo-Celtic narrative of national identity (see McLeod and Yates, 2003; Schech and Haggis, 2001). Hage’s (1998) study on whiteness proposes that debates about race/racism and multiculturalism were best explained as a contest over space. Hage’s white supremacist participants made claims of rejection and discrimination of specific cultures that would typically be construed as ‘racist’, but Hage sees these discourses as nationalist practices. Hage’s participants saw themselves as having ‘an imagined privileged relation between the imagined “race”, “ethnicity” or “culture” and the national space conceived as its own’. This position of privilege is supported by their whiteness (1998: 38). One participant sums up Hage’s argument by saying of Muslim migrants, ‘They’re really not the sort of people I would like to see coming to this country’ (1998: 37).

In this thesis, I examine the way in which multiculturalism might operate as an ideology, and how this ideology interacts with Anglo-Australian narratives of national identity. Ideology is a widely contested sociological concept and it has various meanings. Generally, ideology refers to a normative set of beliefs that ‘tell us what we ought to do’ or how things should be, and ideologies are built upon central values, such as, for example, the idea that one nation or race of people is superior to another (Drucker, 1974: 43; Kellas, 1998; Jenkins, 1997: 159-163). Mark Lopez’s (2000) Origins of Multiculturalism addressed multiculturalism as an ideology. When Lopez uses the term ideology, he takes it to mean the ‘normative concept about the way Australian society is or should be organised’. Lopez discusses multiculturalism as a ‘neutral’ ideology, ‘as a system of beliefs encoded in specific texts intended to articulate a particular ideology’ (2000: 3). Lopez treats multiculturalism as a ‘less comprehensive’ system of belief or system of thought that consists of

a core [set] of concepts plus ideals and agendas for their realisation. Some expressions are in a narrow sense, concepts and policies for migrant settlement; while others are in a wider sense, normative socio-cultural blueprints for the whole of Australian society (2000: 4).

A narrative of national identity which is based on multiculturalism could be seen in terms of dominant and contested ideologies. As Abercrombie and Turner (1978)
describe it, the ‘dominant ideology thesis’ refers to beliefs that serve the class interests of a dominant social group, and it may result in a false consciousness of the subordinate classes who come to accept the ideas of the dominant group. For example, constructions of an Anglo-Celtic majority identity in Australian society could be seen to serve a dominant ideology, because such constructions maintain Anglo-Celtic hegemony despite our policies of multiculturalism (cf. de Lepervanche, 1980; Hage, 1998; Stratton, 1999; Vasta, 1996). All members of any given society, however, do not share one specific ideology, and as Abercrombie and Turner argue, ‘it is typically the case that subordinate classes do not believe (share, accept) the dominant ideology which has far more significance for the integration and control of the dominant class itself’ (1978: 153). Processes of ideology are both ‘continuous and contradictory’ (Fergusson, 1998: 45), and ideologies are also contested. For example, constructions of the nation based on cultural pluralism could be seen as competing or contested ideologies, because they contest Anglo-Celtic dominance. Ideas are constructed by those in power as well as by less powerful people going about their everyday lives, and therefore ideology can be challenged through social interaction and social discourses.

I am not looking at multicultural ideology in terms of dominant/competing ideologies, although I do discuss some hegemonic processes related to multiculturalism, such as the concepts of race and whiteness. I am more interested in looking at the ideology multiculturalism as a set of normative beliefs about the way society should be organised (Lopez, 2000: 3; Vasta, 1993: 212). Specifically, I focus on the way that ideas about multiculturalism are found in everyday constructions of national identity and ethnicity, especially in relation to the belief that Australian society should be organised around a principle of cultural plurality and what this entails, from the point of view of my participants. I will also look at the benefits and costs behind the ideology of multiculturalism on my participants. Katharine Betts (1999) has examined the ideology of immigration in Australia, and she argued that looking at immigration as ideology highlighted the extrinsic consequences (or the vested interests and benefits) of supporting immigration (1999: 32). Looking at multiculturalism as ideology allows us to ask, why do some people believe what they do about multiculturalism?, or as Betts put it, ‘what’s in it for them?’ (1999: 30). The ideology of multiculturalism warrants investigation as a system/set of beliefs whose meanings are shaped by social interaction and one which informs the construction of social identities in Australia.
Irrespective of the ‘reality’ behind the multicultural and Anglo-Celtic narratives of the nation, people take it for granted that these two ideas about Australian society actually exist. Given my social constructionist framework, I am interested in examining these taken for granted assumptions about society. The narratives of Anglo-Australian-ness and multiculturalism represent two different sets of ideas about how Australian society should be organised, and my participants are able to draw upon or reject these narratives in their subjective constructions of Australian nationality.

The following section sketches constructions of Latin and Turkish ethnicity in Australia.

2:4: THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF LATIN AND TURKISH IDENTITIES IN AUSTRALIA

In order to set the context of my study and the two groups of interviewees, I include some background information on Latin American and Turkish culture in Australia. (Appendix 2 summarises demographic information on these groups pertinent to the themes of my thesis, including education, employment, citizenship, language, and religion.)

2:4:1 LATIN AMERICAN MIGRANTS IN AUSTRALIA

The first wave of Latin Americans arrived in Australia in the 1970s, and these migrants came mostly from Chile, Uruguay and Argentina due to socio-political hardships. The second wave came in the 1980s from predominantly Central American countries such as El Salvador, and most of these migrants came in under refugee and humanitarian programs (Amezquita, Amezquita and Vittorino, 1995: 168).

The latest available information on Latin migrants comes from the 2001 Census. In 2001, the total number of first generation migrants from South and Central America and the Caribbean was 86,205 people (there is no available information on second generation migrants from this region). The three largest groups were from Chile (25,705), Argentina (11,837), and Uruguay (10,378) (ABS, 2003a). My study includes
women with backgrounds from Argentina, Chile, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Peru and Uruguay. The Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs (DIMIA) has published demographic information on all these communities except for Costa Ricans, using data from the 1996 and 2001 Census (DIMIA, 2000a, 2000b, 2000c, 2003a, 2003b). Below, I give a general summary of this information (for a detailed look at each group, see Appendix 2, p. 292).

The latest available information on migrants from Argentina, Chile, El Salvador, Peru and Uruguay shows that these groups were mostly living in New South Wales, except for Salvadorans, who mostly live in Victoria. Of the first generation Latin migrants over the age of 15 who originated from these five countries, between 41 and 63 percent had educational or occupational qualifications (that is, some kind of post-secondary qualifications). In comparison, 42 percent of the total Australian population had such qualifications. Of these Latin people who held qualifications, between 12 and 30 percent held a higher education degree (including bachelor, graduate and postgraduate degrees and diplomas). In 1996, Peruvians had the highest rates of combined educational and occupational qualifications (64%) and higher educational rates (30%) of all five Latin groups (DIMIA, 2000b: [2]).

These five groups of Latin migrants had slightly higher employment rates (percentage of all people over the age of 15 or percentage of total labour force employed or unemployed) in comparison to the rest of Australia, but they also had significantly higher unemployment rates. For example, in 2001, Argentineans had the highest employment rate of the five groups (68%) and this was a relatively higher rate in comparison to all Australians (62%) (DIMIA, 2003a: [2]). In 1996, Salvadorans had the highest unemployment rates of the five Latin groups (31%), which was more than three times the national average (9%) (DIMIA, 2000a: [2]). All five groups had significantly higher citizenship rates in comparison to all overseas-born Australians, except for Chileans who were fairly similar to the average citizenship rates. All five groups predominantly spoke Spanish at home and their major religion was Western Catholic. All five groups were significantly less likely to state that they had ‘no religion’ in comparison to the total Australian population, except for Uruguayans who in 1996, were slightly more likely to state no religion (16.9%) in comparison to the rest of Australia (16.6%) (DIMIA, 2000c: [3]).

There are few empirical studies on Latin migrants in Australia, and the studies that do exist have explored the significance of the pan-ethnic Latin identity in the context of
Australian multiculturalism. During 1978 to 1980, Vanda Moraes-Gorecki (1988) conducted pioneer field research on Latin American migrants in Sydney, and she linked constructions of Latin ethnicity in Australia with Catholic constructions of sexuality. Moraes-Gorecki argued that traditional values of masculinity (‘machismo’) and femininity (‘marianismo’) acted as ideological constructs that reinforced female subordination and gender inequalities for Latin immigrants in Australia. ‘Machismo’ values revolved around being dominant over ‘people and things’, acting ‘strong’, and personifying the opposite attributes to ‘a maricón (sissy)’ (1988: 27-8). Moraes-Gorecki found that men’s views on their masculinity ‘are associated with notions about women in relation to men’ (1988: 33). Men were ‘virile breadwinners’, who held authority over women as the ‘head of the family’ (Moraes-Gorecki, 1988, 30).

‘Marianismo’ values dictated that a woman’s role revolved primarily around being mothers and wives, and tending to household chores. ‘Marianismo’ values were described as the ‘behavioural attributes of humility, serenity, tolerance and submissiveness... perceived as necessary requisites for the ideal Latin American women in her relations with men’ (Moraes-Gorecki, 1988: 26). Moraes-Gorecki argued that Latin American constructions of femininity in Australia were applied under strict religious codes pertaining to Catholicism, and that ‘the rationale for male domination is based on the female’s economic dependence and the man's duty to give moral protection to women’ (1988: 33, my emphasis). Moraes-Gorecki’s found that it was ‘universally assumed among Latin American immigrants that by and large the immigrant male’s working capacity is highly valued and worthy of respect’ (1988: 32). Consequently, Latin femininity was a site of oppression in relation to constructions of ethnicity, religion, class, and sexuality in the Australian context.

In 1988, Beryl Langer (1998) began ethnographic research on El Salvadoran refugees living in Australia and their constructions of culture and community. Langer condemned multicultural policies in Australia, which both treated Salvadorans as a cohesive community and saw them as part of the wider category of a ‘Hispanic’ or ‘Latin American’ community. Langer argues that collective labels such as ‘Salvadoran’, ‘Central American’ and ‘Latin American’ were misleading, as these identities did not correspond to ‘ontologically given cultural communities’ (1998: 163). Langer argues that the impact of globalisation renders the constructs of ‘ethnic community’ and ‘ethnic culture’ (Salvadoran or otherwise) as ‘myths’ of multiculturalism. ‘The whole idea of fixed and coherent “ethnic cultures” becomes an
increasingly anachronistic fantasy when geographically distant “life-worlds” are inflected through the same material and cultural products and processes’ (1998: 171). For example, she described that Salvadorans participated in the ‘Coca-Colonisation’ and Americanisation of global culture just as much as Australians, and because of this their cultural differences were not as pronounced as might be expected. Salvadorans, just like Australians, consumed McDonalds and Coke, they watched Hollywood films and they dressed in jeans and sneakers, rather than in the indigenous costumes associated with El Salvador (1998: 171-172). Due to the similarities in cultural consumption and the effects of globalisation, Langer argues, ‘The clearly specifiable and distinctive “ethnic” and “dominant” cultures presumed by multicultural discourse bear little relation to actually existing national and regional cultures’ (1998: 170).

During 1997 to 1999, Erez Cohen (2003) conducted fieldwork on Latin American migrants and political refugees in Adelaide. Cohen found that his Latin participants were greatly influenced by a ‘discourse of multiculturalism’ when representing their identities. He argues that Latin-Australian immigrants are ‘invisible’ within multicultural Australia because their individual migrant communities are so small in numbers. One strategy that the Latin community in Adelaide had adopted to increase their visibility was to emphasise their ‘indigeneity’: ‘In order to be recognised and visible as a specific “ethnic community” Latin Americans implicitly and explicitly perform their distinctive “culture” and represent their “community” and “traditions” by emphasising the exotic indigenous imagery of Latin America’ (2003: 49).

In 2000, I conducted in-depth interviews with 13 heterosexual second generation women aged between 17 to 25 years from South and Central American backgrounds who lived mostly in the Western suburbs of Melbourne (Zevallos, 2003a; see also Zevallos, 2001). The participants held multiple ethnic identities. They each identified with four identities: a localised Latin identity (for example Chilean or Argentinean); a regional Latin identity (either South or Central American); a pan-ethnic identity (‘Latin American’); and a qualified Australian identity (their ‘Australian side’) (2003: 87). Eleven participants stressed emphatically that they were not Australian, despite speaking about their ‘Australian side’. Instead of holding hyphenated Latin-Australian or hybrid identities, they described themselves as ‘Latin American living in Australia’.

The participants saw themselves as belonging not only to their country-of-origin communities, but also to a collective (pan-ethnic) Latin American community on the basis of four ‘emblems’ of culture, which for them symbolised a homogenous Latin
ethnicity. These emblems were: ‘traditional’ country-of-origin food; language (either
Spanish or Portuguese); ‘traditional’ Latin music and dancing (*cumbias, salsas* and
*sambas*); and festivity, which referred to parties involving the entire extended family,
and also community-organised functions (2003:90).

While 11 of the 13 women rejected being Australian, ‘Australian influences’ were
in fact pivotal to their reconstruction of gender within their Latin communities. There
were five areas of parental conflict stemming from incongruent cultural and inter-
generational ideals about gender: sleep-overs with female friends, going out, bringing
boyfriends home, moving out, and constructions of Latin femininity and masculinity. It
was on this last issue that they drew upon their ‘Australian side’: ‘The participants
emphasised that Australian society is egalitarian and therefore they could not “put up
with” inequality’ (2003: 94). While their fathers, brothers, and boyfriends embodied
‘macho’ masculinities, they emphasised that their gender ideals were ‘influenced by the
Australian context in which they had grown up’ (2003: 95).

Significantly, I found that the women I interviewed constructed their femininity as
the extreme opposite to ‘marianismo’ values, through values of autonomy,
independence and equality. While the term ‘machismo’ was not in the participants’
discourse, they described Latin men as ‘macho’, dominant, over-protective, controlling,
and homophobic. These attitudes were similar to the ‘machismo’ values. Since the idea
of ‘marianismo’ derived from image of the Virgin Mary, the secularised lifestyles of
these women could explain the absence of the term ‘marianismo’ from their
vocabularies. All 13 participants were raised Catholic and they had attended Catholic
primary schools. Yet only four women reported an active tie to Catholicism, and the
other women led secularised lives, and they commonly said, ‘We kinda broke the
church thing’ (Zevallos, 2000: 33).

The participants discussion about their ‘Australian side’ signified that they were
adopting an Australian identity, ‘albeit a partial and problematic one for most
participants’ (2003:89). This partial adoption of an Australian identity highlighted the
contingent nature of the participants’ identities. They would not call themselves
Australian while they were in Australia, but when they travelled overseas the situation
reversed. External categorisations of ‘race’ influenced the way in which the participants
thought of their ethnicity while in Australia. As one participant complained:
It’s hard in Australia, because I’m not seen as Australian. I’m not. Even though I have no accent, I was born here, but because my parents aren’t Australian, I’m not Australian. And I’m not your typical blond-haired, blue-eyed Skippy. I’ve got the dark features. I mean, you look different to them. Plus my background is different to them (2003: 91).

**2:4:2 TURKISH MIGRANTS IN AUSTRALIA**

Large-scale Turkish immigration to Australia began in the late 1960s, after a bilateral migration agreement between Australia and Turkey (DFAT, 2004: [1-2]; Elley and Inglis, 1995: 194). These pioneer Turkish migrants arrived in Australia with the expectation of being ‘guest workers’, and had every intention to return to their homeland. This expectation had a great effect on their childrearing practices (Akcelik and Akcelik 1983; Elley and Inglis 1995: 194). Saving money was their primary ambition, and children were expected to make a contribution. In their first years after arrival, children were encouraged to work instead of continuing their education beyond the compulsory age, and girls were expected to aid in the care of younger siblings. By the mid to late 1970s, following repeated attempts to resettle in Turkey, these early Turkish migrants accepted that ‘their future was in Australia. [Their families] had found it hard to adjust in a country vastly different from that they had left. They felt they no longer fitted in’ (Elley and Inglis 1995: 195). Once these Turkish families accepted permanent residency, a new emphasis was placed on children of both genders to advance on to tertiary education.

The latest available information on Turkish migrants in Australia comes from the 2001 Census, which found that 54,596 Australians were first and second generation Turkish (DFAT: 2004: [2]). In 2001, most Turkish-born Australians lived in Victoria, and 29 percent of Turkish-born people over the age of 15 held educational or occupational qualifications (that is, post secondary school qualifications) compared with 46 percent of all Australians (DIMIA, 2003c: [1-2]). Of these people, 12 percent held higher education qualifications, including bachelor, graduate and postgraduate degrees and diplomas (DIMIA, 2003c: [2]). Of the Turkish-born Australians, 49 percent were employed in the paid labour force in comparison to 63 percent of the total Australian population. Sixteen percent were unemployed in comparison to seven percent of the total population (DIMIA, 2003c:[2]). The main language spoken at home by Turkish-
born Australians was Turkish (82%), and they had a significantly higher rate of citizenship (91%) in comparison to all overseas-born Australians (75%) (DIMIA, 2003c: [2-3]). Most Turkish people in Australia were Muslims of the Sunni and Alevi sects, and they were significantly less likely to state ‘no religion’ (5%) in comparison to the total Australian population (16%) (DFAT: 2004: [2]; DIMIA, 2003c: [3]).

There have been few empirical studies on Turkish ethnicity in Australia. In 1989 and 1990, Joy Elley and Christine Inglis (1995) conducted interview research with second generation Turkish youth about their educational and work expectations and experiences, and their ethnic identity. They interviewed 65 people aged 15 to 24 years living in Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane, and also incorporated survey data on approximately 140 secondary students of Turkish background living in Sydney. Elley and Inglis found that place of birth, ‘mother-tongue’, and religion were ‘symbolic markers’ of Turkish ethnicity, and more generally, family loyalty, marriage and traditional segregation of gender roles shaped Turkish identities in Australia (1995, 201).

The participants’ gender and ethnicity ‘set up two different worlds of experience’, not only from other young people living in Australia, but also between both genders within the Turkish community. Turkish-Australian ethnicity was enacted upon a gendered model of the Turkish ‘life-cycle’ that included three main ‘phases’: schooling, leaving school, and marriage. While there was a strong parental emphasis on both genders to become highly educated and pursue professional occupations, the gendered expectations for men and women differed in terms of how ‘adulthood’ was realised.

Traditionally, Turkish masculinity in Turkey was marked by the ‘transitional’ life-stage period of 18 months compulsory military service, and an expectation that they would exercise their ‘delikanlı’ nature, which translates as ‘with wild blood’. During this period, it was expected that young men develop opinions and attitudes that were not approved of by the family, particularly by their fathers. Parents tolerated drinking, smoking and staying out late, as young men were expected to do ‘wild and foolish things’ during their late teens (1995: 201).

In comparison, Turkish girls’ freedom was heavily restricted during adolescence and early adulthood relative to their brothers, to other youth living in Australia, and to relatives living in Turkey. Elley and Inglis found that Turkish family life was a constant influence on the girls’ ethnic identity and that they grew up with their parents’ expectation of being ‘responsible’, and that they helped their mothers in domestic
duties. In addition, ‘The social life of girls was invariably based in the home and in home-related activities’ (1995: 197). By contrast, their brothers had grown up participating in sporting activities, and spent their time with friends in shopping centres and game arcades. Although the girls might voice challenges to the restrictions on their freedom while they were growing up, they overwhelmingly accepted this.

Marriage was the final life-stage for both genders, as it ‘confirms adult status, regardless of the age at which it occurs’ (1995: 200). Unlike the experience of Turkish boys, for whom marriage symbolised ‘a formal transition, in essence, a settling down’, girls had no ‘transitional’ life-stage (1995: 201). On the contrary, Turkish girls ‘traditionally move directly from being a child (with responsibilities) to being a married woman with family responsibilities’ (1995: 200). One female participant noted with a sense of irony that marriage increased Turkish girls’ freedom, saying, ‘After you get married you can start to enjoy yourself, but what’s the point of that when you couldn’t enjoy your single life?’ (1995: 200-1). The women in Elley and Inglis’s study understood that marriage conferred a heightened change of status on them within the family (cf. Baldassar, 1999: 13).

The participants identified themselves as ‘Turkish-Australians’ or ‘Australian Turks’. As one participant said, ‘I’m living in Australia but I’m living in the Turkish culture’ (1995: 199). Nevertheless, belonging to their Turkish communities meant that they were ‘bound by its norms and values’. One male participant explained:

If I’m going to stay in Australia, I’m going to be an Australian. But if I’m too much of an Australian then I’d be isolated from my own community… If I want to stay with my community then I’ve got to be a member, an element of it… [to] be appreciated and be seen to be part of it (1995: 199).

Although Turkey has been a secular society since it became a republic in the early 1920s, its Islamic traditions are deeply entrenched in Turkish-Australian’s daily lives (Akcelik and Akcelic, 1983: 7). This enmeshing of religion and ethnicity is reflected in Turkish-Australians’ marriage patterns. Participants in Elley and Inglis’ study reported feeling a pressure to marry a fellow Turkish person who was also Muslim, and that this had more impact on the young women they interviewed than on the men (1995: 201). For example, one girl said that she did not ‘mind’ the ethnicity of her friends, ‘but when it comes to marriage, I think I’ll marry a Turkish person… it’s because of my religion
that I think there would be a lot of difference between us’ (1995: 200). Khoo’s recent study on intermarriage by second generation Australians found that Turkish-Australians had some of the lowest rates of out-marriage of all birth-place origin groups, and Turkish women in particular were less likely than women from all other groups to have a spouse of different descent. Eleven percent of Turkish women (and 18 percent of Turkish men) married someone of a different ethnic background in comparison to the second generation of other backgrounds such as American (84%), Welsh (80%), or Thai women (85%) (2004: 37).

In the mid-1990s, Robert Birrell (1995) found that second generation Turkish men had among the highest rates of marriages to overseas-born brides, along with second generation Vietnamese and Lebanese men, and he concluded that these men were specifically returning to their parents’ homelands to find a spouse. Khoo’s study on intermarriage supported this finding, but it also showed that this was a common practice among Turkish women. Khoo reported that second generation Turkish-Australians were more likely than people from the other groups to marry an overseas-born person, with nearly half of Turkish-Australian women and 30 percent of Turkish-men doing so (2004: 41-42). Such findings suggest that marriage and family life continue to be a strong boundary marker of Turkish ethnicity in Australia.

CONCLUSION

Social identities are given meaning through social interaction, and they anchor us to other individuals and collectivities in society through a sense of shared belonging or social distance. Identities are often ambiguous. While people can hold multiple identities, these identities are usually constructed as binaries. That is, individual social identities are defined through oppositional identities: people feel a sense of sameness with each other because there are others who are seen as different. While the concept of otherness masks the similarities in the experiences individuals and collectivities share, its focus on difference creates an avenue through which we can explore the power dynamics in the naming, expression, and social interactions that lead to the social construction of identities.
In this chapter I have identified four social identities for discussion: ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and nationality. My discussion of ethnicity outlined that ethnic identity is forged through subjective and objective understandings of ethnic boundaries, a sense of a shared culture and ancestry, and it is supported through social interaction between minority and majority groups. Race is also a social construction which greatly influences the construction of minority and majority ethnicities. While all social identities are under a constant state of negotiation, ethnic identities (like most other social identities) also reflect relationships of dominance and resistance. In the case of second generation identities, racism fosters a sense of social exclusion from the Australian national identity, but at the same time, second generation migrants also adopt an Australian identity that is accommodating of their migrant cultural practices.

My discussion of gender argues that we make choices about the way in which we ‘do gender’, but that these choices often lead to the perpetuation of gender inequality. Heteronormative notions of sexuality regulate the social construction of heterosexuality. This means that doing sexuality depends upon essentialised, binary categories of gender, and the presumption of heterosexuality. Patriarchal notions of femininity still have some influence on all heterosexual women’s expression of their sexuality, particularly in notions of virginity and the double standard, and these ideas perpetuate gendered sexual inequalities. Such influences may be accentuated within some minority ethnic groups.

My discussion of nationality outlined the tensions regarding the ethnic and civic models of nationality in light of our cultural diversity. Such tensions are mirrored in the two dominant narratives of the nation. The Anglo-Celtic narrative of the nation is hegemonic and appears to prevent Australian national identity from being truly inclusive and reflective of our cultural diversity, but equally, the multicultural narrative of the nation marginalises the contribution of Anglo-Celtic Australians. In this chapter, I have argued that the Anglo-Celtic and multicultural narratives of national identity inform the social construction of ethnic identities in Australia. I will now identify these narratives as overarching themes that emerged from the empirical studies of second generation migrant Australians which I reviewed in this chapter.

Studies of young second generation migrants show that constructions of ethnic culture, gender, sexuality, and nationality are informed by the youths’ migrant and Australian perspectives. The second generation appear to adopt their parents’ cultural ideals in a number of areas, for example, language and principles about sexual
‘morality’, but at the same time, these studies show that Australian cultural ideals are also influential, especially in relation to gender. The studies I reviewed show that the second generation often adopt hybrid migrant-Australian identities, and that they celebrate Australia’s cultural diversity and its multiculturalism. At the same time, the second generation feel that their migrant identities are marginalised by dominant racialised representations of Australian-ness.

The second generation are engaged with reconstructing Australian national identity, but this process is limited. The second generation, despite their support for multicultural models of the nation, still described the Anglo-Celtic identity as a homogenous ‘majority’ identity, or as a ‘stereotype’, and they regard this identity an ideal type that warrants criticism. Multiculturalism is premised upon racial, ethnic and religious tolerance, and its ideological basis plays an important but often ambiguous role in the reconstruction of an inclusive Australian ethnic identity. As I will show in the chapters that follow, examining the social construction of second generation identities is one way to make the benefits and contradictions of such a ‘multicultural’ Australian ethnicity visible.

**Research objectives**

My thesis is guided by two interrelated research objectives. First, I investigate the social construction of four intersecting social identities for the 50 women I interviewed: ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and nationality. My analysis of ethnicity focuses on the concepts of ethnicity and pan-ethnicity. Ethnicity refers to the women’s migrant (or country-of-origin) culture and pan-ethnicity refers to ‘imagined communities’ (Anderson, 1991) which include migrants from various national origins. There are two pan-ethnicities under investigation in this thesis: I explore the Latin women’s constructions of Latin pan-ethnicity, and then I explore the Turkish women’s constructions of Islamic pan-ethnicity. Ethnicity and pan-ethnicity are explored through the women’s subjective understanding of both their families’ and of Australian cultural traditions and values, as well as the cultural traditions and cultural values they understand members of their pan-ethnic communities share. The concept of gender is explored through the women’s constructions of femininity and masculinity in their migrant communities and in wider Australian society. The concept of sexuality is
specifically focused on heterosexuality, and it is explored through the women’s constructions of sexual norms and expressions of sexual behaviour in their migrant communities and Australian society. The concept of nationality is explored through the women’s constructions of their Australian citizenship, Australian identity and race, and I focus on the women’s adoption or rejection of Australian identity in reference to their social identities.

Second, I investigate the social influences on the women’s identities. I specifically focus on the ideology of multiculturalism and constructions of ‘Anglo-Celtic’ Australian ethnicity. My focus on the ideology of multiculturalism is on the women’s subjective understandings of multiculturalism and how beliefs about multiculturalism are embraced or rejected in the construction of their social identities. My focus on Anglo-Australian ethnicity is on the women’s subjective conceptualisations of Anglo-Australians, and how the women engaged with Anglo-Australian ethnicity when constructing their ethnicity, gender, sexuality and nationality.

There are three sets of research questions guiding my overall analysis and these are as follows:

1. How do these women construct their ethnicity? What are their attitudes towards their family’s country-of-origin culture and Australian culture?
2. How do the women construct their gender identities and their sexuality? Do their ethnic identities affect their expressions of gender and sexuality?
3. What does the women’s citizenship mean to them and does this citizenship influence their adoption of an Australian identity?

In this thesis, I argue that narratives of multiculturalism and Anglo-Australian-ness influenced the women’s social construction of their ethnicity, gender, sexuality and nationality. The following chapter will describe my study’s methodology and it includes reflections on my research project and the process of writing my PhD.
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

From September 2001 to April 2003, I conducted in-depth, semi-structured interviews with 50 second generation migrant-Australian women aged 17 to 28 years. The women came from two groups: first, I interviewed 25 women of Turkish background, and second, I interviewed 25 women of Spanish-speaking South and Central American backgrounds. All the women were Australian citizens, 30 women were Australian-born and 20 women were born overseas. The overall sample of 50 women consisted of heterosexual women who were mostly single, living in their parental home and were studying in higher education on a full-time basis. They lived mostly in the Western suburbs of Melbourne, they generally identified themselves as ‘religious’ (either Catholic or Muslim) and their parents worked mostly in working-class occupations. The interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed verbatim, and the participants were given pseudonyms.

This study was based on qualitative methods and was informed by a feminist epistemology. Although this phrase describes a multiplicity of theoretical assumptions, feminist concerns are broadly located in documenting and understanding women’s experiences and their social contexts (Reinharz, 1992, 244-258). There has been growing support in the past two decades for feminist research into the intersecting elements of gender, ethnicity, class and sexuality in the identity constructions of women of migrant backgrounds (Anthias and Yuval-Davis, 1992; Bottomley, de Lepervanche and Martin, 1991). Feminists have argued that research that isolates the ‘categories’ of women’s social identification undervalues the reality of ethnic women’s struggles (hooks 1984: 2-3; Griffin, 1996: 181; Kilic, 1997: 33-34).

At the same time, feminism is open to criticisms for its assumptions about a ‘universality’ in the experience of women and their struggles against ‘oppression’ that is informed by Western culture (Ramazannoglu, 1989, 21-23). As Sevgi Kilic wrote: ‘... many analyses by both Western feminists and white males are couched on a hierarchy which equates white Western discourses as progressive and modern, and non-Western discourses as backward and traditional’ (1997: 46-47). Given that I interviewed Muslim women who wore the hijab – a group that is widely misunderstood in Australian society – this critique of the feminist concern about ‘oppression’ is a particularly important one.
post-September 11, and my analysis tries to be sensitive to it (cf. McDonald, 2002: 234-235).

My study was primarily concerned with the women’s subjective understandings of their social identities. Qualitative data allows researchers to explore subjectivity and meaning (Kvale, 1996: 5-6, 31). Consequently this study used open-ended questions to explore the major themes of ethnicity, gender, sexuality and nationality (refer to the interview schedule in Appendix 3). I was interested in exploring the women’s attitudes to these issues, but I also kept the interviews flexible and explored the issues the women raised for discussion. The qualitative approach is ideal for exploring the micro-level experiences of social actors given that the open-ended interview explores ‘people’s views of reality and allows the researcher to generate theory’ (Reinharz, 1992: 18; see also Minichiello et al., 1995: 75). The advantages of this approach are the rich, descriptive data and in-depth detail about the experiences of specific social groups which, in my thesis, involve two minority ethnic groups (Neuman, 1997: 328-335, 420). As I noted in the previous chapter, there is rich empirical data that supports the social constructionist view of the enduring, but changing constructions of second generation ethnic identities. Such research focuses on specific ethnic communities. This strategy avoids the criticism of feminist writers who argue against generalising about a collective ‘migrant’ experience (Kilic, 1997: 41-44).

Australia is home to 200 ‘minority’ ethnic groups. While there exists some notable research on the ‘largest’ of these NESB minority groups, especially Italians and Greeks, there is very little written on Latin American Australians, and not much research has been conducted on Turkish Australians since the 1980s. My focus on second generation ethnic groups such as those from Turkish, South and Central American backgrounds provides an opportunity to understand how members of these minority groups understand social life in Australia.

This chapter will discuss: the origins of the study; my sample, data collection and analysis strategies; my position as researcher given my insider/outsider perspective on both groups; and the limitations of my sample. It concludes with some suggestions for further study.
3:1 THE STUDY

3:1:1 ORIGINS OF THE STUDY

Two factors influenced my decision to carry out an investigation into the social construction of identity by second generation women of Latin American and Turkish backgrounds. Firstly, I wanted to test out the findings from my Honours project (Zevallos, 2000; see also Zevallos, 2003a) by gathering data on a wider group of women of South and Central American backgrounds to see if these earlier findings would hold up. Second, I wanted to expand the boundaries of my Honours project by focusing more on nationality and religion, and by comparing the Latin sample with another ethnic group. My decision to focus on Turkish women came from reflecting on this earlier work.

The 13 women I interviewed for my Honours project came from numerous South and Central American backgrounds. They strongly asserted that ethnicity was not an issue when choosing friends, boyfriends or prospective marriage partners. Indeed, the women had diverse friendship networks that included different Latin and NESB background individuals (mostly European), and some of the women were dating non-Latin men. Despite their emphasis on the cosmopolitanism of their social relationships, they said that they would never consider dating or marrying men of Muslim backgrounds. The women complained about the ‘macho’ identities of Latin men and saw this as a potential problem in future relationships, but they perceived Muslim culture to be exceptionally patriarchal. So, while Latin culture was seen as ‘sexist’, Muslim culture was seen as hyper-sexist. For example, one woman who had in the past dated a Turkish man, said, ‘It’s just too hard to get into [Muslim] culture. Their attitudes towards women are worse than [in] South America. Horrible’. Other women had been warned by their families not to date Muslims, and one woman, who was happily engaged to a Turkish man, said her extended family had told her Muslim men ‘treat you nice at the beginning, but one you get married, they change’ (Zevallos, 2000: 47). The women I interviewed for my Honours project lived predominantly in the Western suburbs of Melbourne. They told me that in these suburbs, Turkish men had ‘bad reputations’ as ‘trouble-makers’ due to local ‘gangs’ in the area (Zevallos, 2000: 47).
The women I interviewed in 2000 repeatedly emphasised their sense of difference to Anglo-Australians and that they felt a sense of comradeship with other people of migrant backgrounds due to a shared sense of difference. At the same time, these women saw Turkish and Muslim men as *too different* (and even deviant). I wanted to speak to Turkish women primarily to see what they might have to say about Turkish men and whether they used Latin people as a reference point. And thus began my PhD.

I used my Honours findings as a pilot project for my PhD, and I conducted two pilot interviews with Turkish women to test my modified interview schedule, which was based on my Honours interviews. These pilot interviews were not included in the PhD because the two Turkish women fell outside my target age-range (they were both 31 years of age). My Honours findings are omitted from the present study, as I wanted to interview a different sample of women from South and Central American backgrounds.

### 3:1:2 THE SAMPLE

**Participant demographics**

As already discussed, the second generation can be understood in statistical, social and subjective terms. In my study, I focus on both the social and subjective definitions of the second generation: I am interested in the way in which overseas-born and Australian-born women define their ethnic identities. My decision to include overseas-born migrants in a study of the second generation is consistent with other studies where researchers have included migrant children who came to Australia ‘at a very young age’ and ‘up to around ten years’ (Butcher and Thomas, 2001: 6-7; Vasta, 1994: 21-22). Arriving at an older age suggests that the ‘significant learning about the social and cultural environment of their home country has already taken place’ (Seitz and Kilmartin, 1987: 14).

My study includes 30 Australian-born women and 20 overseas-born women who arrived in Australia before the age of 10. Of the Australian-born women, 22 were of Turkish background and eight women were of Latin background. Of the three overseas-born women from Turkish backgrounds, one was born in Cyprus and two were born in mainland Turkey, and they arrived in Australia between the ages of six to 18 months.
Of the 17 overseas-born women of Latin background, one woman was born in Argentina, one in Costa Rica, two in Uruguay, two in Peru, four in Chile and seven in El Salvador. They arrived in Australia from the ages of two to 10 years. The mean age of arrival for the overseas-born women of both groups was age six.

Appendix 1 outlines the women’s demographics, but in this chapter I discuss their socio-economic backgrounds in more detail. Thirty-five women lived in the western and north-western suburbs of Melbourne, predominantly in Broadmeadows and Meadow Heights. These are adjacent suburbs located around an hour and a half’s drive north-west of Melbourne, and in Sunshine and St Albans, which are adjacent suburbs 40 minutes west of Melbourne. The Turkish women tended to live almost exclusively around Broadmeadows and the Latin women tended to live more around Sunshine, but they also lived around Broadmeadows. Twelve women lived outside these Western regions, in suburbs such as Preston, Heidelberg, Noble Park, Dandenong and three women lived near Melbourne’s CBD. Below is a map of Melbourne showing the areas in which the women lived.

**Figure 1: Participants’ suburbs of residence**

![Map of Melbourne showing suburbs of residence](image)
Data from the 2001 Census shows that Broadmeadows and its surrounding suburbs such as Meadow Heights have high levels of unemployment, many low-income families and many people without post-school qualifications (ABS, 2003b: 35, 45, 49). The participants described this area of residence as having a strong Turkish-community and Muslim-community presence. For example, Fatma described Broadmeadows as ‘Turk-land’ and said that when she ‘went into the real world’ to study in a university near the city, she found it difficult to adjust to being outside this familiar Turkish environment:

[At university] you’ve got all these types of people from different religions, from different backgrounds. It sort of is a bit hard to adjust to it. It’s really different and sometimes you don’t feel secure, you don’t feel safe and you feel like you’re so alone. You know, I used to go home by train, and I used to hear a Turkish person, and go [sighs] ‘Thank God I’m home!’ [Laughing] Just to hear a Turkish word [deep, dramatic inhaling of air] ‘Oh I feel better now! I feel safe!’

The women’s view that Broadmeadows is a ‘Turkish suburb’ is partially supported by the most recent available Census data. In 2001, the Turkish were the largest of the overseas-born communities the Hume-Broadmeadows statistical local area (SLA). Almost seven percent of overseas-born migrants in this area were Turkish, compared with three percent of Italian-born and almost three percent of Lebanese-born (ABS, 2002b: [2]). Additionally, Bouma and Phillip Hughes’ (2000) research on religious residential concentration partially supports the women’s view that Muslims have a high profile in Broadmeadows and its surrounding areas. Using data from the 1996 Census, Bouma and Hughes found that Muslim people were amongst the most comparatively residentially concentrated religious groups in urban Victoria. In 1996, Muslims made up 1.5 percent of Victoria’s population, and the SLA of Hume-Broadmeadows had the largest number of Muslims in Victoria. Within this SLA, the highest residential population of Muslims was in the suburb of Campbellfield, where Muslims comprised over 26 percent of the local population (2000: 22-23).

The participants in my sample had mostly grown up in larger-than-usual nuclear families, and their parents were mostly in full-time paid employment, which is unusual given the 2001 Census figures, where only 49 percent of Turkish-born Australians aged over 15 were employed (DIMIA, 2003c: [2]). Twenty-three of the 50 women had between three to five siblings. Two women had been raised in single-parent households
from a young age due to their father’s death; five women’s parents had separated, mostly during the women’s infancy; and three women’s parents had divorced when the women were young. The other 40 women had been raised in intact families.

The women’s parents were employed in working-class occupations, mostly as factory hands (both parents), cleaners and kitchen-hands (mothers), and mechanics or car-related repair workers (fathers). There were only three women who had parents who worked in white-collar occupations (IT and office work). Most of the women’s parents were still in paid labour at the time of the interviews. A few of the women’s ‘stay at home’ mothers had stopped paid employment after they had children but in most of these cases the Turkish women’s mothers ran small sewing businesses from home or they worked at home sewing for other people. Four Turkish women’s parents ran joint sewing businesses in addition to their full time employment; one woman’s father owned and worked in a panel-beating shop, and one woman’s parents ran a small grocery store.

The following table summarises the women’s birthplace, education, employment, marital status and travels back to their families’ country-of-origin (for more detail on individual participants, refer to Appendix 1).
Table 1: Summary of participants’ demographic background

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>LATIN (N=25)</th>
<th>TURKISH (N= 25)</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Australia</td>
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<td>22</td>
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<td>Overseas</td>
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<td>20</td>
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<td><strong>EDUCATION (HIGHEST LEVEL)</strong></td>
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<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completed at least one TAFE degree</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completed at least one university degree (undergraduate and post-graduate)</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Currently in high school</td>
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<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Currently in university or TAFE</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EMPLOYMENT</strong></td>
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<tr>
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<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Part-time</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full-time</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>18</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>MARITAL STATUS</strong></td>
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<td>Single</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long-term relationship</td>
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<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Engaged</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>LIVING ARRANGEMENT</strong></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alone</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With partner</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TRAVEL TO FAMILY’S COUNTRY-OF-ORIGIN</strong></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not ever/ not since arriving in Australia</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For holidays</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To live</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The women’s parents had limited secondary education. In contrast to this background, all the participants were either in the process of acquiring a tertiary education or had successfully done so, and one Latin woman aged 17 was still completing her secondary schooling at the time of her interview. Two Latin women had almost completed but deferred their university degrees. Four women had completed at least one TAFE degree (three Latin), 13 women had completed at least one Bachelor university degree at undergraduate level (six Latin), one Turkish woman had completed a university degree at Honours level, and one Latin woman had successfully completed a PhD. Two Latin women were currently studying at TAFE level; 24 women were currently studying full-time at university at undergraduate level (eight Latin and 16 Turkish women); and two Latin women were working full time while completing their PhDs.
Eighteen participants were in paid full-time employment in a variety of ‘white collar’ and knowledge industries such as finance, research, graphic and computer design, therapy and education. In addition to being full-time students, 14 women worked on a part-time or casual basis. They were mostly in customer service industries, but one of these women worked in accountancy, one woman worked as a law clerk and one woman was a social worker. This implies some upward mobility within my sample.

Eleven of the 50 women were married, five women were engaged and 10 women were in self-identified long-term relationships (average of 2 years), but of these women in long-term relationships, only one was Turkish. The median age for the women in relationships from both groups was 24. There were distinct differences in the married women’s relationships. The six married Latin women had been married between 2 months to 7 years, but they had married their partners after being in a relationship between three to 10 years. The five Turkish women had been married between 9 months to six years, but they had typically married their partners after being in a relationship for six months. The Turkish women were almost twice as likely to be single than the Latin women. Fifteen of the Turkish women were not in a relationship at the time of their interviews, in comparison to nine of the Latin women. Only one of the single Turkish and one Latin woman were currently dating a man on a casual basis. The median age for the single women from both groups was 21. Only one of the 50 women had a child: one of the married Turkish women.

Twelve of the 50 women were currently living with their partners, and one woman lived alone. The other 37 women still lived in their parental home, and the Turkish women were slightly more likely to be living at home than the Latin women. Twenty of the 25 Turkish women still lived in their parental home in comparison to 17 of the 25 Latin women. Two of these Latin women who had previously moved out of their parents’ home to be closer to their tertiary institution had later returned home. The participants’ attitudes towards gender and sexuality were likely to be influenced by their living arrangements, as most of the women in both groups still lived with their parents. Living with their parents meant that issues related to gender, independence and their relationships with men involved some level of negotiation with their parents, and so Chapter Six looks at the participants’ negotiation of gender and sexuality inside and outside of the parental home.
Given that most of the women interviewed lived with their parents (37 out of 50), their financial independence was limited. Twenty-seven women who lived at home were studying full-time, and of these women, the Turkish women were more likely to be financially dependent on their parents than the Latin women. Twelve of the 13 Latin women who were studying full-time were also in paid employment (10 women worked on a part-time or casual basis and two women worked full-time). In comparison, only four of the 16 Turkish women who were studying full time also worked in paid employment (all on a part-time basis). A further two Turkish women engaged in non-paid work: one woman volunteered at a legal centre and one woman worked at her family’s business on weekends. Of the 13 women not living with their parents, only one Turkish woman was unemployed and supported by her spouse, and the rest were employed in full-time paid work.

The participants’ living arrangements, which were largely based within the parental home, reflect the wider Australian patterns of young people in the women’s age cohort. Data from the 2001 Census showed that 40 percent of 20 to 24 year olds lived in the parental home (ABS, 2004: 32), and an earlier report by the ABS showed that in 1999, 12 percent of 25 to 29 year olds lived in their parental home (2000: [3]). The proportion of young people living in the parental home has increased since the 1980s, and this is generally attributed to extended education, delayed marriage and financial dependence (ABS, 2000: 3; 2004: 32).

It is possible that this sample of women was unusual due to their extensive overseas travel. Of the 50 participants, all but 10 women had been back to their family’s country-of-origin (CoO) for a visit. Twenty-nine women had gone on holidays that lasted typically between three to five months, and most women had visited their families’ CoO at least twice in their lives, usually in their early primary school years and then again in their late teens. Two of these women though, had visited their families’ CoO as many as five times. Eleven women (eight Turkish and three Latin) had spent between one to eight years living in their families’ CoO during their childhood. Seven of these 11 women had been born in Australia, and their parents had relocated the family to their CoO thinking the move back would be permanent, but had eventually returned to Australia both for the benefit of their children’s education and because of economic concerns.
Recruitment of sample

I gathered my sample through the snowball method. Initially, I tried three strategies to recruit my sample groups. First, I spread the word through my social networks that I was looking for Turkish and Latin participants. This was a relatively unsuccessful recruiting method, and I only got a couple of participants this way. The reasons for this is that when I began my study, I did not know any Turkish people, and most people I have contact with are in the same boat. I was reluctant to recruit Latin participants through my own networks because I did not want to interview anyone with whom I had previous contact, and my acquaintances had already helped me recruit Latin women for my Honours project. These reasons severely limited my ability to recruit participants through my wider social networks. In the end, I interviewed only one Turkish woman and two Latin women who were known to my acquaintances.

Second, I put up posters advertising for participants in suburbs with substantial Turkish and Latin populations (mostly in the Western suburbs of Melbourne). I put up posters in shopping centres, community centers and during community events, such as the annual Spanish Fiesta in Johnson Street in Fitzroy and the Turkish festival in Broadmeadows (see Appendix 5 for an example of one of the posters). The posters were utterly ineffective in recruiting participants. Only one Turkish woman contacted me through the posters, but she had also heard about my study through a friend I had previously interviewed and the poster only served as a reminder to call me after her friend had encouraged her to participate.

Third, I contacted Turkish and Latin community advocacy and welfare groups around Melbourne and student social clubs in Melbourne universities which catered to Turkish and Latin students. Usually I called these groups directly and I also sent emails detailing my study and I sent them copies of my posters via email to hand out to their group members. Speaking directly to university groups was the most effective method to recruit my sample groups. As it turned out, most important of all was that I made contact with young women who were leaders within such social and community groups who fitted the criteria of my study. As it happened, I gained the majority of my participants through the support of one Turkish woman from a university social club for Turkish students and one Latin woman from a Latin community group. Both of these
women participated in my study and took a personal interest in my topic. Without their help, I doubt that I could have recruited the number of participants I did.

Recruiting participants is always difficult, but each of the sample I interviewed presented their own difficulties. I decided to recruit one group at a time, and began with the Turkish sample. In mid-2001, I began actively seeking participants through the methods described above. My attempts to recruit through the Turkish organisations proved unsuccessful largely because such groups were run by, and catered to, first generation migrants. Language barriers meant that I was unable to recruit their children, and the people I spoke to did not understand the aims of my study. My attempts to recruit through Turkish social clubs in universities were severely limited because only one such group existed at the time of the interviews. I rang and emailed the president of the club but over two months passed and I heard no word.

After months of trying to recruit Turkish women, I became convinced that young Turkish women were simply not interested in a study such as mine. Just as I had decided to abandon my research topic and had drafted a new research proposal, a woman from the Turkish student club contacted me on 20 September 2001 saying that she had a group of women ready to talk to me, and when did I want to speak with them: tomorrow? I could hardly believe my luck, but there was a specific reason for this newfound spark of interest in my study. Most of the women who participated in my study were motivated to speak to me because of the impending war on Afghanistan. The Turkish interviews were conducted over a four-month period, and the first interviews took place at the end of September 2001. I initially gained links into Turkish women’s networks through women who felt it was important that other Australians understand that Muslim-Australians (not Turkish-Australians) were not ‘terrorists’ and because they wanted to promote understanding of their religion.

Many of the Turkish participants were initially uneasy about my motivations for focusing on Turkish women. They typically asked, ‘why Turkish women?’ As awkward as it was, I would briefly explain my Honours findings as they appear above, and, surprisingly, they agreed to speak to me. The first few women who spoke to me did so largely because my contact person encouraged them to; but once I had interviewed three women, more of their friends came forward. Most participants were initially concerned about being misquoted. This was because of media reports which they felt had vilified Islam and Muslims since September 11 2001. Their fears of being misquoted were reflected in the way that almost every Turkish woman, when asked if
they wanted a copy of their transcript and a copy of the completed thesis, asked for a copy of both. None of the Latin women wanted a copy of their transcript, but most wanted a copy of the thesis. Despite the Turkish women’s sensitivity, I was able to establish trust during the initial phase of the interviews in all cases.

Almost half of the Turkish interviews came from my initial contact from the Turkish student social club and these interviews showed that being Muslim was highly important to these women. This was a finding I had been unprepared for, given that my reading on Turkey up to that point had emphasised Turkey’s secularism. This led me to retry university student clubs. This time I contacted Islamic groups asking for Turkish participants, and this strategy eventually snowballed to an Islamic school in the Western suburbs. It opened up possibilities and I very quickly completed the 25 interviews for which I had aimed. Seven participants were members of the original Turkish student organisation, four participants were teachers in the Islamic school, and the rest of the participants were members of the Islamic student clubs or they were recruited through friends who belonged to these organisations.

All of the Turkish women I interviewed identified as Muslim and this identity was more important to them in most cases than their Turkish or Australian identities. I interviewed an almost even mixture of Turkish-Muslim women who wore the hijab (the Muslim ‘headscarf’) and women who did not wear the hijab. Most of the Turkish participants referred to the hijab as a ‘scarf’ or ‘veil’ during their interviews. I use the term ‘hijab’ throughout my thesis because, according to the women, this term best reflects the Muslim dress to which they adhered. Twelve of these women wore a version of hijab which involved wearing a headscarf that covered their hair and chest area, and they also dressed in loose-fitting clothing. Additionally, two women wore a burqa, which involved further covering one’s face, so that only their eyes were shown in the presence of men who were not their husbands or members of their family. When I interviewed these two women, they uncovered their faces, because as a woman I was allowed to see their faces. All 25 Turkish women referred to women who wore hijab as ‘closed’ or ‘covered’ Muslims, and they referred to women who did not wear hijab as ‘open’ Muslims. For the purposes of consistency, I refer to women who wore the hijab as ‘closed’ and women who did not wear the hijab as ‘open’. Being ‘open’ refers to not wearing a headscarf or any additional covering on their hair, faces and bodies. Interestingly though, the majority of these ‘open’ women said that they did not wear
tight clothing, low cut tops or miniskirts in observance of Islamic ideals about clothing. In this way, then, this group of women were also influenced by the hijab.

Throughout my thesis, I have used these two terms to categorise the Turkish women: 14 women were ‘closed’ and 11 women were ‘open’. I rely on these two categories in the chapters that follow because, as I will show, there were significant differences between these two groups of Turkish women, and because they spoke of their identities and social practices and those of other Muslim women in reference to wearing or not wearing the hijab.

Given that the sample was largely derived from women who were actively affiliated with Muslim associations, it was not surprising that the findings of my study should support a model of Islamic identification. That is to say, not only were these 25 women Muslims, but they were, by their own admissions, ‘religious Turks’ for whom Islam played a central role in their lives. ‘Cultural Turks’, as they explained, were Turkish people who were also Muslim (because, as they kept telling me, ‘99 percent of Turks are Muslims’) but these ‘cultural Turks’ did not follow Islam ‘properly’. As these women saw it, cultural Turks were more focused on Turkish cultural traditions, whereas ‘religious Turks’ focused primarily on Islamic traditions. My study, then, only focuses on self-identified ‘religious Turks’.

Recruiting the Latin sample was less stressful but still difficult, and it took much longer to reach my target of 25 women than it had with the Turkish women. I wanted to interview women from as many national groups from South and Central America, including Brazilian women (who are not Spanish-speakers) but in the end, my sample did not include any non-Spanish speakers. The Latin interviews were largely completed over a six month period between October 2002 and April 2003. This sample took longer to attain than the Turkish sample because, unlike the Turkish sample, I had fewer contact groups to draw upon (given that my wider networks had been exhausted). Contacting universities for Latin social clubs was unsuccessful because no such groups existed at the time of the interviews. Instead, I was able to get a couple of contacts from university lecturers who taught Latin American students, and I snowballed from there. One third of my Latin sample came from a contact I made at a Latin community group. I initially made contact with a community worker by email, through an online community group for Latin youth linked to a Latin community welfare group in Victoria. This woman circulated an email and poster on my behalf by email, describing
my study. She also participated in my study and organised interviews with her friends from the online group, and I snowballed from these women.

As far as I could tell, the Latin women had different motivations for participating in my study. Whereas the Turkish women were largely motivated by their political awareness of Islam, these Latin women participated in my study mostly out of ethnic pride. The Turkish women could be seen to have ‘ethnic pride’ in Islam (because they saw Islam as an ethnic ‘culture’ as well as a religion), and therefore participated in my study out of a sense of pride for Islam, more so than their Turkish ethnicity. The Latin women had ethnic pride in being Latin and this was their motivation for participating in my study. When I contacted the Latin women, there was rarely any hesitation in participating; they never asked, ‘Why South/Central American women?’, as the Turkish women had asked. Instead, the Latin women usually agreed to participate without listening to a lengthy description of my study. The Latin women were mostly enthusiastic straight off the bat, and they said things like, ‘Sure! Why not?’

There was another more general reason that both groups of women were willing to participate in my study: as fellow students, they were sympathetic to my plight. In describing my study to the women, I let them know this was for my PhD. The women, being current or former students themselves, would usually tell me they understood that it was ‘hard’ to complete assignments that relied on the participation of others. They usually told me this after the interviews were over and when I asked them if they knew of anyone else who might be interested in being interviewed, and so it seemed that they were willing to recruit friends due to my status as a student.

As discussed, for each sample group I had one contact person who helped me recruit numerous women from their social networks. In most instances, after she gave me the contact details, I contacted potential participants personally. Usually, I would ask participants to speak to their friends to see if they were interested in participating in my study, and then I would collect phone numbers of potential participants and tell them about the study personally. I found this to be more efficient and faster than relying on a third party. Of the women I contacted, everyone agreed to participate on the basis of my conversation with them; but two women whose friends had arranged interviews without any contact from me did not end up participating.
3:2 ANALYSIS

3:2:1 DATA COLLECTION

I collected my data through in-depth, semi-structured interviews. I took notes after each interview about my observations during the interview, usually of the participants’ body mannerisms and the discussions we had after the interviews. These notes were not integrated into my analysis. I kept these notes for myself to chronicle my personal interpretations of the interview process. I usually spent some time chatting with the participants before and after their interviews in order to facilitate a friendly atmosphere and to establish rapport. I sometimes spent up to five hours with each participant including the informal chatting and the actual interview. The interviews lasted approximately one hour, but they ranged between 40 minutes to over two hours. On most occasions, I would interview two people in the same day, as I asked the participants to arrange for their friends who were interested in participating to come along, but I interviewed all participants separately. I managed this because I stressed to the participants that this was a requirement of my study.

When I arranged each interview, I would ask that we meet in a quiet and private place that best suited the participant. I specified that I was happy to meet them where it was easiest and most comfortable for them, and I always offered to come to their houses, or if they were happier, I would meet them at work or at their university. Although I always arranged for the interview to take place in a private location, on three occasions the participants were happy to be interviewed in an open room where their friends were within earshot. I preferred not to interview the women in these circumstances, but I also wanted to accommodate the wishes of the participants.

Nineteen of the 25 Turkish women were interviewed in their place of work or at their universities, most often in a secluded outside area or in a vacant office or classroom. The other five Turkish women were interviewed in their own or their friends’ homes, and one woman was interviewed in a public library near her parents’ home. Eighteen of the 25 Latin women were interviewed in their own home or in a friend’s house (who had recruited them), usually in their bedroom or in the living room when the other occupants of the house were out. Three Latin women were interviewed
at their work, two women were interviewed at their universities, and two Latin women were interviewed over lunch or a coffee in cafés near their work.

It is significant that the venues of the interviews were so different. This had a slight impact upon the interviews, and it might even reflect something about the groups I interviewed. Interviewing the Turkish women predominantly at their work or universities meant that their interviews were significantly shorter than the Latin women’s interviews. The Turkish women were usually fitting me in between classes or on their lunch break, meaning that the interview time was usually restricted to exactly one hour. Interviewing the Latin women at their homes meant that their interview times were much longer, usually closer to one and a half hours. Also, interviewing the Latin women predominantly at home meant that I usually spent a lot more time hanging out with them before and after the interviews.

The fact that the Turkish women were initially apprehensive about their interviews and my motivations for conducting a study on Turkish women may have affected their choice of venue. Interviewing them at work or at university was a more neutral and less intimate venue than their own houses. This is mere speculation; but it was striking how the Latin women always jumped at the idea of having me come to their houses, while the Turkish women almost always refused this option. I will stress however, that the choice of venue did not affect the content of the interviews. That is, I did not feel as if the Turkish women were reticent in comparison to the Latin women. The choice of venue mostly meant that I had more data on the Latin women overall than on the Turkish women, even though I covered all my key themes with each group.

I devised a general interview schedule and made sure to cover these set themes with the participants, but I also questioned the women on the themes that they themselves identified for discussion during their interviews. A copy of this interview schedule is found in Appendix 3, but I will now describe the interview more generally. I would always explain the ethics procedure and the general themes of the interview with the participants when we organised an interview. Before the interview began, I would read a description of the study and the ethics statement and ask them if they had any questions about this before they gave their written consent (see Appendix 4 for a copy of disclosure and informed consent forms). The interview began with questions about demographics (refer to Appendix 3). I would then ask the participants to tell me a little about themselves, and I left this question purposefully open to get them talking comfortably. They usually told me about their interests, their work and their studies.
The first set of questions covered the topic of migration and ethnicity. I asked questions about the women’s family relationships and I asked them to narrate a story about their family’s migration experiences and the reasons why their family moved to Australia. Other questions included reflections on their schooling, friendship groups, religious identities, their descriptions on their families’ CoO culture and Australian culture, their ethnic identities, issues of citizenship and their experiences of discrimination.

The second part of the interview focused on gender and sexuality issues. At this point of the interview, I would signal to the participants that the next set of questions were of a sensitive nature, and I reminded them that they were free to stop the interview at any time or not answer questions they felt uncomfortable with, and that they could withdraw from the study at any time. This section of the interview included questions about femininity, gender experiences in their families of origin and in their marriages (where applicable), questions about their expectations in romantic relationships and of marriage and having children. At the end of the interview, I invited the participants to ask me questions about their interview or the study itself and I urged them to contact me if they wanted to add anything to their interviews at a later time. Usually, the women took this opportunity to ask me about my findings so far, especially of the women in their ethnic group. In many cases they also asked me about my ethnic identity and about my cultural upbringing. I always answered their questions openly.

I memorised my interview schedule and only rarely referred to it during the interviews. Instead, I would run through the interview questions from memory, and once the interview was complete, I would say to the participant something like, ‘I think we’ve covered everything I wanted to cover with you. Let me just have a quick glance over my questions’. This would give me an opportunity to pick up on any questions I had missed. Conducting the interview this way was more effective than constantly glancing down to my interview schedule (which I did in the first couple of interviews), as I found this tended to interrupt the ‘flow’ of the interview. I preferred the interview to resemble an everyday conversation as closely as possible (Kvale, 1996: 5-7), and so I did not like breaking eye contact in order to read questions from my interview sheet.

Once I had completed 25 interviews with the Turkish women, I did no more interviewing for about one year. During this time, I worked with the Turkish data and I read the literature on Islam, as this was something I had limited knowledge about. It was clear that the women’s religious practices and attitudes and their discussion on hijab was immensely important and I needed to learn more about these issues before
moving on to the Latin interviewing. I wrote papers using some of the data from the Turkish interviews, inviting feedback from colleagues on my findings so far (see for example Zevallos, 2003b). I also used this time to reflect upon my interview schedule and to modify my questions according to the data I had received from the Turkish women, especially on the issue of religious identities.

3:2:2 DATA ANALYSIS

My analysis concentrates on the participants’ use of language when constructing their social identities, and this is a primary concern of social constructionist theory (Burr, 1995: 8). That is, I focus on the ideas the women used to convey their social identities through their talk, and the meanings they attached to the things they reported doing in their everyday lives.

I strove to keep the flavour of the women’s language as much as possible. The interviews were transcribed verbatim, but most interruptions of speech were edited out at the time of transcription. Specifically, ‘ums’ and ‘ahs’ were edited out to keep flow of conversation intact, unless I felt that such ‘interruptions’ were necessary. I have left the women’s colloquialisms mostly intact. For example, I have written ‘coz’ instead of ‘because’, and ‘nash’ and ‘nasho’, which is short for ‘nationality’, and the women also used this word as a substitute for ethnic identity and ethnic culture.

I have not used any qualitative computer software for my data analysis. After transcribing and de-identifying the interview transcripts using Microsoft Word, I began my analysis by printing out a hardcopy of each transcript and reading over it carefully. I highlighted relevant passages and quotes and I made notes along the margins of the transcripts, looking for recurring themes. While I had three general themes (ethnicity, gender/sexuality, and Australian nationality/culture), I also looked for the themes that had emerged from the interviews. From here, using Microsoft Word, I cut and pasted specific comments from each of the participants to the themes which emerged from my reading of the transcripts and gathered them together. These themes included: Anglo-Australians; Australian culture; citizenship; community; CoO traditions; CoO travel experiences; discrimination/racism; ethnic identity; friendship networks; gender; gender inequality/disadvantages; hijab; marriage; multiculturalism; respect; September 11. Some of the participants’ comments appeared under multiple themes. Next, I printed
off a hard copy of each of these ‘theme’ documents, and I re-read the comments from each of the participants under the themes to get a sense of how I would write up the material. I wrote summaries of my findings under each theme and incorporated the women’s comments. At various stages while I was writing my thesis, new themes would emerge (such as ‘religious identities’), and so I would go back through the interview material and create more documents, and so the process of analysis was ongoing.

I developed a database for each of the sample groups on Excel in addition to my Word documents in order to manage the data. First, I generated a demographics worksheet of each group which included each participants’ age, birthplace, travel experiences to their families’ CoO, their parents’ occupations, parents’ birthplace, details about their siblings, place of residence, education, career aspirations (if still a student), employment details, marital status, religion, and self-identified ethnic-identity. I printed a hardcopy of these documents and added information during the write up, so that I would have a quick summary of the important findings of my study. A modified version of this document appears in Appendix 1, but I have omitted details which would compromise the participants’ anonymity, such as details about their parents and siblings. I have also generalised other details in order to protect anonymity; for example, instead of writing the specifics of their employment, I have only included their employment status (none, part-time or full time).

Second, using the same database, I generated ‘semi-fixed data grids’ on specific themes, following a course I attended on focus group analysis in February 2003. Such grids are ideal for semi-structured qualitative interview data. Along the top axis, I placed each of my primary questions (for example, ‘How would you describe your ethnic identity?’) or my key themes as they emerged from the interviews (for example attitudes towards multiculturalism) and down the left-hand vertical axis, I placed each participants’ pseudonym. The grid shows the responses to each of my key interview questions, but in some cases, there were gaps in the cells because of the flexible nature of my interview, where some topics discussed with some women were not discussed with other women. An example of one grid is Appendix 6, which shows the Latin women’s responses to my key questions on religion. The grids provide a visual aid to the data and it was sometimes an easier reference point than reading through the Word documents to find what the different women said about the same topic.
Third, while I was writing each chapter I developed typologies, in order to highlight my key findings. W. Lawrence Neuman writes that a typology is made up of simple concepts or ‘ideal types’, which he defines as ‘models or mental abstractions of social relations or processes’ (1997: 432). A researcher draws together these ideal types in order to highlight a complex interrelationship between their key concepts (1997: 42). The typologies I present are empirical typologies because the types that I work with emerged while I was analysing my data (de Vaus, 1991: 195). Each type represents clusters of ideas that the women had in common; for example, I grouped all women who saw themselves as Australian under one type. At the same time, the types also draw our attention to the differences between groups; for example, women who saw themselves as Australian can be compared to the women who did not see themselves as Australian.

Importantly, ideal types are ‘constructions of the investigator’ (de Vaus, 1991: 194). While I grouped women according to the unique features they had in common, I determined which features were important to highlight to the reader, according to my primary research questions (refer to p. 62), and in the context of my overall analysis. Organising the data through typologies made it easier for me to understand the general trends of my findings. Equally, the typologies simplify the wealth of material that my study generated, so that it would be easier for the reader to understand. This is one of the strengths of typologies; they allow the researcher to ‘organise ideas and systematically investigate relations in the data, as well as communicate results to readers’ (Neuman, 1997: 437). This is also a limitation of typologies: they can obscure differences within each type. Ideal types allow us to compare such social processes even though ‘no reality ever fits an ideal type’ (1997: 432). Not all the women fit neatly into the typologies I devised, but throughout my analysis I draw the reader’s attention to such anomalies. I also explain my reasons for classifying them in the groups chosen.

I developed four typologies in my thesis: in the following chapter there are two typologies on religious identities (one for the Latin women, which was based on their discussions of Catholicism; and one for the Turkish women, which was based on their discussion of Islam). In Chapter Seven, there are two typologies, one on racism, and another on ethnic identities. While I discuss these typologies in detail in my thesis, I also mapped each woman’s comments on tables and grids that I printed off in hard copy for easy reference (for examples, see Appendices 6 and 7).
3:3 REFLECTIONS ON THE RESEARCH PROCESS

3:3:1 RESEARCHER AS ‘INSIDER’ AND ‘OUTSIDER’

Both groups presented their own challenges to me as a researcher due to my insider/outsider status. Firstly, my ethnicity was a source of ambiguity with some of the women I interviewed. Some women would ask me my ethnic background over the phone when we organised the interview, but most women tried to determine my ethnicity by my physical appearance when we met. Therefore, they were judging my ethnicity on the basis of racial markers, with mixed success. They also judged my ethnicity from the sound of my name. My name threw most participants. My first name is not Spanish, and so the Latin women would not have known I was of Latin background when we spoke. (For the record, my name has both Persian and Arabic origins.)

Most of the Latin women quickly assessed that I was Latin once we met due to my physical appearance, and this influenced the tone of their interviews. These women would speak to me like I was one of them, even if they did not specifically come out and ask me my ethnic background (they usually asked this at the end of the interview). These women would say things like, ‘we do things this way in our culture, do you do that too?’ For example, while describing Argentinean culture, Pandora started talking about *mate*, which is a strong tea that Uruguayans and Argentinians drink, and she asked me ‘Do you drink *mate*?’ Other women who established my specific ethnic background by asking about my ethnicity outright also referred to me as one of them: they let me know that, while they felt a sense of difference towards other people in Australia (especially Anglo-Australians), I was the same as them and they expected that I could understand them easily. For example, I asked Poppy how she might describe Chilean culture to someone who knew nothing about Chile and she initially found this a difficult hypothetical, but not so when she imagined how she might describe Chilean culture to me, a fellow South American. She said:

I don’t think I’ve ever really explained Chilean culture before. I can’t! You can’t explain it, not to someone who doesn’t know anything! I could probably explain
it to you because you’re Peruvian. It’d probably be the same as Peru if I started to explain it.

Small comments such as these showed how the women felt that there was a common understanding between us. They often slipped into Spanish when they could not translate specific phrases into English easily, and in such moments, I encouraged the women to speak Spanish if they wanted to. The interview transcripts and my thesis reflect that my own cultural background affected the interviews in relation to language. Spanish words are peppered throughout my data chapters and they appear in Spanish (followed by my English translation) because I spoke the language and could transcribe such phrases easily. Turkish words, in comparison, are notably absent from my thesis because the Turkish women seldom said things in Turkish to me, and when they did, it was a word here or there, which they translated for me on the spot.

Not all the Latin women identified me as Latin, and in fact, this happened more than I might have expected. This had a curious effect on me – the first few times this happened, I thought nothing of it. These participants would ask me at the end of the interview about my culture, and they would be shocked to learn I was born in Peru. These women assumed I was Turkish because of my name. The interview had been conducted under this assumption, and so they would explain to me, for example, what a tortilla was in great detail, and I would patiently and silently listen. When a participant misread my ethnicity/race for a fourth time, I found myself wondering why this was happening, and I must admit I was slightly put off! Mostly, I would stay quiet, but in three instances, I spoke up and told them I was Latin. I mention this to show the reader not only how my own ethnic background set the tone of most of the interviews in an implicit way (with the participant assuming I was an insider), but how on three specific occasions, I directly signalled my ethnicity, thus affecting the tone of the rest of the interview (where I went from being an outsider to an insider).

Some of the Turkish women asked me over the phone when we first set up an interview if I was Turkish because of my name, which sounds similar to the Turkish name Züleyha. Some other women, however, just assumed I was Turkish until they met me, and they admitted being confused about my ethnicity after the interview. The Turkish women did not speak to me as an ‘insider’ of their culture because they had doubts that I was Turkish due to my looks.
While it was fascinating to learn more about Islam and the hijab, the Turkish women’s views on sexuality were very different from my own, and so I had a keen sense of my role as outsider when interviewing them on this issue. At first, I was unsure about decorum in discussing sexuality with the closed Turkish women. After the first five interviews, I signalled my ‘outsider’ status in an effort to better comprehend their point of view. So for example, when they told me that they did not believe in dating before marriage, I would listen to their explanations and then say something like: ‘I want to understand where you’re coming from. The way I was raised in my culture, we date lots of people so we can figure out who we want to marry. What would you say to that?’ In making such comments, I wanted to show them that, while my experiences were different, I still wanted to understand their point of view in more depth.

Being a migrant woman who belonged to the women’s approximate age group, however, meant that I was an ‘insider’ with both groups regardless of my specific ethnic background. First, because I was a young woman, they related to me as someone who was likely to have experienced the same problems with parents as they had and they assumed that I shared their worldview on men. So, for example, the Turkish women would complain about men and their promiscuity, and they would say things like, ‘Oh you know how men are!’ The Latin women would complain about Latin men’s masculinity and they said things like, ‘Oh you know how Latin men are!’ In both cases, the women appealed to me foremost as a fellow woman who had to suffer the insensitivities of men.

Second, I was a migrant woman, a non-Anglo person with whom they could freely discuss Anglo-Australians. When they said negative things about ‘Anglos’, ‘Australians’ and ‘white Australians’, they would say things like, ‘Of course I could never say that to them!’ The women seemed to feel safe discussing sensitive topics such as racism with me in great detail, as I was seen as an ‘insider’ who would seemingly understand their stories. For example, they discussed the meaning of the term ‘wog’ and how this was highly offensive and racist when an ‘Australian’ person used this word. When the women referred to themselves as ‘wogs’, it seemed that they felt okay about using this word freely with me because they saw me as belonging to the ‘wog community’. For example, when I asked Ferah, a Turkish participant, to describe her ethnic identity, her first reaction was to say, ‘Very woggy [laughs]. Am I very woggy? [Laughs]’. Ferah was joking around, but she nevertheless invited me to comment on her ‘wogginess’. She seemed to feel that her comment would not invite
abuse from me, even though she had been greatly tormented by ‘Anglo-Saxons’ in the past over ‘being a wog’.

I could easily relate to much of what the women told me, but sometimes this made the process of analysis difficult. For example, the data on racism was most difficult for me to understand. What I understood as ‘racism’ was influenced by my sociological understanding of this term, and by my own experiences with racism. The women’s understanding of racism was vastly different to mine. I wanted to be true to the women’s ideas but, at the same time, I had to manage my own beliefs and feelings on this topic. I dealt with this conflict by offering multiple explanations for the women’s discussion of racism (see Chapter Seven).

Analysing the data on the Latin women was sometimes difficult because I was familiar with the stories they told me, and this was especially true of the data I gathered on religion. The women’s views on Catholicism were in some ways similar to my own views, and this made the material seem inconsequential to me at first. Also, in comparison to the Turkish women, who had focused so heavily on religion, the Latin women’s discussion of religion seemed worlds away: they seemed less impassioned and less articulate about their religious identities. This process made me realise that I had to stop trying to literally compare the two groups.

Interestingly, the Latin women I interviewed commented on issues pertinent to the Turkish women. The Latin women’s impressions of Islam were gleaned mostly from documentaries and news reports that followed September 11. They were concerned that Muslims were being vilified in Australia due to the war and they believed that Muslims were targets of intense racism. At the same time, they had negative opinions about the hijab and its connection to women’s oppression. Much like the women I interviewed for my Honours thesis, the Latin women I interviewed for the present study also discussed Muslim and Turkish men as unsuitable marriage candidates because the Latin women believed these men had extreme patriarchal views on women. Usually, the Latin women raised such issues about Islam when they discussed their ideas about gender equality. I presume that the Latin women raised these issues partly because of the media coverage on Islam and partly because they knew my study was also about Turkish women. The Turkish women however, did not discuss Latin people at all, even though they also knew that I was interviewing Latin women. I have not included the Latin women’s general discussion of Islam and the hijab in my thesis, but I signal to the
reader that the Turkish women were a reference point for the Latin women, whereas the reverse was not true of the Turkish women.

3:3:2 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

My qualitative methodology and recruitment strategies prevent me from making generalisations about my data. The data I gathered was subjective, but I use it to comment on social processes at the wider structural level. Such comments, however, are exploratory. I have written my thesis to help the reader critically understand the women’s social construction of their identities, rather than to make categorical cause and effect statements about the women’s experiences and wider society.

My sample size and purposeful and snowballing recruiting methods meant that my study is not representative of the groups interviewed. Additionally, there are two specific limitations of my sample of which the reader should be aware. Firstly, as outlined in the introduction, one of my groups belonged to a national ethnic group (the Turkish women) and the other is a pan-ethnic group. The Latin women came from six national backgrounds, but the Turkish women share the same national background. As it happened, however, the Latin and Turkish women identified with both a migrant national culture and a migrant pan-ethnic culture. The Latin women identified with their families’ national group (for example Argentina) and with Latin pan-ethnic groups (South/Central American and Latin American). The Turkish women identified with their families’ national group (Turkey) and with an Islamic pan-ethnic group. Given that pan-ethnicity was such a strong theme in the Turkish and Latin women’s discussion, I decided to continue writing about these women as members of two sample groups. My discussion of ‘Islamic pan-ethnicity’ comes from only one perspective – from Turkish women who primarily identified with Islam, and so my findings on this pan-ethnicity were limited. My findings on Latin pan-ethnicity were, in one way, more solid because they came from multiple perspectives, but, in another way, they were also limited to the views of women who did identify with a Latin identity, as opposed to women from South and Central American backgrounds who did not identify with a Latin identity.

The second limitation of my sample also relates to the issue of pan-ethnicity and the recruitment of the Turkish women. Recruiting through the snowball method meant that my sample groups were relatively homogenous: the women recruited their friends,
who led similar lifestyles and shared their ideas and cultural practices. This was most obvious with the Turkish women, who primarily identified with Islam and secondarily with Turkish culture. As I noted earlier, alternative attempts to recruit participants through non-religious Turkish organisations proved unsuccessful because such groups tend to be largely dominated by first generation migrants, people who fell outside the scope of the study and with whom I could not communicate. While my study is limited in its ability to generalize from the Turkish women in the sample to any broader group, the data I present create an opportunity for understanding second generation Turkish-Australian women who hold an Islamic identity, and how this religious identity intersects with their ethnic identities.

CONCLUSION

The two groups interviewed were not necessarily representative of their populations, but they do offer some interesting insights into the ways in which young, well-educated second generation women discuss their social identities. Their discussion about their migrant ethnicities was lively, and their constructions of Anglo-Australians is useful in expanding our understanding of how these women see themselves in relation to Australian society. The most obvious recommendation for further research is also the most important. The findings of my study would be greatly enhanced by interviewing Australians of Anglo-Celtic ancestry of three or more generations on their constructions of their ethnicity, an area that is profoundly unexplored in the Australian context. I would also like to interview second generation Australians of Anglo-Celtic backgrounds whose parents migrated to Australia or Anglo-Celtic migrants who arrived in Australia before the age of 10. These migrants would come from backgrounds such as British, Scottish and Irish. It would be most useful to see how such second generation migrants speak about their social identities, and whether they would draw upon narratives of multiculturalism as well as Anglo-Celtic-ness (or alternative narratives) when discussing their sense of belonging to the nation.

The following three chapters outline the findings of my study, and I begin by looking at the women’s social construction of their migrant ethnicities and of Anglo-Australian ethnicity.
CHAPTER FOUR: ETHNICITIES

Social constructionism investigates how we achieve our ideas of reality through social interaction and how social processes shape the meaning we place upon our identities (Burr 1995: 5-8; Jenkins, 1997). This chapter explores two general themes regarding the social construction of ethnicity for both the Latin and Turkish women: culture and religion. My analysis was guided by two general research questions. How do these women construct their ethnicity? What are their attitudes towards their family’s CoO culture and Australian culture? The concept of culture was explored through the participants’ subjective definition of the word ‘culture’ and through questions about ‘traditions’ and ‘values’ pertaining to their family’s CoO and Australian society. Given that ‘culture’ was explored through the women’s self-reports of this concept, the Latin and Turkish women’s cultural traditions were not strictly comparable, as I will show, because the Latin women’s culture was based upon secular traditions while the Turkish women’s culture was based on religious traditions. The concept of religion was explored through the participants’ understandings of Catholicism or Islam, their attitudes towards their religion, their reflections upon their own religiosity, and finally through their ideas about the role of religion in their CoO and in Australian society.

My analysis of ethnicity investigates the construction of pan-ethnicity. This concept refers to the way that the women I interviewed spoke about their ethnicity not only in terms of their family’s CoO but also in terms of having their ethnicity in common with other people who originate from other countries. The Latin women identified with a pan-ethnic Latin culture, which included migrants from countries across the Latin-American continent. The Turkish women identified with a pan-ethnic Islamic culture, which included people from different national backgrounds who had an identity of being Muslim. Both groups of women also identified with a pan-ethnic Australian identity, which included Aboriginals, migrants and ‘Anglo-Australians’, but as I will show, this was a problematic identity as the women described it.

This chapter is divided into three parts. In the first part, I explore the themes of culture and religion for the Latin sample; in the second part I explore these same themes for the Turkish sample; and in the third part I explore both the Latin and Turkish participants’ ideas about Australian ethnicity. This chapter will also investigate the process of othering, in the way the participants of both groups felt they were othered by
Anglo-Australians and the way in which they represented Anglo-Australians as the other.

4:1 LATIN-AUSTRALIAN ETHNICITY

4:1:1 CONSTRUCTING CULTURE

This section will show how the 25 women of Latin American background constructed their ethnic cultures in two ways. First, I found that there were five emblems that they used to construct their CoO cultures: food, language, music, festivity and the value of family. Second, I found that the participants identified with a wider ethnic group outside their CoO, and therefore that they actively constructed Latin pan-ethnicity. I argue that the women constructed their ethnicities by establishing their cultural practices, beliefs and personalities in opposition to Australian ethnicity, which they largely discussed in terms of Anglo-Australian culture.

Emblems of Latin culture

The 25 participants constructed their ethnicity through their connection with Latin cultural ‘traditions’ and described themselves as completely immersed in their family’s CoO culture. They stressed that their families had upheld ‘all’ of their CoO traditions since their arrival in Australia. We can see this assertion in the comments below.

*While you were growing up did your family keep up many [CoO] traditions?*

Yvonne: Yeah! All of them I think [laughs]. Gosh! I think I grew up knowing most of the culture. [Salvadoran]

Jade: All of them! [Laughs]… We keep continuing it for some reason. I guess it’s just to remind us of your tradition and your nationality, so we do it quite often. [Salvadoran]
In my previous study of Latin ethnicity, I found that there were four cultural traditions which informed the expression of Latin ethnicity in Australia: food, language, music and festivity (Zevallos, 2003a). These four aspects of Latin culture were spoken of as ‘traditions’ but I termed them ‘emblems’ in order to reflect ‘the immense pride that the participants attached to them as symbols of pan-ethnic Latin ethnicity’ (2003: 90). The present study supports my previous findings regarding these emblems of Latin ethnicity, but I add an additional fifth emblem of Latin ethnicity: ‘the value of family’. The following comment from Poppy encapsulates these emblems:

_In your own family, what have your parents taught you about Chilean culture?_ 
Ahhh. [Thinks] Heaps and heaps. I know a lot of Chilean history, so that’s really important. The music was always a big part of my life. We were always getting a lot of music from overseas and listening to it. [Thinks] The food was like, you know, [laughs] very Chilean. We were always eating not-very-Australian dishes at all [laughs]. What else did they teach us? Because we were in a folkloric group, we were always dancing. You know _cueca_? It’s a national Chilean dance. What else have we learnt? Spanish. We speak Spanish at home. [Pause] A lot [laughing] my whole life is like Chilean culture, it just doesn’t get any more Chilean.

A minority of the women offered alternative expressions of ethnicity – for example, while most women, such as Poppy, referred to folkloric music and dancing as enjoyable, two women specifically spoke of their CoO indigenous culture or their ‘folklore’ as important to them. The emblems of food, language, music, festivity, and family warrant closer attention because these were cultural items that the women repeatedly drew upon when discussing their ethnicity. The women’s comments on their ethnic cultures were often specific to their CoO, but at the same time, their discussion of their CoO ethnicity often overlapped with their constructions of Latin pan-ethnicity. That is, the women’s discussion about ‘ethnicity’ often blurred with their discussion of pan-ethnicity because they believed that people across South and Central America had similar customs.

Food was the first ‘tradition’ mentioned by most participants when they were asked to describe their CoO traditions. The fundamental importance of food as a cultural tradition is reflected in the quotes below.
What sorts of CoO traditions did your family keep up you while were growing up?

Josefina: [Thinks] Food? [Laughs] I don’t know…. [Peruvian]

Pandora: Food [laughs]… On the 29th of each month you make gnocci homemade and you put a coin under your plate and make a wish. Yeah that’s something I look forward to. Barbecues – we have asado, oh I love asado! [Argentinean]

Food was central to family interaction and this emblem was also intricately woven into other traditions, such as the festivity emblem. In general, the participants’ descriptions of the food tradition were often accompanied by the emotion of ‘love’:

Yvonne: [W]e keep the tradition of food and I love it! I never get tired of it. There’s food from there that she [mum] keeps cooking here [and] I love it… [Salvadoran]

Moira: God! We love our food [laughs] no matter what anyone says! [Salvadoran]

The second emblem emphasised by the participants was language. The majority of the sample had attended Spanish language school in their childhood and almost every participant had studied Spanish as part of their VCE (their two final years of high school) or at university level. Speaking Spanish was part of their everyday lives when they were home with their families and it helped them define their ethnicity. Language was seen as a way to ensure that they ‘keep the culture’.

Is it important for you to be able to speak Spanish?

Zenia: I think it is. Yes. It’s what my parents have taught me and it’s our language. That’s where we grew up. [Peruvian]

Pandora: Spanish [has] kept the culture of Argentinean families that I know. Even the kids that were born in Argentina and came here when they were, I don’t know,
two, we all speak Spanish. It’s because we know we’re all the same, we were brought up the same…

According to the participants, beyond its use as a communication tool, the Spanish language emblem embodies the deeper commonality of pan-ethnic Latin culture, as evidenced in Pandora’s comment: ‘we know we’re all the same, we were brought up the same’. The importance of language to the participants’ ethnicity was also reflected in the way that three of the eight Salvadoran-background women that were interviewed referred to themselves as ‘Spanish’ at times. This was another pan-ethnic Latin ethnicity assumed alongside the ethnic identities of ‘Latin’ and ‘Central American’. For example these Salvadoran women said:

Jade: I see myself in the Salvadoran tradition I say ‘Costa Rican’ or ‘Spanish’… emotionally, inside of me, I will always be Spanish… tradition-wise and everything that I do, it’s all Spanish.

Luci: I do feel Spanish, because I have the language, I have the values...

Wendy: I’m Spanish and that’s the end of it.

The third emblem of Latin ethnicity was music. The importance of Latin music and dancing ran deep for the participants interviewed because as Zenia said: ‘It’s what I grew up with’ [Peruvian]. These comments typify the centrality of the music emblem.

Neruda: I think that with the Salvadoran community, I’ve got it in my blood. I hear music, I start dancing, you know.

Gracie: [M]ainly [Argentinean culture is] about the music, coz I reckon the music has a lot to do with the culture [pauses] and the way that we dance. And just that it’s heaps funner than here [Australia].

Josefina: The most of Latin culture that I follow is just the dancing and folklore music… I guess because it’s in me, but it’s something that I love. [Peruvian]
Although most participants listened to other types of music, especially R & B (rhythm and blues), they spoke specifically about their ‘love’ of Latin music and of dancing. While the women attended different music nightclubs, they especially enjoyed attending Latin nightclubs because this helped them solidify their pan-ethnic Latin identity:

So what’s the attraction to the Latin clubs?

Josefina: The music [laughs]. I love dancing to salsas. To be honest I do love dancing with los Latinos. The Latin style, everything Latin I like. I guess that’s because it’s what I am. [Peruvian]

Matijana: The Latin people that go there [Latin clubs], that’s my community… I love to dance! [Peruvian]

Lorelei described a deep bemusement with Latin nightclubs in Melbourne. She had a radically dismissive view of the music emblem because for her, this was an outdated tradition. And she should know. Lorelei had recently returned to Australia from Uruguay, where she had lived for the past eight years. Lorelei said:

I don’t really like it [Latin clubs in Australia] because they don’t really play what’s playing in Latin America. They play maybe what’s typically Latin but it’s not actually what’s playing over there on the radio. Do you get what I mean? …It’s not what we young people are dancing to over there…

Lorelei described how most young people in Latin America listen and dance to similar musical styles that are found here in Australia, except that much of it is sung in Spanish. Lorelei saw the music tradition in Australia as irrelevant to modern Latin culture:

…when you go to Latin America you don’t dance like that because that’s not the way that people are dancing. Tango for example. That’s beautiful, I’d love to learn how to tango. But you won’t find a place to tango there [in Uruguay].
Lorelei’s comment connects with some of the theoretical criticism regarding symbolic representations of culture that migrants construct as ‘authentic culture’, but are actually ‘outdated’ practices in the countries-of-origin (Cohen, 2000; Gans, 1979, 1994; Langer, 1998).

The fourth emblem of Latin ethnicity was festivity. Festivity referred to the importance the participants placed on celebration of birthdays, Christmas and New Year. Such events involved the entire extended family or, where their extended family was overseas, family friends who were considered family. Festivity also referred to celebrations of CoO events such as National Independence Days with their wider CoO communities. The emblem of festivity represents for the participants the ‘fun’ nature of Latin people and they described their CoO and pan-ethnic Latin culture as ‘party’ cultures.

Claudia: All South American and Spanish people – they’re fun! They love to dance, go out, they have fiestas everywhere. It’s a very happy culture and quite enjoyable. Very adventurous. [Uruguayan]

Xiomara: I think that Chileans have a good sense of having fun. Try to be happy whenever you can. So I think I’d try to never give up on that if I can.

Pandora: I would say [Argentinean culture is] beautiful. It’s loud, it’s really festive with a very big energy…

The participants’ discussion of the emblem of festivity suggested that they set up Latin ethnicity as the binary opposite to Australian ethnicity, with Latin people being ‘fun’ and Australians ‘not as much fun’. For example, reflecting on the festivity of Argentineans, Gracie said, ‘They party a lot: [thinks] they actually have a culture…’. By this she inferred that Australians did not have a culture and that they did not know how to party in the same way. Claudia said: ‘South American people. We know what we like. We’re party people. We like to party all night’. Claudia saw Australians as ‘more quiet’ than South Americans: ‘it’s like they don’t know how to have fun. They do, but in their own way. And that’s fine, but it’s not my role’. Because of this, she believed that Australians ‘wouldn’t connect with my style’ because, as she said of
herself: ‘I like to be loca [crazy]. I like to have fun, party, have fun and I don’t find that Australian culture’s really like that’.

The festivity emblem emphasised a social space with which the participants were familiar and comfortable. The way in which Anglo-Australians partied seemed foreign to the participants because it occurred in a way in which they were not comfortable. For this sample of Latin women, festivity symbolised what it meant to be ‘Latin’ and not just as a symbol of belonging to their CoO communities. To the women, being Latin was being loud, fun and therefore flamboyant. As Claudia’s comments showed, this was seen to clash with the way in which Australians acted, as they felt Australian parties were not their ‘style’.

The fifth emblem of Latin ethnicity was the ‘value’ of family, which they believed worked differently to Australian family values. In my Honours study, family was a major influence on my participants’ identities, but I mostly described this influence in terms of the festivity emblem. In the present study, I highlight this as an emblem on its own because it was such an important theme for the women interviewed.

Family was the domain where the emblems of ethnicity were learned and reinforced. For example, Moira said: ‘Culture’s based on [pauses]: family to us is very important. Family, food, drinks and music’ [Salvadoran]. When the Latin participants were asked to describe Latin cultural values, they spoke about family as a cultural value:

Xiomara: [Chileans] value family and that’s been a really important thing. My parents don’t really see eye to eye on a lot of things but that’s one thing that’s important. If anything does happen to any of us, we always deal with everything together…

Family came up when the participants were asked to discuss the importance of their family’s CoO culture in relation to their personal identities:

Do you feel today that Salvadoran culture is important to you personally?

Ingrid: I think Latin people are just in general always very family-orientated and everything that has to do with our traditions and our culture is based on the family. So in some aspects I do try to keep up with that, I do try to keep my family being
important to me and keep our traditions, our morals, our culture. I like to keep that for myself.

For the women who did not have many ‘blood’ relatives living in Australia, family friends who had migrated around the same time as their families were seen as family. These participants saw that creating a kinship network of friends who became ‘like family’ fulfilled a ‘need’ for family that their parents were used to in Latin America:

Pandora: It’s just filling that need to have a family, because there’s so many people [in the extended family] over there it’s so overwhelming… It’s the need to have that family here. [Argentinean]

Other studies on second generation Australians have also stressed the importance of family kinship networks on the construction of ethnicity (Baldassar, 1999: 13; Bottomley, 1979; Elley and Inglis, 1995: 201). The emphasis on family kinship networks highlights the ways in which Latin community boundaries are maintained: the participants’ individual CoO communities were bound through family networks (cf Zevallos, 2000: 41-43). Family was both a CoO cultural emblem and a pan-ethnic Latin value because the participants believed that Latin American families ‘tend to be pretty close’ (cf Zevallos, 2000: 34-5). The participants would speak about family as a Latin value that was different to the way in which Australian families worked, and they believed that Australian families ‘aren’t as close’ as Latin families.

What are the sorts of traditions that your parents have taught you about Uruguayan culture?
Cecilia: [Thinks] I’m not too sure about traditions. I guess we’re a lot more family-orientated than [what] you’d sort of call your basic Australian family. Like even now [that I’m married], I’ll see my parents once a week, whereas with some of my Australian friends, it’s sort of when they can. It’s not expected of them…

What about the values that you hold compared to the values that Australian people hold, do you think there’d be any difference there?
Estella: Um [thinks] when I compare my family to other more Australian families, I think family’s just so important. I think friends who aren’t from Latin American
backgrounds, family doesn’t play such a big role in their lives. They don’t gather together as family as often as we do. [Uruguayan]

The participants believed that Australian families did not place as much importance on ongoing quality family interaction. They believed that Australian family members were ‘more closed off’ emotionally from one another in comparison to Latin families. Gracie felt that Australian families were different in this respect to most ‘immigrant’ families:

Would you think that Argentinean family life is similar to Australian family life? Or in what ways would it be different?

Gracie: [Thinks] Nah, they’re different but [thinks] I guess, not only Argentinean but immigrants have more of a dialogue with their families than Australians. I just find them very closed off. They wouldn’t really want to sit down and drink tea with their parents. Whereas we all sit down and drink tea or talk or talk shit, but they don’t really care. They don’t really care about their families.

Implicit in the participants’ discussion about family as a cultural value was that they did not think it positive that Australian families had less of an emphasis on family connectedness. This was evident in Gracie’s comment that ‘they don’t really care about their family’.

As I stated earlier, the term ‘emblem’ refers to the pride associated with the five Latin traditions. Being passionate about their Latin ethnicity went hand in hand with such ethnic pride. Poppy said, ‘Being brought up Chilean, it’s like a belief. I think of it as a belief, like [you’re] passionate about something, you know?’ To be passionate about culture was to be actively involved with it and to take great pleasure in it. This was contrasted with Australians, who were seen as more passive because they were ‘very laid back’ when it came to their culture.

If I asked you to compare Salvadoran culture with Australian culture, would that help you [describe Australian culture]?

Moira: Oh yeah. I think our culture’s very passionate about the things we do, whereas Australian culture’s very laid back. They’re not so passionate. When it
comes to our music – God we’re passionate!  [Laughs] You know, in the Australian culture you just don’t see that passion.

Constructing pan-ethnicity

Beyond the emblems of Latin ethnicity, there were two ways in which the 25 women interviewed constructed Latin pan-ethnicity. First, they reinforced two sets of Latin characteristics: being proud and loud. Second, they emphasised the similarities between individual CoO Latin communities.

The first way in which the participants constructed Latin pan-ethnicity was by reinforcing two Latin personality traits that were different to the Australian persona as they saw it: being proud and loud. Firstly, as we saw in the previous findings, pride was a recurring theme in regards to the participants’ ethnicity.

Poppy: We’re a very proud culture [and] people… [Chilean]

Devi: We’re a very proud people… [Argentinean]

Violeta: I’m glad to say that I’m Latino… I’m proud to say I’m Salvadoran…

Lorelei: ...Now that I’m here [in Australia], I’m proud of the South American part of me. [Uruguayan]

The women were not just proud of their CoO ethnicity, but they were also proud of their pan-ethnicity. Because they were so proud of their ethnicity, the women presumed that people who drifted away from their Latin ethnicity must have had some ‘bad experience’ with their CoO community to allow their culture to slip away. In contrast to these people who must be ‘ashamed’ of their background, the participants described that they were ‘proud’ to be Latin.
Does being ‘Latin’ mean something to you?

Rosa: Yeah I enjoy it [laughs] I enjoy being Latin. There are some people that don’t want any Latin in them or have totally forgotten their culture, I know some people like that here. But no, the more alive we keep it the better, I think. And I’m proud to be Latin.

Why do you think that some people that you know would forget their culture?

Rosa: Mainly because they’ve had bad experiences with our own people, our own culture, that’s why they tend to not want to be any part of it, and they keep away from that community and form part of Australians, and live the way Australian people live. [Costa Rican]

Rosa’s belief that forgetting one’s culture leads one to ‘form part of Australians’ highlights that remaining proud of their ethnicity was crucial to these women’s resistance to assimilate. Taking pride in the emblems of ethnicity also aids this process.

The second Latin trait emphasised by the participants was being ‘loud’. The participants generally laughed about the ‘attitude’ and ‘ego’ at the heart of the Latin persona. The participants saw Latin people as loud and outspoken and thus ‘livelier’ people in contrast to others. It is implicit in the comments below that the ‘others’ with whom the participants were comparing themselves were Australian people.

Josefina: I find them [Latins] more livelier people. They’re very sociable people, we’re very straightforward people – oh, don’t get me wrong there are hypocrites out there too – there’s a bit of everything. Just their style, the way they are, it’s different. [Peruvian]

Pandora: Part of the South American culture is sometimes being really loud and being a bit too in-your-face and if you don’t have anyone around you that’s like that, you’re seen to be kind of rude. So you want to make sure you level out the attitude [laughs]… Plus, we just rock! [Laughs] [Argentinean]

The second way in which the participants constructed Latin pan-ethnicity was by diminishing the differences between individual Latin groups and emphasising their cultural similarities. While all 25 participants referred to themselves as ‘Latin’ and they
spoke about a pan-ethnic Latin culture, three women questioned the validity of such pan-ethnicity. For example, take the following exchange I had with Ursula:

*How do you feel about that term ‘Latin’, like grouping everybody together?*

[Thinks] I think in the end everybody’s going to be just grouping other people, but it shouldn’t be right because Chileans have different ideas to what Argos do, to Peruvians, to whatever. Latins, there’s such a difference in culture between the different countries. *[Chilean]*

There were times when the participants would suggest some differences between the various South and Central American cultures. For example Claudia referred to herself interchangeably as Uruguayan, South American, Latin and Spanish, and so I asked her about her connection with non-Uruguayans:

*When you meet other Spanish people that aren’t Uruguayan, do you feel that there’s a connection there?*

Yeah. I feel there’s a connection when I speak to other Spanish people, but sometimes there’s a little feeling there that we are different. Not all our traditions are the same, or not all the words that we say in Spanish are the same... We have different sayings. We understand one another, but there are some things that are different I feel that if I’m told that someone speaks Spanish, it’s like ‘Oh! There’s a connection there. It doesn’t mean that traditions are the same.

While the participants were willing to acknowledge the differences between different Latin communities, such as colloquialisms and variations in cultural traditions (especially with specific CoO dishes), the participants were eager to reduce the impact of such differences. Similarity triumphed over difference in the construction of Latin pan-ethnicity.

*Do you find that there’s any differences there [between different Latin cultures]?*

Rosa: Oh yeah, not a lot, but there is. In the way that we speak, we speak the same language except that their accent is different, and some words mean something different. Foods they vary, not much, just a little bit. Not a great difference. *[Costa Rican]*
The emphasis upon pan-ethnicity is contingent on the Australian context. The participants have an interest in adopting pan-ethnic labels. The construction of Latin pan-ethnicity was an exercise which allowed the participants to broaden their in-group boundaries (cf. Barth, 1969) in a social context where there were not many other people who were like them. As we see in the American context, Latin migrants who belong to the largest minorities (such as the Cubans) are less likely to adopt pan-ethnic labels such as ‘Hispanic’ and more likely to take on CoO or hybrid migrant-American identity because of their sizeable numbers (cf. Portes and McLeod, 1996). Perhaps, if there were more Chileans living in Australia, my participants would have been less likely to draw upon Latin pan-ethnicity.

As it stands, pan-ethnicity enabled the participants, who come from a minority CoO community, to join a slightly larger minority, that being a pan-ethnic Latin community. This process of constructing Latin pan-ethnicity is one of cultural exchange: it sacrifices cultural, political and historical differences of the individual countries in order to establish ‘a much more pronounced signalling of their perceived differences to other groups – particularly to “Anglo-Australians”’ (Zevallos, 2003a: 91; see also Langer, 1998). Josefina summed this up quite nicely. While she admitted that there were some differences between the individual Latin communities, she said, ‘at the end they’re all basically the same’. Josefina saw that pan-ethnicity allowed Latin people to form ‘a big culture’ in which ‘we’re all Latin’:

*Why aren’t those differences very important here as they might be over there?*

Over there?  [Thinks] It’s really hard to say. Basically if you put us together, *todos somos Latinos* [we’re all Latin]. We get a big culture, that’s a big culture, all of us together. If you start separating them, it’s like you get little separate cultures. So [thinks] I don’t know [laughs]. *[Peruvian]*

Ultimately, it would seem that Latin pan-ethnicity was ideally suited to the Australian multicultural context, because as Devi noted, ‘we’re a community of communities’:

The special thing about Latin communities is that we’re a community of communities. There are not many other ethnic communities that are made up of many, many communities like your main ones, like Indians… And that’s a very
distinct thing that Latin Americans have, because… we’re from all over the place; so we’re a community of communities. Within our community we’re a multicultural community, because as an Argentinean I can go to a Salvadoran’s [house] and it’s a completely different culture practically… [Argentinean]

Rather than having the individual CoO communities fracture into ‘little separate cultures’, as Josefina put it, the construction of a pan-ethnic Latin culture allowed a ‘multicultural [Latin] community’ which unified Latin people together despite their differences. Latin pan-ethnicity becomes a vehicle for resisting assimilation with the Australian majority. This would seem at odds with official Australian multicultural policies, which celebrate cultural difference but also stress social cohesion rather than ethnic separateness (Commonwealth of Australia, 2003). Claudia earlier said in reference to Australian parties that ‘it’s not her role’ to be in a social space composed by Australians. Latin pan-ethnicity was constructed by signalling the differences of Latin cultural emblems, values and characteristics in relation to Australians. This process pushes Australian people out of Latin social boundaries and thus the construction of Latin pan-ethnicity ultimately involves marking Australians as different, while at the same time amplifying their own difference, and embracing it through pride, via the emblems of ethnicity.

4:1:2 CONSTRUCTING RELIGION

Given that Catholicism is the dominant religion in the Latin American continent, it was unsurprising that all 25 Latin participants interviewed were raised as Catholics. Nineteen participants had attended Catholic schools during their primary and secondary years and only four women had spent the majority of their schooling in non-religious schools, although two of these women had received some Catholic schooling (at least two years). The majority of the sample mentioned during their interviews that they were ‘baptised Catholic’ and that they had completed their sacraments, including communion. Despite their Catholic backgrounds, most participants did not describe themselves as ‘religious’ Catholics due to their church attendance rates. Only seven of the 25 Latin women interviewed attended mass weekly (28%). The majority of the participants, that is, 18 women (72%), attended church approximately once a year, for
special occasions such as weddings and baptisms. While the entire sample cited Christmas and Easter as important celebrations within the festivity emblem, the majority of the participants did not attend church to mark these events. Given that there were only two types of church attendance described in this study, weekly and annually, attending mass on a weekly basis is referred to as ‘regular’ church attendance.

The following section investigates two themes. First, it will explore the Latin participants’ religious identities and their perceptions of their own religiosity when it is defined in terms of the importance of religion in a person’s life (Bouma, 1992: 116). This will be done through a threefold typology of religious identities: Catholic, Spiritual-Catholic and Spiritual. Second, it will investigate the intersection of religion and ethnicity and the participants’ attitudes towards the Catholic religion.

**Religious identities**

I have generated a threefold typology that reflects the Latin participants’ descriptions of their religious identities: ‘Catholic’, ‘Spiritual-Catholic’ and ‘Spiritual’. These categories reflect the distinction the participants made between the concepts of religion and spirituality and they highlight how the majority of the sample qualified the description of their religiosity. For example, they might say ‘I am Catholic but I’m not very religious; I’m more spiritual’ or ‘I believe in God but I’m anti-religion’. For a snapshot of this typology and the types of responses given by the women, refer to Appendix 6.

One woman is not included in the typology. Cecilia was of Uruguayan background and raised Catholic, but described herself as ‘Christian’. Cecilia decided to stop being Catholic a few years back and she was attending bible studies classes at the time of her interview to learn more about religion. When I asked Cecilia why she called herself a Christian instead of Catholic, she said that she had moved away from the Catholic Church. She explained:

I don’t really believe that the priests have as big a part in your life as they claim it to be. I guess it’s because I don’t really believe in saints and the Catholic tradition is more that you have a lot of saints and you can pray to saints, whereas I believe
that you should pray to God. I don’t even know all the different saints. In that way I just believe in Jesus and God and that’s why I make a distinction.

Cecilia had similar things to say about the Catholic Church as the other women in this study, but given that she did not describe herself as a Catholic and did not reject religion altogether (as with the women in the Spiritual category), I have positioned Cecilia outside the typology.

\textit{Catholics}

Six women described themselves as Catholic and they said that they considered themselves to be ‘religious’ or ‘very religious’ individuals. These six participants appear in this category of Catholic for two reasons. First and foremost, they adopted a religious identity based within an organised religion; and second, their regular church attendance set them apart from the women in the other categories.

Unlike the women in the two other categories, these women described their religious identities in unqualified terms. Whereas the women in the ‘Catholic-Spiritual’ category might say, ‘I’m Catholic but I’m not a religious person’, the women in this Catholic category were more straightforward. They were Catholic and they did not make concessions about this. This can be seen in the simple exchanges I had with Wendy, who was of Salvadoran background, about her religious identity:

\textit{Do you consider yourself to be a religious person?}

Wendy: Yes.

[Later] \textit{Do you have an identity of being a Catholic? Would you call yourself Catholic?}

Wendy: Yeah!

One participant, Yvonne, was unsure about the role of religion in her everyday life, and one woman, Ingrid, said her faith was important to her everyday life but that the Catholic religion was ‘not really’ important to the way she lived her life, ‘because I don’t really agree with everything that the Catholic church says’. The other four
participants said that religion held a ‘very important’ role in their everyday lives and that it was important to the decisions that they made. For example, when asked whether religion was important to her everyday life, Devi said:

Definitely, definitely, definitely, definitely. Otherwise I’d be insane by now. But yeah, definitely, it’s very much a part of who I am and how I perceive things and how I keep my sanity. Especially in my line of work, I get highly stressed and highly up-strung. Sometimes the brain overworks and you need something to switch it off; leave it in someone else’s hands rather than having to do everything yourself. *[Argentinean]*

All six women described themselves as ‘religious’ Catholics who actively practiced their religion. These six participants were more likely than the participants in the other categories to have been actively involved with the Catholic Church during their lifetimes. Four participants had been members of Catholic youth groups for numerous years during their teens, and one of these women was still involved in such a group at the time she was interviewed. All of these participants attended church every Sunday and four of them specifically attended Spanish mass. Attending mass was an important aspect of religiosity for these women. A couple of these women spoke of ‘spirituality’, but they did not separate this spirituality from their Catholic identities. For example, going to church was described as a ‘spiritual thing’ *[Ingrid]* which fulfilled a ‘need for spiritual guidance’ *[Devi]*, and as Wendy said, ‘When there’s problems, that’s definitely something that I turn to’.

To these women, the idea of being a good Catholic, or living up to their religious beliefs, was based upon two very general criteria: belief in God and treating others with respect and acceptance. These practices help one lead a ‘good’ life.

Ingrid: Basically I just follow what the main commandments say, you know: love God above everything else and treat others the way you want to be treated. I think they’re the two most [important] things that I live upon. Even though I’m a Catholic, I wouldn’t say that I’m really devoted, but that’s the two main things that I want to stick by in my religion. *[Salvadoran]*
The theme of trying to lead a ‘good’ life will arise in the discussions of faith by the women in the other two categories, but the women in the following categories were not so easily able to adopt a Catholic identity. This was in spite of the fact that they agreed with the two basic tenets of the Catholic religion as described by the women who held Catholic identities.

**Spiritual-Catholics**

I have categorised 11 of the 25 Latin participants as ‘spiritual-Catholics’. This was the largest category regarding religion, as almost half of the Latin sample were included in this group (44%). The term ‘spiritual-Catholic’ is my own concept; the participants did not refer to their religious identities in this way, but they did describe themselves as both ‘Catholic’ and ‘spiritual’.

While all 11 women identified themselves as Catholic, they were only loosely affiliated with the Catholic Church. One of these 11 participants was a current member of a Catholic youth group, and only one woman regularly attended mass. Moira was of Salvadoran background, and although she regularly attended church, she was ambivalent about her Catholic identity. For example, when I asked Moira if she was a religious person, she said jokingly, ‘Well I go to church’, and laughed. She then described herself as ‘maybe semi’ religious, but she also said, ‘I suppose I grew up as a Catholic and that’s what I am, really’. Later when I asked her why she called herself a ‘semi’ Catholic, she said:

It takes a lot to say you’re a religious person. It’s not just saying, ‘I’m a Catholic’. I was brought up a Catholic but I wouldn’t consider myself a Catholic. Being a Catholic, like with any other religion, it’s not just saying it; you’ve got to really be what you say you are. I think living in a country like Australia, you’re basically free to say and be who you are, it does really become hard for you to follow the religion full on, a hundred percent. So I don’t consider myself very, very religious. I’d say I try, that’s the person I am. [Laughs] I’m trying really hard here!
Despite their Catholic identification, these spiritual-Catholics participants’ attitudes towards the Catholic religion were ambivalent, and this was reflected in the way that they qualified their religious identities on the basis of two criteria: spirituality and church attendance.

The first way in which the participants in this group qualified their Catholic religiosity was by stressing that they were ‘more spiritual than religious’. Two of the 11 women said that they considered themselves to be a ‘religious’ person, but then said, ‘I’m not a strict Catholic… I feel like I’m a spiritual type person’ [Sayuri, Argentinean]. One woman said that she did not consider herself to be a religious person and yet at the same time she said, ‘I am Catholic… I’m not very religious but I’m a very spiritual person’ [Claudia, Uruguayan]. The other eight women in this category tended to see themselves as somewhat religious, meaning that they stressed they were not ‘strict’ Catholics (see Appendix 6). These women described themselves as ‘more spiritual than religious’. So for example, Jade said that she saw herself as ‘not religious religious. I mean I do believe in God and stuff but I’m not a fanatic religious… [But] yeah, I consider myself as Catholic’ [Salvadoran].

The second way in which the participants qualified their religiosity was due to their non-observance of religious practices. Specifically, church attendance was one point of distinction between the women in the Catholic category and the women in the spiritual-Catholic category. The spiritual-Catholics resented the importance Catholics placed on going to church, ‘on the building itself’, rather than on living up to the ideals of the religion.

Estella: [Catholicism is] important to me because of all the moral teachings of the religion but I’m not church-going. I don’t go unless there’s a wedding or something [laughs]. I guess the values are important but the building itself is not so important to me. [Uruguayan]

Their lack of church attendance was an obvious reason that the spiritual-Catholics hesitated to call themselves ‘religious’ Catholics. These spiritual-Catholic participants said they had no interest in attending church, but they seemed defensive about this at times.
Matijana: It’s like – I don’t go to church every week, every Sunday, but that doesn’t make me a worse Catholic than my best friend or whatever. Big deal, I couldn’t go, but I still prayed. [Peruvian]

By emphasising their ‘spirituality’ alongside their Catholic identity, the women were making a statement about their faith: they did not need to go to church to show their faith in God. They saw religiosity as a private matter. Faith, as Jade says below, was a matter between an individual and God:

I don’t consider myself not religious. I do believe in God. Sometimes, like my grandma tells me, just before you go to bed say the Our Father, and that’s it. I don’t consider myself religious as having to go to church every Sunday… I mean spiritually, in the sense that I do believe in God, I don’t feel the need of having to show it to everyone. I’m religious but I don’t have to go to church every Sunday. It’s between me and Him. That’s it. [Salvadoran]

**Spirituals**

Seven of the 25 Latin participants said that they did not affiliate themselves with an organised religion because they saw organised religion in a negative light. The definitive difference between these women and the women in the two previous categories was that these spiritual women rejected the identity of Catholic altogether. Instead they described their religious identities as ‘spiritual’ but ‘anti-religion’.

Although none of these seven women regularly attended church, there were overlaps between the ideas of the women in the spiritual category and the women in the other categories. These spiritual women were highly critical of attending mass as a form of religious practice, and this was highlighted as a reason for not seeing themselves as Catholics. In this sense, they were similar to the women in the spiritual-Catholic category, because they felt they could nurture their own spirituality without the instruction of a priest. The idea of ‘do unto others’, which has been a recurring theme with the Catholic and Spiritual-Catholics, was also spoken of as an important aspect of these women’s sense of spirituality. Aylin spoke about this as ‘karma’, a concept which was more aligned with a new age sense of spirituality:
I believe a lot in karma, like if you do something bad it’ll come back to you. I think that’s so true. If you do something wrong to someone you can expect it to come back to you. So I always try to do good things for other people. I wouldn’t go to church just to make myself feel better. I think that would be an act. I don’t think going to church and reading in the bible is going to make me a better person. I think it’s your actions that are valued more. [Chilean]

These spiritual women were critical of the Catholic Church because they saw organised religion as ‘too controlling’ and as a source of international conflict. These participants were equally critical of Catholicism’s dogma about guilt and sin.

Poppy: I am extremely spiritual, but I can’t believe in religion. Some of the teachings tell me that I should feel guilty for a lot of things that I’ve done and that I should confess them, but I can’t confess them if I’m not guilty. You see? That’s like another reason, you physically can’t go up there and say, ‘Please forgive me’. It’s just silly [laughs]. If I don’t feel guilty, how can I confess? And if I can’t confess, how can I be that religion? [Chilean]

Most of these participants said that they had been atheist for a period during their lives as a reaction against their Catholic upbringing. These seven spiritual women did not want to be categorised under a specific religious category because they had an open sense of spirituality. They believed that different religions believed in the same God, even though belief in this higher power was given a different name in different religions. Pandora said of her religious identity, ‘On a Census, I would write “Catholic” [laughs] because, I don’t know, that’s what my parents tell me to write’. At the same time, however, Pandora emphasised that she was against having her religion categorised because of her open sense of spirituality. She continued:

I do believe that there’s something bigger than all of us. I do tend to say you’ve got to have faith, but… having to call it God or call it Buddha, is it the same thing? That’s what I’m against, trying to categorise it. [Argentinean]

Faith in God was seen as a private and as an ‘individual thing’. As Pandora said, ‘If I want to be religious, I’ll do it spiritually. I’ll pray to God or whatever in my own
time. I just need to believe that someone is there guiding us somehow and that will help us during the tough times’. Rejecting a Catholic identity in favour of spirituality was a way of claiming their faith in God on their own terms away from the authority of the Catholic Church. Rejecting religious categories also gave these participants distance from the negative aspects they perceived of organised religion, such as the focus on authoritarianism and sin.

It can be seen that there was a lot of overlap in the participants’ discussion of religion across the three categories, especially in regard to their views on the Catholic Church. The next section will consider how the women’s discussion of religion links with their construction of ethnicity.

**Religion and ethnicity**

The majority of the participants wanted to distance themselves from the Catholic Church as a governing body. Poppy, who had a spiritual identity, reflected that she had no ‘passion’ to ‘care about religion’ [Chilean]. And so, while this sample of Latin women might have ‘passion’ for the emblems of their ethnicity, the majority of them have no passion for religion. Moreover, as this section will show, religion was not an ‘emblem’ of their ethnicity. Across the three categories, the participants were very critical of the Catholic Church and they unequivocally separated religion from ethnicity. I will now go on to explore these two significant findings.

Firstly, the intersection between ethnicity and religion was not what one might expect. Most participants believed that Australian society was not religious. In contrast to Australians’ religiosity (or lack thereof), most participants regarded Latin culture in Latin America to be highly centred on religion.

_Do you see many differences between the way Latin Americans approach Catholicism compared to other Catholics?_

Ingrid: Oh yeah. I mean, we’re very Catholic people, Latin Americans are very Catholic people. We love Mary and everyone has this thing that Mary’s the greatest and sometimes we forget that it’s Jesus that we have to [stops] he’s the main character in the whole bible, or whatever. We’re just very fanatical. We
stick by the conservative tradition and we don’t want to see outside the square and I think that’s the problem with our community. [Salvadoran, Catholic]

This ‘fanatical’ approach to Catholicism did not reflect the participants’ own attitudes towards religion. Rosa and Devi were the only two participants in this sample of Latin women who believed that religion was ‘intertwined’ with their ethnic identities, and they held Catholic identities. For example, Devi said ‘a lot of the [Argentinean] traditions go hand in hand with our faith. That’s how we’ve been able to keep it up’. She continued:

My faith is inter-twined with everything I do. I never separate that ‘religious Devi’ from Devi. Everyone that knows me, knows who I am. I can’t separate my culture from who I am now. I can never not talk about religion because everything is so interlinked.

The other 23 participants did not articulate a strong link between religion and their ethnicity. For the most part, the Latin participants’ Catholic influences were a taken-for-granted aspect of their lives, and most women said that religion was a ‘tradition’ that over the years, their families had not really kept up.

Claudia: We never spoke about it [religion], and we don’t. We don’t speak about it. I think in my family it’s become like tradition. It’s not like we’re into it, it’s just a cultural thing, we keep doing it. [Uruguayan, Spiritual-Catholic]

Ursula: Yeah. It started, when we first came here, we went to church but then we just stopped going after a while. [Chilean, Spiritual]

The majority of the participants believed that living in Australia had resulted in weakening their families’ religious participation. They had become ‘lazy’ about religion in regard to church attendance, as Jade explained. Religion had become a ‘cultural thing’ with the families of the women interviewed, but not one that was actively pursued – hence their lack of church attendance. Traditions such as Christmas and Easter, which were in essence religious festivals, were celebrated as part of the Latin emblem of festivity. These festivals were about bringing the family together,
rather than attending mass and fasting as they were in the long-established Catholic custom.

The second significant finding regarding Latin ethnicity and religion regards the participants’ intense criticisms of the Catholic Church and its interpretation of the Catholic religion. This criticism was true even of the women who regularly attended Church and described themselves as ‘Catholic’. For example, Ingrid said, ‘…I don’t really agree with everything that the Catholic Church says… in my decisions, I try to think not what the Church wants me to do but what I think it’s right to do’ [Catholic]. Ingrid said that the Catholic Church was too ‘conservative’ and that this needed to change.

Yeah, like I said, the Catholic Church is going through teachings, just following certain traditions and some things have to change within the Church… Like I said, it’s mostly tradition that they teach, especially in Latin American communities. [Salvadoran, Catholic]

Almost all of the women reported being unhappy with the authority accorded to priests within the Church. The women believed that the bible should not be interpreted literally, and that people should not accept priestly interpretations of the bible. They disagreed with the Church’s stance on contraception, abortion, homosexuality and priestly celibacy. When discussing the teachings of the Church, the participants reflected a consensus that Catholicism and the Church itself needed to change to reflect a more ‘modern message’.

So what’s the message?
Wendy: I suppose not so much the literal stuff, but being able to integrate that into your life and that it’s okay to make religion kind of fun instead of serious all the time, being afraid of God and all this kind of stuff. [Salvadoran, Catholic]

The Latin participants believed that Catholicism followed ‘tradition’ and that this tradition needed updating. In this sense, the concept of tradition was seen in a negative light and it was used to describe a stifling and dated custom. This was at odds with the concept of tradition as it related to the emblems of Latin ethnicity, which were associated with positive emotions such as love and pride. I found that Latin ethnicity
was linked to the Catholic religion in only a loose way. Interestingly though, most of the participants (the Catholics and Spiritual-Catholics) said that they would raise their children as Catholics, and so this is a ‘tradition’ that they will hand down to the next generation, despite their criticisms of the Catholic Church.

4:1:9 SUMMARY: LATIN-AUSTRALIAN ETHNICITY

In this chapter, I have presented data on interviews with 25 Latin-American background women and I have focused on the concept of Latin pan-ethnicity. This concept described the way in which the participants identified not only with their family’s CoO ethnic culture, but also with a broader Latin ethnic culture. In this chapter I investigated the themes of culture and religion and how these influence the social construction of ethnicity. Regarding the theme of culture, I found that the participants constructed their CoO culture through five emblems of ethnicity: food, language, music, festivity and the value of family. Second, I found that the women constructed Latin pan-ethnicity through the traits of pride and loudness, and by emphasising the similarities of cultural traditions of the separate CoO communities from Latin America.

The second theme I investigated was religion. I developed a threefold typology regarding the participants’ religious identities and these were Catholic, spiritual-Catholic and spiritual. Using these three categories, I showed how the Latin participants separated religion from Latin ethnicity. While they believed that Latin ethnicity in Latin America was highly influenced by Catholicism, their own experiences of growing up in Australia led them to believe that religion has become just another Latin tradition, but one that was not strictly upheld. Thus, the participants were largely in favour of a more ‘spiritual’ approach to religion which focused upon belief in God and respect of others, rather than a belief which was sustained through church attendance. Overwhelmingly, the participants were critical of the teachings and authority of the Catholic Church, and they felt that the religion needed to change to reflect modern times.

I have argued that the construction of Latin ethnicity occurred through establishing aspects of Latin culture in opposition to an Australian ethnicity. For example, the participants believed that Latin people held different sets of values to Australian people and that they also behaved differently to Australians. My analysis of
Latin ethnicity highlighted how the participants’ perception of Australians as being ‘different’ was pivotal to the construction of their ethnicity and it will be shown to be equally central to the construction of Turkish ethnicity.

4:2 TURKISH-AUSTRALIAN ETHNICITY

4:2:1 CONSTRUCTING CULTURE

This section will show how the 25 Turkish participants constructed their ethnicity. First, I found that the women constructed Turkish culture through three emblems of cultural-religious traditions: religious festivals, marriage rites, and the value of respect. Second, the women identified with religion more so than Turkish culture, and they actively constructed themselves as members of an Islamic pan-ethnic community. I argue that the participants constructed their ethnicities by downplaying the importance of their cultural influences and contrasting their religious lifestyle with that of non-religious Turks and non-Muslim Australians.

Emblems of Turkish (Muslim) culture

During her interview, Karli touched upon aspects of Turkish culture that were mentioned by the Latin participants as their ‘emblems of ethnicity’, namely food, language and music:

Basically it’s the way you live life [that] is different as well, because no matter what you’re Turkish. You go home to a Turkish house, you talk Turkish, and you listen to Turkish music, and you watch Turkish TV and you eat Turkish food, so do you know what I mean? I’ve got plenty of friends who are Macedonian and Australian and when I go to their house and they come to my house you can see the difference.
All 25 Turkish participants said that they ate Turkish food and listened to Turkish music, and they believed that it was important to keep speaking the Turkish language in Australia, and they wanted to teach their children to speak Turkish. Food, language and music were aspects of Turkish ethnicity that the participants noted as ‘cultural traditions’ but they were collectively spoken about as a taken for granted aspect of their everyday lives. These practices were not ‘emblems’ of culture, because food, language, and music were not associated with the emotions of pride or passion, which were two emotions attached to the emblems of Latin ethnicity. In fact, the majority of the participants expressed their unfamiliarity with Turkish culture when I first asked them to describe it, especially the closed Muslim women. For example, while Dilruba said that her family kept up Turkish traditions, she was unable to elaborate on them:

Traditions? You can’t differentiate when you’re just thinking about it. [Thinks] I can’t even come up with an example. Little things, they don’t seem big to me, if I was to think of them I’d go ‘Oh yeah’, but I can’t [trails off].

The participants had less difficulty discussing Turkish culture when they discussed culture alongside Islam. Instead of following Turkish cultural traditions, the Turkish participants emphasised that they followed ‘religious traditions’.

Growing up, what sorts of Turkish traditions did your family keep up in Australia?

Leyla: [Thinks] Turkish traditions – woo. I don’t know if they did actually. That’s why I don’t – look it’s more religious traditions rather than Turkish traditions.

Huriye: I feel like what I do is based more on religion more than culture. I like to think when I make a decision it’s based on whether it’s Islamically correct or not, you know, rather than culture.

The most common Turkish tradition that the participants referred to was religious festivals. The participants identified their observance of religious festivals as the clearest embodiment of Turkish culture in their lives, even though these festivals were tied to the Islamic religion. That is to say, when I asked the participants to elaborate on
the Turkish traditions their families kept up in Australia, they listed Islamic festivals such as Ramadan as Turkish traditions.

**What Turkish traditions does your family keep up here in Australia?**

Esmeray: Ah basically especially the Ramadan. It’s actually Islamic but the Turks, whether Muslim or not, keep it up. We do keep it up here as well with the distribution of meat during another festival, which is kurban. We call it kurban. We sacrifice and we spread it around, parcels of meat to people we know. During this month of Ramadan we fast and at the end we celebrate so that’s a tradition that we do keep up.

The women celebrated Islamic religious festivals by gathering for feasts with their families and friends, but this differed from the Latin emblem of festivity in that Latin festivity was seen to embody the ‘partying’ aspect of the Latin persona. The Turkish women’s celebration of Islamic festivals was rarely described in secular terms, as was the case with the Latin women’s celebration of Christmas and Easter. Four of the 25 Turkish participants observed religious festivals in a more secular way, so for example, these women tended not to fast during Ramadan. The other 21 Turkish participants celebrated these festivals through prayer, fasting, alms giving (gifts for the poor) and attending mosque, as well as by visiting family. For example, Karli said, ‘Well we’ve got our holy month in Ramadan, which we fast for 30 days. I do that all the time’. The participants who fasted during Ramadan were especially proud of this aspect of their ethnicity:

**What sort of Turkish traditions would you say your family keeps up in Australia?**

Fazilet: Like I said like it’s mostly religion. We’ve got fasting and at the end of that month you’ve got three days of celebration. Then you go around visiting people. Because you haven’t eaten for a month you know, it’s a celebration! You’ve succeeded in something that’s considered hard in the religion… I’m really proud of myself, I’ve got something to be proud of… If you do it, you get – what’s the opposite of sins? [Laughs] Good deeds or something like this.

The second Turkish tradition that the participants most widely referred to was marriage rites. For example, the women detailed intricate marriage rites, such as henna
tattooing on the bride’s hands on the night before she marries, and one Cypriot-Turkish woman spoke of the ‘dancing the jar’ tradition, which is mostly celebrated in Cyprus rather than mainland Turkey. The dancing the jar tradition involves single women dancing during a wedding reception, and in Melodi’s words, ‘It’s like you’re just standing in the middle of a hall [laughing] with a pot and you’re the centre of attention kinda thing’. The dance traditionally celebrates the bride’s virginity (Bridgwood, 1995), but Melodi saw it another way:

…We kinda came up with this theory that it’s for all the Turkish guys to check out all the chicks! [Laughs] And pick which one they want as a wife that’s what we see it as. But apart from that it’s just fun for the girls.

There were four main phases in marriage, and these correlated with the women’s discussion of marriage rites, which they saw as central to Turkish culture. First, there was the ‘hand-in-marriage’ ceremony, where a man will come and ask a woman’s parents for her hand in marriage. At this stage, if the woman accepts the proposal, the couple are seen to be dating/getting to know each other with their parents’ blessing. Second, when a couple decides to get engaged, they exchange ‘promise rings’, and in time, they will have an engagement party where they exchange engagement rings. Third, there will be a ‘nikka’ ceremony, which is the religious ceremony where nuptial vows are exchanged. The women also referred to this ceremony as getting ‘the word’. As the women described it, within Islam, this ceremony is all that is needed for a marriage to be religiously recognised. The majority of the participants however, said their parents would not see them as ‘officially’ married and able to move out and have a sexual relationship with their spouse with only the ‘nikka’. Fourth, a couple will have a wedding ceremony where they sign legal documentation to make their marriage official (in the eyes of Australian law and in the eyes of their families) and they will have a wedding reception. At this stage, the women’s parents would allow them to move out of home and live with their spouse as husband and wife.

It is useful to consider the hand-in-marriage tradition in more detail, because this marital rite highlights the Turkish women’s ambivalent views on Turkish culture. The participants also referred to this tradition as ‘asking for your hand’, and they described this as an institutionalised marital rite within their Turkish communities. For example, Dilruba said of the hand-in-marriage proposal: ‘It happens to all Turkish girls I think
[laughs]’. While the hand-in-marriage tradition was spoken about as a Turkish tradition, a couple of women also said that it was an Islamic tradition. For example Bikem, who was engaged said, ‘They come and ask for your hand… I say [we’re] “engaged” because it’s easier for people to understand. So that’s another religious thing’.

The women stressed that, in their case, the hand-in-marriage tradition was not an arranged marriage, because they freely chose to enter the engagement, but they do so only with their parents’ approval. There were two divergent attitudes towards the hand-in-marriage tradition, but in both cases the participants spoke about the tradition with a sense of amusement and they often laughed heartily about the stories they told. Four of the 25 women interviewed perceived the hand-in-marriage tradition as negative and they often described it as ‘stupid’. Harika said: ‘I just find that really stupid. I know it’s our tradition, I shouldn’t really say that. Not stupid but weird, that’s the word… When they come down I just feel like I’m just showing myself off to them. That’s a feeling that I don’t like’. They perceived this tradition as ‘outdated’.

İrem: I think it’s very outdated… It probably came about when women weren’t allowed to see the guys or talk to guys and their marriages were based on different things than marriages were based on now…

These four women were unusually dismissive of the hand-in-marriage tradition. Even though most women described some proposals they had received (and rejected) as ridiculous (because they came from strangers), the rest of the sample wanted to uphold this tradition because it symbolised respect for one’s parents. While most women ruled out the possibility of accepting a proposal from a stranger, they were eager to arrange a hand-in-marriage meeting with a man they wanted to marry, thereby giving their parents’ authority over their marriage choice. Dilruba described the hand-in-marriage tradition as both ‘funny’ and ‘odd’, but at the same time she planned to become engaged through this tradition because ‘It’s more of a respect thing’. Similarly, despite Cennet’s past haphazard experiences with the hand-in-marriage tradition, she found this a positive tradition because it reflected the respect she has for her father.

Well I like it. I feel as though I’m asking for my dad’s permission also. I would want to ask my dad permission anyway… I think just by having me respect his
decision, it makes him feel good about himself also and that he’s still a part of my life.

Following on from this, the third Turkish cultural tradition regards the value of respect. A consensus arose from the sample that a positive aspect of Turkish culture was having respect for family, especially respect for one’s elders. The Turkish value of respect was one that the participants wanted to continue to uphold in the future.

_How would you describe Turkish culture to someone who didn’t know where Turkey was?_

Fatma: I think with Turks it’s based on family, it’s very important in Turkish culture, and it’s based on respect. Respect for our elders, love for our youngers [stops and thinks]… We’ve got that close family-community structure.

Smoking, swearing, wearing clothes that their parents (especially their fathers) would disapprove of and – in most cases – dating men, were all avoided behaviours because they were deemed improper and disrespectful. The participants perceived that maintaining this level of respect with their parents and elders was different to the way in which Australian families operated.

_How would you describe the differences between Turkish culture and Australian culture?_

Cennet: Very different [laughs] from what I’m aware of the Australian culture. We don’t call our elders by name, by their first name. Everyone’s got a name like ‘uncle’ or ‘auntie’ or even if they’re not related to you. Turkish culture really emphasises respect for your elders and that’s the biggest difference I think to the Australian culture. I know from experience that respect is a big issue when it comes to Turks.

Poynting, Noble and Tabar’s (1999) research on Arabic-speaking youth found that respect was a key feature of their ethnicity and masculinity, and that this respect was contrasted against Anglo-Australians, who were not seen to have respect for others, and indeed, their participants did not see Anglo-Australians as worthy of their respect. In my study, the Turkish value of respect served a similar function to the pan-ethnic Latin
value of family, because one way in which the participants in both groups were able to
signal their CoO ethnicity most strongly was by marking their differences to
‘Australians’. Sahiba said that being ‘very respectable to your elders’ was reflective of
the ‘maturity’ of Turkish youth in comparison to the way she viewed Australian youth.
The Turkish participants saw a lack of inter-generational respect within Australian
families as a negative aspect of Australian culture. Güldeste said of Australians:

…they don’t know how to treat people [stops] how can I say it? Hmm. I feel that
you have to treat elders a bit more differently than how you would treat the young.
Give them the respect they deserve. Make them feel like they’re special, because
they’re older, they’ve experienced things. I see that there’s not enough respect for
the elders in the youth nowadays in Australia. They take them for granted…

Respect was tied to religion because younger people were expected to visit their
elders during Islamic festivals as a sign of respect. Manolya said, ‘It’s an Islamic value
and, like I said, most of the Turkish values are adapted according to Islam. It is really
important to respect your elders’. Religious festivals, the hand-in-marriage tradition
and respect were described as Turkish traditions, but they had overlaps with Islam. The
following section outlines how the participants constructed the Islamic religion as a
pan-ethnic culture.

**Constructing pan-ethnicity**

There were two ways in which the participants constructed Islamic pan-ethnicity: first,
by identifying themselves as ‘religious Turks’, and second, by diminishing the
differences between Muslim migrants of different CoOs.

A couple of the Turkish women I interviewed would disagree that a pan-ethnic
Islamic culture exists. For example when I asked Pertev if she thought there was a
Muslim culture she answered: ‘No there isn’t! A lot of people turn it into their culture:
that’s where a lot of people go wrong’. Some women gave contradictory messages
about their resistance to the concept of a pan-ethnic ‘Islamic culture’ during their
interviews. For example, Güldeste repeatedly said: ‘Islam I don’t see as a religion, I see it more as a way of life…’ but she also referred to Islam as a ‘culture’:

*If you had to describe Islam, how would you describe it?*

[Thinks awhile] I think depending on the person the behaviour is all Islam… In general being respectful and loving people is the Islamic culture, and not being judgmental…

But later Güldeste denied that Islam was a culture.

*Would you call it a culture?*

No I wouldn’t.

*An Islamic way of life then?*

Yes.

So, if Islam was seen not just as a religion but was instead seen as a ‘way of life’, does that make Islam an *ethnic culture*? My analysis of the interview data shows that the Turkish participants expressed their ethnicity through discussing a pan-ethnic Islamic culture.

The first way in which the Turkish participants constructed Islamic pan-ethnicity was by identifying themselves as ‘religious Turks’ who were distanced from Turkish culture. The one defining characteristic of the Turkish persona as they saw it was having a devotion to Turkish culture. The participants saw ‘cultural Turks’ as people who did not practice their religion ‘properly’. Christine Jacobsen (2001) described how her Algerian-Muslim participants spoke about their ‘authentic’ practice of religion, which they felt should not be based upon cultural interpretations. Similarly, my participants distanced themselves from Turkish culture because they believed that many Turkish traditions were contradictory to Islam, most especially in terms of gender relationships (see Chapter Six). They also spoke about the ‘idolatry’ of Turkish culture as being contradictory to Islam.

Amatullah: There’s certain things in the Turkish culture that actually go against Islamic teachings. There’s a blue stone like this that you might see some Turkish people wearing, it’s in the shape of an eye. They wear it thinking that it’s going to
protect them and that is an extreme Islamic notion, because that’s considered idolatry in Islam coz you’re putting your trust in a piece of rock that can’t do anything. You step on it, boom, it’s gone. So that’s out of the religion as well and that’s part of the Turkish culture and it’s completely unaccepted.

The women positioned themselves as ‘religious Turks’ who were more devoted to religion than culture, but in so doing, they blurred the distinctions between Turkish ethnicity and Islamic pan-ethnicity. For example, Leyla said:

A lot of cultural people will mix their religion and their culture together and sometimes they get confused. Is it culture, is it religion? Which is wrong, but this is just how they are. See with me if you ask me a question about my cultural Turkish side, the reason why I jump to the religious side is because I have no cultural side… A lot of Turks are brought up cultural and that’s why it’s difficult for them to distinguish between the two [religion and culture], whereas with me I haven’t got a cultural side. That’s why I say my culture is my religion. Our religion isn’t just religion, it’s a way of life. Everything we do is influenced by it, so it’s become our culture. I know it may be confusing for people [but] that’s just the way it is.

The second way in which the participants established Islamic pan-ethnicity was by diminishing the differences between individual Muslim migrant community cultures and emphasising their similarities through their religious practices. There are two major Muslim traditions in Turkey, the Sunni, which are in the majority in Turkey and around the world, and the Alevi sect. The Sunni make up between 83 to 93 percent of all Muslims in Turkey. The ‘Alevi’ are a heterodox Shiite Islamic sect that make up less than 20 percent of the Turkish population and are mostly Kurdish (CRS, 2004: [6]). The differences between these two groups lie in their religious practices and beliefs. For example, Alevi women do not wear hijab and the Alevi do not fast during Ramadan (Oktem, 2002: 374-375; van Bruinessen, 1996: [3]). Only one woman highlighted this religious difference between Muslims. Pertev said, ‘There’s actually two types of Muslim religions and no not all Muslim people are the same…’. Nobody else made this religious distinction between Muslims. Only a minority of the sample (four women) conceded that there were cultural differences between Muslims of different ethnicities,
especially in regards to their gender relationships (for example, these women talked about Lebanese-Muslims being stricter with their daughters than Turkish-Muslim parents). The majority of the Turkish women emphasised that Muslims of different ethnic backgrounds were ‘very similar’, or they said ‘we’re exactly the same’ when Muslims practiced their religion ‘properly’.

*Do you see a difference between being a Turkish-Muslim person and other Muslim people?*

Melodi: [Pause] I think they’re all similar. Most Muslims from other nationalities, they’re all the same. Culture-wise and stuff they’re pretty much the same.

Ferah: At uni we had Moroccans, we had Africans, we were a big group and it was so, so beautiful. Even though you had cultural differences, you’ve got one similarity and that’s your religion…

Any cultural differences between Muslims were perceived to be so slight that they largely pertained to style of dress. For example, Manolya said, ‘Just maybe the way we dress. In some traditions they might wear a longer headscarf. There’s not much [difference in] practices, it’s really the same’. Interestingly, Huriye, who was married to a South African Muslim, believed that Muslims put their culture aside in favour of uniting within a pan-ethnic Islamic community *because* Australia was a multicultural society.

I think because Australia is so multicultural [a] country, that’s why culture is not a very big thing for me. You just look at the religious perspective on things. In terms of me and my husband, we don’t put cultural things into it, it’s more religion so I can’t say. I can’t say I’ve seen someone who puts culture into the religion at all.

Seeing cultural differences between Muslims as ‘subtle’ rather than conspicuous allowed the participants to identify with the *umma*, a community whose religious ties subsumes ties to any nation state (Castells, 1997: 15). By identifying with the *umma*, the participants were contributing to the ‘ethnification of Islam’, a concept which describes the way religion is seen as an ethnic category by young Muslims living in
Western countries (Schmidt, 2002). For example Amatullah explained that she saw religion as her ethnicity:

Ethnicity, generally I’d say automatically, ‘Yeah I’m Turkish’ but... how I really feel – I don’t really feel Turkish if there was a way to feel Turkish. [I’m] just a Muslim really. It’d be weird to answer your ethnicity with your religion but there’s a word, an Islamic term *umma*, which means ‘nation’. It’s like the Islamic nation, so I’d say [laughs] I’m part of the Islamic nation...

In order to take on Islam as ‘a way of life’, the Turkish women I interviewed have distanced themselves from Turkish culture. Nationality undermined the cohesion of the *umma* (Catells, 1997: 17), and so nationality must be discarded or its importance downplayed. Being part of the *umma* meant that one must take pride in adhering to the Islamic lifestyle and not in one’s CoO nationality:

Huriye: I do hold the religion more highly and it says in the religion that religion is more important than nationality and where you come from.

Amatullah: What if I was born in Nigeria or Greece or Japan or Turkey? It doesn’t mean anything, the nationality aspect of it. It’s nothing to be proud of; you haven’t earned it, you just happen to be you know? It just causes division. So ‘I’m a Turk!’ Big deal. If I was to take pride in anything it would be in accepting Islam, not in nationality.

The participants’ constructions of Islamic pan-ethnicity highlight that their sense of difference was not signified merely in reference to ‘Australians’, because they equally signalled themselves as different from other Turkish people living in Australia who are ‘more cultural’ than religious. These participants established Islamic pan-ethnicity by downplaying the significance of culture and instead highlighting the significance of religion in their lives. The next section shows that, by choosing religion as a site of identification, the participants were constructing their ethnicity in opposition to dominant narratives of identity both in the Australian and Turkish contexts.
All 25 Turkish participants identified their religious identities as Muslim. Unlike the Latin participants, almost all of whom had attended Catholic schools, the majority of the Turkish participants had received a secular education at public schools. The women who attended religious schools had, on the whole, done so irregularly. Three women had attended Islamic schools (mostly during their secondary years); one woman had attended an Islamic primary school for only one year; and two women had attended public school during the week and gone to ‘Sunday school’ at their local mosque during their primary years. A further two women had attended single-sex Christian schools.

The following section investigates two themes. First, I outline a two-fold typology of the participants’ religious identities, which were ‘closed Muslims’ and ‘open Muslims’. Second, I show that the participants perceived an inextricable intersection between Turkish ethnicity and Islam. My analysis of the participants’ construction of religion shows that they undertook this construction in opposition to dominant narratives of religious identity in both Turkey and Australia. Therefore, beyond identifying with a pan-ethnic Islamic ethnicity, I argue that the participants were engaged in a reconstruction of Turkish ethnicity through the use of religion.

**Religious identities**

The major religion in Turkey is Islam, even though the public sphere has become increasingly secularised over the past eight decades, especially in terms of outlawing Islamic symbols such as the hijab. My findings on the Turkish participants’ religiosity might seem surprising in light of this secularisation. Given the appeal of the hijab, my analysis of the participants’ religious identities first focuses on the women who have chosen to wear the hijab.

**Closed Muslims**

Fourteen of the 25 Turkish participants interchangeably referred to themselves as ‘closed’ or ‘covered’ Muslims because they wore the hijab. These 14 closed
participants said that they decided to close for ‘religious reasons’. First and foremost, the decision to close showed that they were ‘submitting to the will of Allah’, because they believed Allah had decreed that all women should cover in hijab.

Nural: The reason why I do wear it is because it’s the wish of Allah alone and it’s his command. Being a Muslim and respecting the religion and wanting to live the religion you have to respect each and every command that God asks us to do.

Second, they closed because they believed that the Qur’an supported this mandate. The participants stressed that ‘There’s no compulsion in religion’. As Sahiba explained that with marriage or the headscarf: ‘You can’t force anybody to do anything’. While there was ‘no compulsion in religion’, these closed women saw closing as ‘compulsory’. Some theorists have argued that ideas about the hijab have been misinterpreted over the centuries and that the Qur’an does not mandate closing as an Islamic practice (for example, see Mernissi, 1987). The closed participants I interviewed, however, would take issue with such theorists, but they also said that they respected Muslim women who chose to stay open.

Huriye: [The] dress code and that, that’s a big part of the religion. It just depends on what level that you are practising the faith. There are some people that are Muslim but the way they feel and the way they interpret the Qumran they don’t think that’s not really important. You don’t really have to worry about how you’re dressed; it’s more how you feel. Whereas for me it’s both; its’ how you feel and how you are dressed.

Covering may be a woman’s choice, but it was a predetermined choice because these participants saw covering as mandated by their religion.

*Do you feel like covering up is your choice?*

Manolya: Yeah it was totally my choice. Like everyone asks me, ‘Were you forced or something?’. It was totally my choice. My mother even goes to me, ‘If you’re not ready to, don’t’. But I’m like, ‘How can you not be ready for it; we’re told to do so?’. It was my choice.
The fact that these 14 women wore the hijab was peculiar because most of their mothers were not covered. Only four women were raised with the expectation from their parents that they should close and they had grown up seeing their mothers in hijab. The women who were raised to wear the hijab closed at the time that they began menstruating, in accordance with Islamic doctrine. Three of the four women who were raised to close had not found this a positive experience at first because their parents, specifically their mothers, had not been sensitive to the difficulties that wearing hijab caused them at school. They typically described that they wished their parents had educated them about the religious reasons for closing. It was only after their own studies into Islam that the women who were raised to cover were able to see the hijab as their own choice:

Nural: it’s very important to teach your kids and educate your kids. To love Allah and Islam. To love Allah and to obey Allah. Once your kids understand that, wearing the scarf is very easy for them because they’ll understand that they wear it for the sake of Allah and to protect themselves too. Not having that knowledge or understanding can be very hard.

The other 10 women who had not been raised to wear the hijab found the decision to close less stressful, but this involved much ‘soul searching’. Surprisingly, around half of these women closed before they began puberty and the other women closed much later in their adolescence, usually in their late teenage years. All of these formerly open women reiterated that the decision to close came about from their studies into Islam. One of the most difficult aspects of closing for these 10 women who were not raised to wear the hijab was their families’ concern for them. As Dilruba said, ‘back then my parents weren’t religious’, and so ‘seeing their daughter all of a sudden religious’ came as a ‘shock’. Closing was seen as a life-long commitment and their parents warned them that closing should not be decided upon frivolously. Their parents also expressed concern that their daughters would experience discrimination because they wore the hijab.

Despite the stigmatisation that the closed women faced from some non-Muslim Australians, the closed participants were very proud to be wearing the hijab. They said that they ‘love it’ because it reflected the fact that they are ‘a servant of God’ and that were living their lives according to the teachings of the Qur’an. The participants saw
the hijab as an *emblem* of Islamic pan-ethnicity, because practising their religion ‘properly’ was something they could take pride in. The sense of pride attached to the hijab was reflected in the way that these closed participants saw it as a ‘flag for the Muslim religion’.

Leyla: I think it’s like my flag. I stand out in the crowd and you think to yourself, ‘There’s a Muslim’. If people want to know anything about it, they can come and speak to me. So really it’s my identity. People can say, ‘That’s a Muslim’, and that’s what I want; I want them to recognize me as a Muslim.

The participants’ travels to Turkey showed them that most women in Turkey, especially women in their age group, were *not covered*. They attributed this to Turkey’s ‘scarf law’. It was the participants’ understanding that the Turkish government believed that the hijab was symbolic of the way that Islam was ‘backward’ and that it prevented Turkey from becoming ‘more modernised’. The participants were alarmed that women were not able to wear the hijab in Turkey and participate in the public sphere. Women who wear the hijab in Turkey cannot work in the government sector or study in university (Breu, 2000: 25, 36; Hirschl, 2004: 1849-1850). The Turkish participants noted that they, as Turkish women living in Australia, were free to study and to wear the hijab. The closed women also acknowledged that the hijab had taken on a different meaning in Australia. The participants said that wearing the hijab in Turkey was merely about ‘tradition’, especially given that, in their observations, it was mostly elderly women who wore the hijab. But in Australia, wearing the hijab was about ‘holding onto identity’.

Rana: I think wearing the scarf in Turkey is more of a tradition rather than – they don’t even know why they put it on, because they just put it on. They’ve just made it more of a tradition whereas in Australia because we have to hold onto our identity, especially in countries where there aren’t many others like you, we embrace it more strongly because it’s all you’ve got and you’ve got to hold onto it, otherwise – you know.

The hijab was clearly more than a ‘flag’ of religious commitment. It aided the expression of identity, and it was also a marker that signalled the women’s in-group
boundaries (cf. Barth, 1969). As an emblem of pan-ethnicity, the hijab was a positive symbol in their presentation of self (cf. Goffman, 1969). For the women who wore the hijab, this emblem helped them to make a public statement about their belonging to a pan-ethnic Islamic community in a social context where the majority population was not Muslim. Fatma said that when people saw her walking down the street in her hijab, they think to themselves, “Oh my God, she’s a Muslim”. That’s what I want people to think, that I’m a Muslim and I’m a person that follows Islam. Or I try to follow it as best as I can, [and] obey God’.

**Open Muslims**

Eleven of the 25 Turkish participants were ‘open Muslims’, and they also spoke of themselves in this way. While all 25 women referred to women who wore the hijab as ‘covered’ as well as ‘closed’, none of them referred to women who did not wear the hijab as ‘uncovered’. Most of the open women described covering their hair when they attended mosque or when they read the Qur’an, but they did not wear the hijab on a daily basis.

The open women said that their religion was ‘very important’ to them and that they considered themselves to be ‘very religious’.

Karli: It’s my life. My life revolves around being – I won’t say it revolves around being Muslim but [thinks] it’s a very, very big part of my life.

İrem: I’ve never really covered my hair or anything like that but I’ve always been very religious.

While the majority of these open Muslims described themselves as ‘religious’ Muslims, they also said that they wanted to increase their religious commitment. For example, Pertev wanted to be more religious but she said:

I don’t actually follow the religion all the way. It’s 50 percent… Things like Ramadan, which is coming up soon, where we have to do that 30 day fasting. Yes
I will do that. There’s special nights where we have to pray for our loved ones that have passed away. We will do that, we will pray…

The hijab was at the heart of the women’s desire to increase their religious commitment, and this was reflected by Pertev who said ‘I should be [in hijab] but I’m not. It’s part of the religion’. Only three of these 11 open women did not envision themselves ever closing and one other woman felt ambivalent about closing. Destan echoed the Latin participants who held spiritual-Catholic and spiritual identities because she believed that religiosity should not be judged against the fulfilment of specific duties or rituals. She said: ‘It’s all spiritual; religion should be a personal thing, you shouldn’t have to say, “I’m a Muslim because I do this”’. Specifically, Destan did not feel a need to wear the hijab in order to ‘prove’ her religiosity.

The seven other open women eagerly anticipated finding the ‘strength’ to close in the future. They anticipated they would close when they felt they had reached a ‘higher level in my religion’ or when they were ready to take the ‘next step in my religion’. When I asked Karli what the hijab symbolised to her she said, ‘probably taking a further step in my religion’. That I’m a stronger believer and that I accept much more’. Cennet reflected the deep respect the open women held for women who have taken their religion ‘another step’ through closing. Closing was something she planned to do in the near future:

Because I want to pursue my religion to a further extent, I think that would be another step towards it. I’ve taken a step already, I pray, and I think if I was to cover up [stops]. I love females that cover up, like young females my age, my friends. I think for me that it symbolises strength because we live in such a culture where people are stared at if they’re different. Girls in my age group that have got the scarf on are very strong in their character and what they want. I think that’s probably the main reason apart from religion-wise that I’d wanna be like that.

These women said the decision to close would come at a stage where they felt ‘comfortable’ wearing the hijab forever. Some of the open women were apprehensive about closing because they anticipated ‘racism’.
Asuman: I guess deep down inside I am chicken shit about all this [racism] coming up again… It’s really hard. Even with jobs – it’s much more difficult to get a job. I feel like every day you walk out of your house you constantly have to explain yourself to people, and try and earn respect… I guess I’m comfortable with the way I am. It’s easier for me to carry on with my daily life. I’m a bit Australian in that I like to go down to the beach! [Laughs] It’s a bit hypocritical of me to say, but I will always show respect to the people who do. I’ve studied about it and read into it, and I understand why [women close].

Asuman’s comment ‘I’m a bit Australian’ highlighted that part of the appeal of being an open Muslim was the invisibility they enjoyed without the hijab. Melodi said, ‘It makes me more anonymous, yeah. People are guessing, “What nationality is she?”’ While the closed Muslims took pride in signalling their difference to others through the hijab, the open Muslims were anxious about doing this so publicly.

*Do you think things would be different now though if you wore a headscarf?*

Akasma: Yeah, because of the situation now [September 11]. They wouldn’t know what nationality or religion I am by looking at me, so they wouldn’t say anything. But if I had the scarf on, they’d be like, ‘Oh she’s Muslim, definitely’. I’m pretty sure I would’ve copped a few things. Like my cousin goes to me that every day they have cars going past, trucks, beeping at them, and people screaming. They have security all around her [Islamic] school. They’ve had bomb threats and everything.

Two women in this category had previously been closed but had decided to open up again and their experiences show the apprehension the open women harbour about closing. Solmaz closed around the time she enrolled in an Islamic high school and was closed for around ten years. Once she entered university, she began ‘getting into the clubbing scene’ and she found herself ‘taking the scarf off for special events and occasions… and it became more frequent than it used to be’. After experiencing a relationship break-up, Solmaz decided to open once again.

It’s been like this now for 1½ years now and I’ve been happy like this. I’m happy. I still go to my religion and I can’t really rip myself apart from it but I don’t think
it’s appropriate to have the outer appearance of a Muslim yet not acting like one. I wasn’t doing anything that a Muslim should be doing. I wanted to start practicing more instead of looking like one. That’s what I’m focusing on right now.

Nowadays Solmaz did not go to nightclubs as frequently as she used to but when she feels ‘really stressed out and I just feel like dancing and I think, “Put religion aside. Put the parents aside. Let’s just go out and drink and forget about it. Be like everybody else and just lose yourself in dance. Get up to mischief”’. Presently, staying open allowed Solmaz to ‘be like everybody else’ and transgress the rules of her religion, but getting ‘up to mischief’ after closing is now out of the question for her. Solmaz’s story highlights how being Muslim in a non-Islamic society can be ‘quite challenging’. Solmaz explained:

I have to establish myself in a new group of friends where they know their religion and they practice their religion and I’ll feel more comfortable with them… and I won’t feel the peer pressure, I guess.

Still, Solmaz hoped to close again in the future, once she settled down and was ready to take her religion ‘to the next level’.

**Religion and ethnicity**

The Turkish participants noted two ways in which religion and ethnicity intersected in their lives within the Australian context: first through their emphasis that Islam was ‘a way of life’ and second by comparing their religious commitment with other Turkish people. I argue that the participants use religion as a tool to reconstruct Turkish culture in Australia, a reconstruction that goes against dominant narratives of secularism in Turkey and Australia.

The overwhelming majority of the Turkish participants felt differently about their religion than the Latin participants. The Latin participants were highly critical of the Catholic Church and of literal interpretations of the Bible, and they wanted Catholicism to ‘change with the times’. There was only one Turkish participant who
felt this way about Islam, specifically in relation to closing. Destan, an open Muslim, said ‘I think the headscarf – our religion has to move with times. A lot of people forget this’. In contrast, the majority of the Turkish participants stressed the unchanging nature of Islam, with its focus upon a literal interpretation of the Qur’an, as a positive aspect of their religion.

And do you think that the Muslim religion will continue to have the same meaning in Australia in the future as the generations go on?
Manolya: Meaning like changing? Well it’s remained the same for 1,400 years so I don’t believe it will ever change… Islam is an order and a way of life. When they fulfil those duties and follow those ways, they’re a good Muslim; and when they don’t do that they’re a bad Muslim. [Closed]

The Turkish participants saw Islam as ‘a way of life… it’s something I grew up with’ [Cennet, open]. The participants felt that Islam guided their decisions and that it provided an important structure to their daily lives.

Güldeste: [Islam] is a way of life. If you were to really study it, it tells you how to greet a guest. It tells you how to go to bed. It tells you how to treat your spouse. Or it even gives you solutions to marital breakdowns. Just everything, everything you can think of, it can have it’s own law but it’s also flexible too. There are certain rules that you have to [follow], that you must, it’s obligatory that you [do], it’s compulsory, but there are just normal guidelines. Those guidelines are just social norms, social behaviour that Australians would see as normal. [Closed]

Jessica Jacobson’s study into the interrelationship between religion and ethnicity of young British Pakistanis found that Islam was just as pervasive, with Jacobson’s participants identifying more strongly with their religion than their culture. They too saw Islam as ‘a way of life’ (1998: 249). My participants may have subscribed to a Muslim pan-ethnic culture where ‘Islam is more than a religion’, but there was a deeper intersection between Islam and Turkish ethnicity than this. This intersection can be seen in the participants’ discussion of Turkish culture, which was heavily centred on religious practices, such as religious festivals.
The second intersection of religion and ethnicity was in the participants’ religious commitment in relation to other Turkish people. Whether closed or open, most participants spoke of being ‘more religious’ than their parents. Their parents had raised them as Muslims but, for the most part, their parents had not explained the meaning behind their Islamic practices. The interviews had a common theme of self-educated religiousness. Most participants described doing ‘research’ on their religion and they attended Islamic seminars in Melbourne aimed at young people. Many participants had also learnt enough Arabic to enable them to read the Qur’an.

Cennet: I try and practice my religion every day as much as I can, however my parents aren’t very religious. I can honestly say I’m probably the most religious one. People sorta freak out about that… I started learning the Arabic language and I started reading the Qur’an. I got so into it at one stage where I learnt things I’d never known before. [Open]

Leyla: My parents had brought me up saying, ‘You have to be a Muslim’, but they didn’t teach me much about it. ‘You have to be a Muslim, and you have to cover and you have to be Islamic and rah, rah, rah’. They didn’t say, ‘This is the reason and you have to pray and all this other stuff’. So I learnt it on my own and that helped me become more [religious]. [Closed]

The participants also compared their religiosity to their family members living in Turkey. The participants believed that their family in Turkey was not ‘as religious as we are in Australia’ [Amatullah] and they said that their family members overseas were often shocked to find out how religious they were even though they had grown up in Australia. Esmeray, a closed Muslim, said, ‘They might see me as too much the extreme’, because she wore the hijab. While the Latin participants believed that living in Australia had weakened their commitment to religion in comparison to Latin people living in Latin America, the opposite was true of the Turkish participants. Güldeste said, ‘in Turkey they’re not practising. They’re more practicing their culture rather than their religion’ [Closed].

Where the Latin participants separated religion from ethnicity, the Turkish participants felt that Turkish culture was irrevocably tied to the Islam. This seems contradictory given that they also believed that most Turkish people were ‘cultural
Turks’ rather than ‘religious Turks’, like they were. But this contradiction goes to the heart of the Turkish participants’ ethnicity: while they might underplay their Turkish cultural influences, the participants were reconstructing Turkish ethnicity through their religion. This was seen in the way that the majority of the participants saw themselves as ‘Muslim-Turks’ instead of simply as ‘Muslims’.

What does it mean to be Turkish?

Dilruba: I don’t know; religion and being a Turk just comes together. Some people can differentiate like, ‘Oh that’s different, that’s different, you’re a Turk, you’re a Muslim’ – I think it just comes together. It makes you up as it is - it just comes together. I don’t know how else to put it [laughs softly]. [Closed]

The Australian context, with its multicultural backdrop, was essential to the participants’ reconstruction of Turkish ethnicity. Both Australia and Turkey are secular societies, but it is within the Australian context, where the majority of the population are not Muslim, that the participants utilised Islam as a way to reconstruct Turkish ethnicity. Turkey has in essence already experienced one such reconstruction of ethnicity: it was once an ecclesia state but its national identity was reconstructed to separate religion and ethnicity. The Turkish women I interviewed were reconstructing Turkish ethnicity once again, to reunite ethnicity with religion. By defining themselves as Muslim-Turks then, the participants constructed their ethnicity in opposition to the secular narratives of identity in both Australia and Turkey. Some participants, like Güldeste, did not fail to identify the ‘irony’ of this reconstructed identity when she travelled back to Turkey:

All my other young cousins, none of them are covered. I was the only covered one so that’s what they found very ironic. Like ‘You’re coming from a Western country and you should be Westernised. You should be all civilised and looking good all the time coz the West looks good all the time’. Yeah they found that really weird. They go, ‘We don’t live in the West and we’re living the lifestyle and wearing the clothes they wear, whereas you should be doing that. Whereas you do the opposite’. [Closed]
I have presented interview data on 25 Turkish-background women, and my analysis was heavily focused on the concept of Islamic pan-ethnicity. This concept describes the way in which the participants identified not only with their family’s Turkish culture, but also with a broader Islamic ‘culture’. I investigated the themes of culture and religion and how these influence the social construction of Turkish ethnicity. Regarding the theme of culture, I found that the participants constructed Turkish culture through three cultural traditions: religious festivals, marital rites and the value of respect. Second, I found that the participants constructed Islamic pan-ethnicity by identifying themselves as ‘religious-Turks’ instead of ‘cultural Turks’, and by emphasising the similarities between Muslim migrants.

The second theme I investigated was religion. I developed a twofold typology regarding the participants’ religious identities and these were open Muslims and closed Muslims. Using these two categories, I outlined two intersections regarding the participants’ religion and ethnicity. First, I found that the participants believed that Turkish culture was inextricably linked with Islam because it was seen as ‘a way of life’, and second, I found that the participants saw themselves as ‘Muslim-Turks’ who were ‘more religious’ than Turkish people living in Turkey and other ‘cultural Turks’ living in Australia. Given that the social contexts in Turkey and Australia are premised upon secularism, the participants’ Muslim-Turkish ethnicity goes against dominant narratives of identity in both countries. Religion provided these Turkish women with a celebrated sense of achieved difference in contrast to the identities of other Australian and Turkish people in a way that their cultural traditions did not. For this reason, it is from Islam and not from Turkish culture that the Turkish participants drew their sense of ethnicity.

While the women tried to distance themselves from Turkish culture, I have argued that they were reconstructing their Turkish ethnicity using religion. This reconstructed ethnicity is contingent on the Australian social context in two ways. First, their ethno-religious identities were reconstructed against the backdrop of Australia’s secularism, and second, it was Australia’s multicultural context that made possible the closed women’s public expression of their Muslim identities in a way that would be otherwise limited in Turkey. In Australia they were able to wear the hijab and study, and yet in Turkey this would be denied to them.
The concept of difference, or otherness, has been a strong undercurrent within my findings so far. Multiculturalism fosters a culture of otherness, where being different to others, especially to ‘Australians’, was pivotal to the participants’ construction of ethnicity. The final section of this chapter explores the 50 women’s construction of Australian ethnicity by way of concluding this chapter. I will show that imagining Australian ethnic culture within contradictory narratives of ‘Anglo-ness’ and multiculturalism sheds further light into the construction of migrant ethnicities in Australia.

4:3: AUSTRALIAN ETHNICITY

4:3:1 CONSTRUCTING CULTURE

This section of the chapter includes data from the Latin and Turkish interviews, and I explore two themes regarding the participants’ construction of Australian culture: cultural traditions and pan-ethnicity. I argue that the participants constructed Anglo-Australians as the other in order to give greater legitimacy to the contribution of migrant cultures in Australia, with mixed results. From this point onwards in the thesis, I distinguish between the Latin and Turkish women using these two categories, rather than by indicating the Latin women’s CoO ethnicity.

Cultural (non) traditions of Anglo-Australians

The participants expressed two beliefs about Australian culture: first, Australia was believed not to have a culture, and second, Australian cultural traditions were dismissed as illegitimate traditions.

Only two women described Australian culture in an in-depth manner. For example, Saryuri first described Australian culture in stereotypical ways, saying, ‘I’d say it’s a working-class society; very [long pause] into sports and barbecues, that type of thing, drinking’. But she went on to say that class impacted on the ‘different kinds of Australian culture’:
Once me and [my fiancé] went out for my friends’ birthday and it was like a pub; [a] rough kind of place. Then we went out for his friend’s birthday and I said to him, ‘These people are different’. All still being Australian, but they were just different… not as rough around the edges, that type of thing... I don’t know if it was being brought up in a different type of background or education, yeah, and I feel that there are some differences in the culture because of class.

The majority of the participants typically said ‘I don’t think Australia has a culture’, and they initially said that they could not describe Australian culture. Even Xiomara, who held the most enthusiastic perceptions of Australian ethnicity, was unable to describe Australian culture. She said, ‘I really enjoy it’, but at the same time she said, ‘I can’t put a word to Australian culture’ [Latin]. Moira said:

Australian culture? I don’t know if they have much of a culture! [Laughs] Oh Gosh. Their culture? Their culture’s basically – do what you want to do, be what you want to be. Yeah [laughs] I don’t know if I could really explain their culture. [Latin]

The participants believed that Australians could have taken on influences from Aboriginal culture, but because this was not the case, Australians had overlooked this as an avenue to create a unique culture. For example, Gracie believed that Australia had no traditions, ‘because the Poms don’t really have any traditions. Coz they settled here, no one here has any either. Maybe if the Aborigines, if they were to have possession of their land, like they have more traditions and culture I think. But the Poms don’t, therefore we don’t’ [Latin]. The Latin women were especially passionate about this issue, and they spoke negatively of the way that ‘Australians’ have not adopted Aboriginal culture as part of mainstream Australian ethnicity.

Matijana: That’s the thing – Australia doesn’t have an identity, because everyone was an immigrant and the only identity that they had, they rejected with the Aborigines. Do you know what I mean? Look at how they treat them; they treat them like shit. This is people that they could probably learn a lot from or they could’ve learnt a lot from… and what do they do? They totally reject them, to the side. [Latin]
The second way in which the participants constructed Australian culture was to dismiss the legitimacy of Australian cultural traditions. While the participants said that Australia had no culture, they did list aspects of Australian culture, especially its lack of religiosity, freedom, food, sport, its convict history, and the laid-back Australian persona, which would suggest that Australia did indeed have a culture. Despite listing these aspects of Australian culture, they still believed that Australia had no culture. For example, the women in both groups described ‘Australians’ as ‘laidback’ people who let you ‘be yourself”. This was contrasted with the gossip in the women’s CoO communities, which was especially acute in the Turkish women’s case.

Güldeste: You kinda have to put on a mask when you’re in the Turkish culture, you do. Only with your closest friends you can be yourself. With the Australian culture I like how you can be yourself, wherever you are. You don’t get that in Turkish culture.

At the same time, most of the women believed that Anglo-Australians did not have a culture because they are so laid-back. In contrast, the participants did not see themselves as being laid-back about their approach to their CoO culture.

*How might you describe Australian culture?*

Akasma: Actually I don’t think Australians have much of a culture I guess. When you compare it to the Turkish culture, it’s like a big, big difference. They’ve got more things that they do, and Australians are more laid back. They do whatever they want and how they want. They don’t really follow a certain thing, that’s how I see it. A European or a Turkish [person], they follow more of a culture.

[Turkish]

The participants were dismissive of Australian cultural traditions, and this dismissal was often marked by a laugh as they described Australian culture.
How would you describe Australian culture to someone who does not even know how to find Australia on a map?

Claudia: Just Australian culture? Just the Aussie part of it? [Laughs] That’s funny! You know, every time someone says, ‘Australian culture’, I think of [laughing] beer, pies and the footy! That’s the first things I think of! [Latin]

Dilruba: What is there seriously? [Laughs] What is there? There’s barbeques. The outback. I seriously don’t see what there is. It doesn’t have much of the history anyway, Australia, all together. When I look at my Turkish history, I think, ‘Oh my God, look where we were!’ You feel proud. [Turkish]

Some participants rather contradictorily said that Australia had no culture but they still described Australian culture as ‘boring’ or ‘bland’ – which would suggest that there was indeed an Australian culture, albeit one that they did not view in a positive light. Wendy found Australian culture ‘bland’ and she thought that immigration had enriched it.

How would you describe Australian culture?

Wendy: [Laughs] Oh God! I don’t know whether I understand it terribly well. Confused, in a way. I think that the Australian culture is not very well defined. In a way I guess that bland comes to mind [laughs]. There isn’t a lot there. I think that the richness we have in Melbourne comes from the fact that there are a lot of different cultures to enrich the whole thing and people find it all very fascinating and gorgeous. It’s not a lot to do with Australian culture per se. I don’t think that it has a lot of substance to it [small giggle] that doesn’t sound very good. It’s probably because I don’t understand it well enough. [Latin]

Constructing pan-ethnicity

The participants constructed Australian pan-ethnicity in two ways: first, by denying that Anglo-Australians were the ‘true’ Australians, and second, by emphasising Australia’s multiculturalism.
The participants stressed that the one group with the most authentic claim to the Australian identity were Aboriginal people. Additionally, the women said that because ‘we’re a multicultural society’ in Australia, being a ‘white Anglo’ was no longer the norm.

Aylin: You can’t pinpoint it [Australian culture]. It’s not one culture, it’s a mix of cultures. There’s the Anglo-Australian culture and then there’s the other cultures. Even in the Australian culture there’s been a mix with all the other different cultures and you can’t really say what the culture’s really like any more. In the 50s or 40s there was a very strong Anglo-Australian culture but now I don’t reckon. [Latin]

Similarly, Kumru celebrated the reconstruction of Australian ethnicity, which was once based on notions of a ‘pure Australian’, in place of an Australian ethnicity shaped by immigration:

I think to me there isn’t a pure Australian. I think Australia is so unique because everyone has brought their own thing to Australia. We’ve made Australia such a great country because of all our little knick-knacks that we’ve brought and our ideas, our little cultural festive celebrations. [Turkish]

The participants denied that the identity of ‘Australian’ belonged to Anglo-Australians, but at the same time, their comparisons of Australian ethnicity referred to migrant and non-migrant background Australians. For the most part, during their interviews, whenever the women talked about ‘Australians’, they were inferentially talking about Anglo-Australians. Devi was a prime example of this. During her interview, Devi, a Latin participant, continually drew upon the rhetorical question ‘So, who’s Australian?’ She said, ‘The difference depends on what Australian you’re talking about. I’m very strict about that, like who’s Australian? White Australian?’ Devi believed that people of different backgrounds – migrant, Aboriginal or Anglo – were all Australian, and yet she still used the term ‘Australian people’ in place of Anglo-Australian at times during her interview. For example, she said, ‘An Australian-Asian is completely different to Australian-Anglo. Australian people just assume that it’s just Anglos out of Australians, but I say, “no, I’m referring to Asian-Australians or Anglo-
Australian or Aboriginal-Australian”. The diversity’s just immense’. So, while Devi
made a point to distinguish between different Australians, when she said, ‘Australian
people just assume that it’s just Anglos out of Australians’, she was still using the term
‘Australians’ to be a generic term for Anglo-Australians (cf. Poyting and Tabar, 2001: 14).

The second way in which the participants constructed Australian pan-ethnicity
was by emphasising multiculturalism and diminishing the contribution of Anglo-
Australian culture to Australian ethnicity. The participants’ observations of Australian
ethnicity went beyond denying that Australia had a culture; it was more that they did not
believe that Australia had a culture of its own, outside of the one provided by migrating
cultures. When I asked Ofelia to describe Australian culture, at first she said Australia
did not have a culture, but then she changed her mind and said, ‘yeah, we’re making the
culture, the immigrants. We’re making the culture’ [Latin]. Other women said:

Claudia: It’s like we’re their culture. [Latin]

Solmaz: I think we’ve done more for this country than they [‘Anglos’] have in that
sense. [Turkish].

Multiculturalism featured heavily in the participants’ discussion of Australian
ethnicity. The word ‘multiculturalism’ was described along similar lines by the
participants in both groups, and this referred to two meanings of multiculturalism
identified by Vasta: first it was a term describing the ‘polyethnic’ make up of Australian
society, and second, it was an ideology of tolerance for this polyethinicity (1993: 212-3).
The participants I interviewed described multiculturalism as, ‘Just a different variety
of cultures’ [Ursula, Latin], and ‘people from different ethnic backgrounds and cultures
and religious backgrounds living in a society and a geographical location in harmony’
[Amatullah, Turkish].

All 50 participants perceived the Australian identity to be ‘multicultural’ and this
was seen as a positive aspect of living in Australia.

Solmaz: To be Australian I think it means to be multicultural in every sense…
You’ve got every look. You’ve got the grungies, you’ve got the hippies, the
punks, the Buddhist people with the baldie head, the long dresses, the bearded
The women believed that multiculturalism not only supported their migrant ethnicities, but that it made ‘holding onto’ their cultural traditions all the more important. Harika even linked multiculturalism to the reconstruction of Turkish culture:

Generally with some things it’s [Turkish culture] much stronger in Australia sometimes because of people wanting to protect it so much. Because there’s not so many of us – oh, there is a lot of us, but compared to other people we’re in a multicultural country, we’re in a different country, so they wanna hold onto what they’ve got… [In Turkey] they really don’t worry about our traditions, our culture, as much as we do. So in that way, it’s a bit different.

While the participants believed that multiculturalism had strengthened their ethnic cultures, they believed that multiculturalism had weakened Anglo-Australian culture, and therefore Anglo-Australians had not been able to keep well-defined cultural traditions.

Claudia: In a way it’s sad because Australia, it needs to really maintain its culture and I don’t think it is much... There’s too many cultures and you just don’t know what it is anymore. Like: is Australia even there? So I think it’s losing their traditions because of other cultures. [Latin]

Dilruba: You don’t see much of the Australian values anyway. It’s like they don’t have a strong cultural identity anyway. You don’t see it, even if there is. I don’t know the Turkish culture just gets through more. [Turkish]

Despite evidence to the contrary, the women I interviewed arrived at the conclusion that Anglo-Australians must not have a culture because Australian culture was beyond description; it was opaque and impenetrable to them: they could not see it, so was ‘it even there?’ they asked rhetorically.
SUMMARY: AUSTRALIAN ETHNICITY

Seeing Anglo-Australian culture as non-existent or weakened in the face of multiculturalism gave further legitimacy to the participants’ CoO cultures. This process ensured that their migrant ethnicities were strengthened to the point where they ‘get through more’ than Australian cultural influences. While rejecting Anglo-Australian culture could be seen as a reaction against hegemonic constructions of Australian identity, this rejection of Anglo-Australian culture was based upon ethnocentric notions of ‘culture’. The cultural symbols of ‘old Australia’, such as the bush, and the more contemporary symbols of Australian culture, such as pies and footy, did not really conform to the women’s expectations of what culture should be. The women’s migrant cultures were seen as ‘old’ and ‘vast’, and in comparison, Australia’s culture was seen as fairly new when defined through Anglo-Australian institutions. If Australian culture was based on Indigenous culture, then the women might see it as culture because Aboriginal culture was based on ancient customs and traditions, and this made it a more robust culture than one based on going to the pub for a beer.

The cultural contributions of Anglo-Australians to the world of art and literature and in other so-called ‘high art’ arenas throughout the past 216 years did not feature in the women’s notion of Australian culture. In addition, Anglo-Australia’s ties to the much older cultural traditions of their British and Irish ancestors did not feature in the women’s understanding of Anglo-Australian culture. Culture was something that was enduring and something that stretched back through the ages, and even though the women’s own cultural practices were not ancient because they had been shaped through the migration process – Anglo-Australian culture was, at age 216, too new to be seen as a culture, especially since the women had the belief that it was being changed and ‘taken over’ by migrant cultures.

CONCLUSION: ETHNICITIES

In this chapter I have shown that the Latin and Turkish women I interviewed made connections between themselves and their CoO and pan-ethnic collectivities, and they drew upon their sense of difference to Anglo-Australians. Jenkins (1997) argued that
ethnicity was based upon a dialectic of similarity and difference, and he outlined four processes that contributed to the social construction of ethnicity: cultural differentiation, social interaction, flexibility, and internal and external influences. These four processes can be seen in the women’s discussion of their ethnicities. First, the women engaged in a process of *cultural differentiation*; that is, they drew comparisons between the groups they identified with (their CoO and pan-ethnic groups) and Anglo-Australians. For example, saying that Anglo-Australians invested less value on their family life and that they had ‘no respect’ for their elders not only helped to highlight the women’s own commitment to their families, but it helped to clearly mark out their CoO/pan-ethnic ethnicities. The women constructed Anglo-Australians as their cultural *other*, and this construction highlighted the women’s difference and uniqueness.

Second, ethnicity was the outcome of *social interaction*; that is, ethnicity was about the social contact and the social networks the women formed with people they perceived to be part of their ethnic groups. Ethnicity was shaped by their everyday experiences and their belief that they shared a meaningful relationship to those within their ethnic boundaries. For example, the Turkish women believed that Islam was ‘more than a religion; it’s a way of life’, meaning that their ethnicity was shaped by their religious traditions. In their experiences, any differences between different national groups was inconsequential to the Islamic identity, so long as Muslim people ‘practised their religion properly’. The women believed that people who were ‘religious Muslims’ would share their religious traditions and ethnicity, because this was true of the Muslims they interacted with on a daily basis.

Third, ethnicity and culture were not fixed ideas, because *ethnicity was flexible*. The traditions, symbols and the situations in which ethnicity were produced and reproduced were fluid: the women’s ethnicities were changing and adapting and they were continually being reinvented. For example, the Latin women had appropriated what they believed was *authentic* Latin music as part of their culture, even though, as Lorelei pointed out, the music Latin youth enjoyed in Latin America was more like the music young people listen to in Australia. The Turkish women were ‘more Muslim’ than Turkish people in Turkey.

Fourth, ethnicity was a social identity that was equally impacted by *external and internal exchanges*. The hijab offers an interesting example of this internal-external dialectic. All the Turkish women saw themselves as Muslim-Turks, and this identity was based on their subjective ideas about their belonging to Muslim and Turkish
collectivities. While the Turkish women’s internal self was subjectively identified, it still depended upon the way the women imagined other people saw them. The open women could call themselves Muslim without wearing the hijab, but the closed women wanted their internal identity to be immediately recognisable on their exterior. They wore the hijab despite the stigmatisation that went along with being publicly identifiable as Muslim. After all, the open women were afraid to cover due to the ‘racism’ they might face. When the closed women wore the hijab, the message they sent out was unambiguous: they were Muslim and they wanted everyone else to know. Wearing the hijab then, consciously aligned these women’s internal and external definitions of self, and it meant that other people would interact with them as Muslims, rather than just as Turkish or Australian women.

My analysis showed that there was no one way to construct ethnicity, as both groups interviewed constructed their ethnic cultures according to different narratives: one narrative was about taking pride in culture and the other was about taking pride in religious observance. But where the women’s stories diverged regarding the narrative of ethnicity that each group presented, their stories converged in the story they told about Australian ethnicity. The following table gives a brief snapshot of my findings on my participants’ constructions of Latin, Turkish and Anglo-Australian ethnicities.
Table 2: Participants’ constructions of ethnicity: culture, pan-ethnicity and the intersections of religion and ethnicity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ETHNICITY</th>
<th>EMBLEMS OF ETHNIC CULTURE</th>
<th>CONSTRUCTIONS OF PAN-ETHNICITY</th>
<th>INTERSECTION BETWEEN RELIGION AND ETHNICITY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| LATIN (as described by Latin participants) | Country-of-origin  
- Food  
- Language  
- Music  
- Festivity  
- Value of family | Latin  
- Latin persona  
- Similarities of cultural traditions | Weak intersection with ethnicity  
- 6 Catholics  
- 11 Spiritual-Catholics  
- 7 Spirituals |
| TURKISH (as described by Turkish participants) | Turkish  
- Religious festivals  
- Marriage rites  
- Value of respect | Islamic  
- Muslim-Turk persona  
- Similarities of religious traditions | Strong intersection with ethnicity  
- 14 Closed Muslims  
- 11 Open Muslims |
| AUSTRALIAN (as described by Anglo-Australian and Turkish participants) | Anglo-Australian  
- Cultureless  
- Illegitimate traditions | Australian  
- Reject Anglos as ‘true’ Australians  
- Multiculturalism | Weak intersection with ethnicity  
- Not very religious but Christian |

The most striking contrast between both groups was that, for the Latin sample, religion did not have such a big importance for them, and so the other emblems of Latin culture became iridescent in their importance. The five emblems of Latin ethnicity of food, language, music, festivity and the value of family were important to the Latin participants because these emblems were the focal point of difference between themselves and Australians. Religion was not seen as very important because the Catholic Church’s teachings did not seem relevant to these Latin women’s lives and so Catholicism lacked the power that the Latin emblems had as a source of identification. Furthermore, although being Catholic in Australia was once a contentious marker of difference, this has not been the case in recent times. Being Catholic, then, no longer provided the status of otherness that it once did, but cultural emblems of ethnicity, no matter how outdated, did. The meaningfulness of the Latin emblems was that in the Australian context, they allowed the participants to belong to a wider, pan-ethnic Latin community.

In the case of the Turkish sample, because religion was so central, emblems of Turkish culture were diminished in their significance. Even though Turkish culture can be seen as different to Australian culture in its food, language, and music, the Islamic
lifestyle provided spiritual guidance to the Turkish women’s everyday lives, and so
religion was a more valued source of identification. Belonging to a pan-ethnic Islamic
culture became crucial to their social identities because being Muslim has become
conspicuous within mainstream Australian culture.

Religion can be seen as a significant marker of ethnicity not only in the Australian
social context, but also in comparison to the CoO of both groups of women. Both the
Latin and Turkish women rejected their CoOs’ association with religion as it related to
their ethnicity. The Latin participants rejected formal Catholicism, which they saw as
institutionalised in the Latin American continent; and the Turkish women rejected
secularism, which is state-sanctioned in Turkey. Religion therefore emerged as a
significant avenue for reconstructing ethnicity for both groups, although this
reconstruction was more pronounced with the Turkish group.

Jenkins’ work on social identities (1996) and ethnicity (1997) concentrated on the
way that social identities, including ethnic identities, were constructed through the
dialectic between similarity and difference. The women I interviewed drew
comparisons between those people who they felt were similar to themselves (those
people in their CoO and pan-ethnic boundaries) and those people to whom they felt
different (Anglo-Australians). Having an ‘other’ to bounce their identities off
strengthened the women’s’ sense of ethnicity. Referring to the otherness of Anglo-
Australians could also, in part, be seen as an exercise in resisting assimilation. After all,
if the Australian identity was now centred on multiculturalism and not on Anglo-ness,
then Anglo-Australians were the other, not migrant-Australians.

One of the most significant findings in this study has been the participants’
construction of ethnicity as it relates to pan-ethnicity. The Latin women constructed
their Latin ethnicity in reference to pan-ethnic Latin culture and the Turkish women
constructed their Turkish ethnicity in reference to pan-ethnic Islamic culture. The
participants espoused ideological support for an open-ended Australian ethnicity based
upon the ultimate pan-ethnicity – one grounded within multiculturalism. Within such a
multicultural pan-ethnicity, all cultural communities were united under one Australian
ethnicity, irrespective of culture, religion, or geographical origin – but the participants
were less convinced of their own place within such a multicultural pan-ethnicity. They
might see Australia as multicultural, but this cosmopolitanism had not erased the
dominance of Anglo-Australian culture, no matter how hard they tried to deny the
existence or substantive contribution of Anglo culture.
The way in which both groups of women conceptualised Australian ethnicity along the same lines signals an important assumption regarding the social construction of ethnicity in Australia. This assumption is that otherness underpins ethnicity. Due to its multicultural policies, Australia plays host to numerous cultures and one way to carve out an ethnic identity is by contrasting one’s difference to others. The Latin participants did this through imagining their traditions, personal characteristics and values to be different to Australians. The Turkish participants established their ethnicity by differentiating themselves from Australians through their religious practices, their values and dress codes. I argue that the most direct way to not ‘lose’ one’s CoO ethnicity is by finding a vehicle to anchor difference to the dominant group. Making Anglo-Australians into the other assists in this process of differentiation and in the construction of migrant ethnicities, but it had not resulted in the creation of a truly multicultural pan-ethnic Australian ethnicity as these women described it.

This study is limited in its sample size and methods, and therefore the findings I presented on the participants’ construction of ethnicity may not be representative of Turkish and Latin communities in Australia. Despite the methodological limitations of my study, I make tentative links between the groups interviewed and the Australian social context. I find that both groups of women share a narrative about Australian culture, which is premised on constructing Anglo-Australians as ‘the other’. I found that the participants’ CoO ethnicities became more meaningful when constructed in contrast to the other. Migrant people are ‘othered’ in Australia, but the findings presented in this chapter shows that migrants also turn ‘Anglo-Australians’ into ‘the other’. Moreover, I found that ‘othering’ was an important process in the construction of ethnicity.
CHAPTER FIVE: GENDER AND SEXUALITIES

In this chapter, I examine the women’s social construction of gender and sexuality. My analysis was guided by two general research questions. First, how do the women construct their gender identities and their sexuality? Second, do their ethnic identities influence their perceptions of gender inequality? My analysis is focused on two themes, gender and sexuality. The concept of gender is explored through questions about expectations of men and women in the participants’ families of origin, their CoO communities and in the wider Australian society. It is also explained through the participants’ expectations and experiences of marriage, and issues of gender equality. The concept of sexuality is specifically focused on heterosexuality, and it is explored through questions regarding the discussions the participants had with their parents about appropriate sexual behaviour whilst growing up, and about the participants’ understanding of sexuality in their CoO groups and Australian society. While I did not ask the participants direct questions about their own sexual practices, they were asked about their attitudes towards sexuality. Even so, most of the women often spoke about their own sexual behaviour in direct and indirect ways, and so the women’s attitudes and behaviour will be analysed in connection to their cultural and religious identities.

This chapter follows a similar format to the previous chapter. It is divided into three parts: Latin-Australian gender and sexuality, Turkish-Australian gender and sexuality, and Anglo-Australian gender and sexuality. For the Latin and Turkish groups, my discussion of the gender theme is in two strands: first, I look at the women’s understanding of gender constructions within their CoO group, and second, I examine the women’s negotiation of gender relationships in their families of origin and in marriage. My discussion of the sexuality theme is in two strands; first, I look at the articulation between religion and the participants’ attitudes towards sexuality, and second, I explore the participants’ ideas regarding appropriate avenues of sexual expression, especially in premarital relationships. Lastly, I look at each group’s challenges to the gender and sexuality constructions of their CoO ethnicities. My discussion of Anglo-Australian sexuality explores two themes regarding the negotiation of gender and sexuality: first, I look at the way the participants in my study believed
Anglo-Australians negotiate gender in their families of origin, and second, I look at the participants’ perception of Anglo-Australian marriages and sexuality.

The issue of equality was an essential theme in the women’s discussion, and my analysis reflects this. All of the women raised the issue of equality as a point of discussion without any direction from me. Additionally, my analysis throughout the chapter is focused on the participants’ rejection and adoption of their CoO ideals regarding gender and sexuality and of Anglo-Australian ideals as they understood them. I argue that the participants’ adoption of Anglo-Australian cultural ideals of egalitarianism were pivotal to their constructions of gender and sexuality, and these Australian ideals allowed the women to distance themselves from the gender inequalities which they saw as being institutionalised in their CoO communities.

5:1 LATIN-AUSTRALIAN GENDER AND SEXUALITY

5:1:1 CONSTRUCTING GENDER

In this section, I look at constructions of Latin femininity and masculinity in the women’s families of origin, their CoO groups, and how the participants hoped to manage gender issues in marriage. I show how the participants constructed their femininity in reaction to constructions of masculinity from their CoO communities, which they described as a ‘macho’ masculinity. I discuss how the Australian context influenced the women to challenge the gender constructions within their CoO cultures.

Latin femininity and masculinity

The Latin women consistently observed that femininity and masculinity in their CoO communities were constructed around double standards. The women reported that gender expectations in their CoO communities were fairly uniform and conservative: women were expected to be homemakers who tended to the needs of men. While the women were asked to describe the ‘ideal’ construction of femininity within their
individual CoO communities, there were similarities in their descriptions across the different Latin communities represented by this sample.

*Do you think that there’s a particular ideal femininity in your [CoO] community?*

Yvonne: [Answers quickly] Yes! [Laughs] Angel, little angel, perfect little daughter. I’ve learnt that no one’s perfect, but that’s what they want… They all expect [women] to be perfect and it really irritates me because no one’s perfect! [Laughs]

Moira: The Salvadoran community expect the women to be at home [laughs]. You can take care of the kids… the ideal wife for a Salvadoran would be [thinks] submissive to the husband and [thinks] basically she would have no identity. She would be *The Wife* bringing up *The Children* and working for *Her Husband*…

Luci: I would like to think it’d be strong and independent [laughs] but I don’t think that’s what it’d be. I think you’d have to be a good mother and a hard worker…

Latin masculinity was not described favourably, and the Latin participants had far more impassioned criticisms of this masculinity than of Latin femininity. This was because they saw Latin masculinity as negatively impacting the way in which Latin femininity was constructed. Whereas Latin femininity was constructed around the ‘wife’ role, the Latin participants believed that masculinity within their CoO groups was constructed around a ‘macho’ identity, which was founded on the ‘sexist’ belief that women should do all the housework and ‘serve’ the men of their household. The women described the men in their own communities in similar ways, so their descriptions are henceforth referred to as descriptions of a pan-ethnic Latin masculinity.

*Do you think there are the same expectations on men within the [CoO] community or are men and women treated differently?*

Sayuri: *Hell* yeah! [Laughs] you know, that a woman has her place. South American men are very macho, they have to be *men*, they can’t be in the kitchen
or doing what they would consider womanly-type things around the house. So yeah, there are expectations of who should do what.

Rosa: With the Salvadoran community there’s many expectations about women. The women are expected to do all the housework, you know it’s very macho the way they think… where the guy comes home and his food has to be on the table and the women are the only ones that do the housework… That still exists up until now, although it may vary from family to family. For example when you go to parties the woman always has to organise the food for the husband. The wife is expected to bring the food to the table.

Overall, the women described culture within their CoO communities, and Latin culture in general, as ‘machista’ or ‘macho’.

Violeta: They’re very traditional. I guess some of the stuff, Salvadorans are too strict in some ways. Like, what do you call it? Machismo, you know what I mean? I would hate to have machismo in my kids! That I would not have. No way. That I would change. All the Latin countries have that and I hate it [laughs]… I never had anything against the Hispanic countries but now I do. Now, knowing how the women get treated, it’s like hang on, that’s not the way it should be.

The above comments show that Latin masculinity is defined in opposition to the role of women; a man’s resistance to engaging in ‘womanly-type things’ defined his macho identity. Similarly, the participants in Moraes-Gorecki’s study of Latin migrants in Australia associated Latin masculinity, or ‘machismo’, ‘with notions about women in relation to men’: that is, ‘women are primarily mothers and wives properly engaged in household chores, and men are the breadwinners’ (1988: 33). Additionally, Moraes-Gorecki argued that the ‘macho ethos’ in Latin culture is defined through physical strength, virility, bravery, stubbornness and through a man’s assertion of ‘control of people and things, even of violence and death’ (1988: 27-8). While the women I interviewed did not describe Latin masculinity in terms of the assertion of physical violence, the women said that a Latin man asserts his ‘macho’ masculinity through his power in the family; for example, in seeing himself as the ‘boss of the family’ [Cecilia]
or as the ‘the man kind of ruling the roost and taking control’ [Wendy]. Luci encapsulated the power element of the macho masculinity as follows:

*So in your understanding, what does it mean to be ‘macho’?*

Luci: I guess that feeling of power you have over females. The fact that men feel that they can control, they can do what they like and that they need to have their little wife at home, cooking and cleaning and looking after the children. That’s what I think; that’s a macho guy.

Despite their belief that gender constructions in Latin communities were ‘male-dominated’, the Latin women also contradicted the stereotypes of male and female roles in three ways. First, some women perceived that certain Latin communities were more egalitarian than others. In this case, while some women viewed their own CoO as *machista*, they also saw it as more equal than other Latin cultures. For example, Devi said that there was great gender inequality across Latin American communities. At the same time, she believed that this inequality was ‘more obvious in certain Latin cultures’, and she believed that her own CoO was less unequal:

When you talk about Argentineans and expectations, I think Argentineans are probably some of the most lenient ones. Certainly the Central American ones are the ones that have more gender bias… [the] Mexicans and Salvadorans. You can tell straight away. That’s not to say that that doesn’t happen in some Argentinean households.

Second, other women said that the dominance of men in Latin culture was all for ‘show’, and that in reality, Latin women were strong and assertive, and had more power than might be apparent.

*Thinking about relationships between men and women in the Argentinean culture or South Americans in general, what would they be like?*

Pandora: I think South American women are very outspoken and opinionated and I love that. I’m proud of that. Men can be very wanting to be the man about the house type thing, but it tends to be more of an image that they want to be like that. At the house, of most people I know anyway, you’ll notice that most of the males
[are] the breadwinner…  [But] the woman is the one that actually lleva la casa adelante [carries the household forward]… The South Americans love the image of being the man of the house but [laughs] I reckon most of the women rule the house, from what I see…  [The men] just like the idea of having power. Whether they do or not is a different story.

Third, some women said that their mothers defied gender stereotypes because they ‘wore the pants’ in their family.

Now thinking about the Argentineans that you’ve grown up here with, how would you describe the relationships between men and women in the community? Are men and women treated equally?

Gracie: Nah, it’s not equal. I reckon the majority of the time, it’s the man of the house, but not really in my family. My mum wears the pants, you know? So [pause] I don’t reckon they’re equal, some have more power than others. Sometimes it can be a woman over a man, sometimes a man over a woman.

These descriptions of an assertive Latin femininity complement the Latin persona as described in the previous chapter, in respect to being loud and ‘outspoken’ rather than subservient to the macho masculinity of Latin men. Yet a closer exploration of the women’s experience of gender relations within their families of origin suggests that traditional constructions of femininity and masculinity prevail, despite the above examples of some Latin women’s assertiveness within the home.

**Negotiating gender relationships**

Seventeen of the 25 Latin participants lived with their parents at the time of the interviews (68%). The women who lived with their parents were aged 17 to 27 years, with a median age of 21. These women were mostly full-time students who also worked casual or part-time (10 women), and four women were full-time workers (two of these women were also full-time postgraduate students). The eight women who did not live in their parental home were aged 24 to 28 years and were all in full-time paid work. Seven of these women lived with their partners (one was engaged and the rest
married), and one woman lived alone. This section focuses on the Latin women’s negotiation of gender in their families of origin, especially regarding their social life and housework, and it also discusses the women’s future expectations and actual experiences of negotiating gender in marriage.

**Families of origin**

Most of the Latin women expressed frustration about their mothers’ domestic labour. Twenty-one of the 25 women’s mothers had worked in paid work most of their lives; but despite both their parents’ employment, the women’s families of origin had maintained a gendered division of domestic labour between parents and siblings. The ‘double burden’ experienced by the participants’ mothers is not exclusive to Latin culture, but the women did not see this inequality as universal. Australian women continue to do more housework than men, irrespective of the domestic technology at their disposal and even when they earn more than men (Bittman, Rice and Wajcman, 2003). The participants believed that the dual labour burden experienced by their mothers was a ‘cultural thing’ and that it was a heavier burden in comparison to that borne by other women, especially Anglo-Australian women.

*When it comes to domestic work, how do they [your parents] divide that?*

Luci: My mum does everything [laughs]. That’s definitely a cultural thing because she’s told me she feels guilty if she doesn’t cook and there’s nothing to eat because she should make sure that there’s something to eat. She expects me to help but not my brother. Again, she says that’s the way she’s been brought up – the girls help with the household, but I don’t buy that [laughs]. The other thing is that she likes things to be done her way, so she’d rather do it herself. So it’s all three things [laughs].

Poppy’s parents had been separated for years, and she believed this separation had been largely due to their domestic inequalities. Her comments are an extreme example of the stories the women told about inequalities in their parents’ marriages:
My mum just couldn’t cope. Maybe in Chile it’s okay because their women don’t work; but even there, women do work, so I don’t know. But here, my mum was working the same hours as my dad and then coming home and cooking, which my dad didn’t do, and taking care of the children, which my dad didn’t do, and cleaning, which my dad didn’t do. Imagine – her whole life was just household and work, household and work, and then to have someone there with you at every step and not doing anything, just watching you do everything, it would just drive you insane…

Besides their experiences of gender inequalities in their parents’ marriages, 19 of the 25 women had at least one brother, and these women identified two general areas of gender inequality in relation to their brothers: social life and housework. The women had a strong sense of injustice about the gender inequalities between themselves and their brothers and they spoke emotively about this. When I asked the women if their parents had the same expectations about their daughters and sons in terms of housework and social activities, they made statements like ‘No way! No way!’ , ‘Hell no!’, and ‘I feel so strongly about it!’.

Regarding their social life, the women discussed how their social activities with their friends, such as sleepovers with their girlfriends and going out, and also dating boys, had been heavily restricted in their early teenage years, whilst their brothers had not experienced such parental obstacles. A couple of the women had given up negotiating with their parents about going out when they were teenagers and had grown to accept their parents’ restrictions upon their social activities. Giving up, however, was not the norm. On the contrary, the Latin participants argued with their parents until they were allowed out as much as they wanted. They spoke of ‘pushing’ or ‘stretching’ their parents’ rules so that they were given more personal freedom in their social lives. On this point, most women stressed that they had fought their parents on the grounds that they were not in their CoO anymore, and they were living in Australia:

Ingrid: I’m an only child, so they’re very strict on me. But you know sometimes you just stretch the limits and they start realising that not everything is how it used to be and we’re not living in El Salvador, we’re living in a different country and so I think that’s helped a little as well. It’s kind of: I teach you, you teach me as well [laughs].
Dating had caused the women many problems with their parents. A minority of the sample had been allowed to date from a young age. Aylin said her parents were, really easy-going and let me make my own decisions. They went, ‘Fine; you want a boyfriend? Have a boyfriend. Just use protection’.

Most of the other women's parents had been ‘really strict’ on them regarding boyfriends, especially in comparison to Anglo-Australian parents:

Jade: We weren’t allowed to go out or supposedly have boyfriends until you’re 18. Here, [at] 16 you’re allowed to drive already. So it’s more strict, the way that we were brought up anyway.

While the Latin women described having to ‘fight’ their parents for more personal freedom, they noted that their brothers had been allowed to come and go as they pleased from an early age.

Yvonne: It really bothers me how he’s younger, he’s allowed to go out at 12 o’clock in the afternoon and come home at 1 o’clock in the morning… I’d get shot! [Laughs] There’s no way they’d allow that for me. And I ask them, ‘Why is that? How come he’s a boy, he’s younger and he’s allowed to stay late?’ And my parents go [speaks in an authoritarian tone], ‘Coz he’s a boy. He can defend himself…’. And they go, ‘Who knows, you might get raped and stuff. Who would rape a guy?’ Things like that. It really bothers me [laughs]. It really does. And that’s for everyone too, all the Salvadorans, the guys are more independent and free [laughs].

Their brothers had not only been allowed to date, they had been allowed to flaunt their relationships by having their girlfriends sleepover in the parental home.

Sayuri: I remember my brother bringing home girls in the room with the door closed. For the guy, it’s okay to have the girlfriend in the room, whatever, but for the girl it’s totally different. It’s almost like, oh how disrespectful. It’s a lot more
easier for a guy to do things, because it doesn’t look as good for a girl. Yeah. How stupid, huh?

The second way in which the women were treated unequally was through expectations about housework. Many women complained that their brothers had grown up expected to be waited on. Rosa said, ‘My brothers for example never lifted their food off the table! My brothers always expected everything would be done for them’. Neruda said her parents treated her brothers ‘like they’re disabled – because they’re guys, they can’t do anything’. Some women specifically described having to cook, clean and even iron for their brothers when they were younger.

Jade: I mean – they [brothers] were men. That’s the way our tradition sees it, the men are allowed to do everything. The women have to stay home and cook. For a while that’s how I was with my brothers, because I was the oldest girl there I had to cook, I had to clean, I had to iron, I had to do everything. That’s why I got sick of it, because they didn’t even get up to put their plate in the sink. They’d just get up and walk off. Whenever they wanted to go out, they’d drop their clothes all around me and I had to iron them and that’s the way [it was]. Nowadays, that’s changed – they’ve got their wives to do that.

The biggest obstacle to gender equality in the women’s families of origin was the father: if they wanted things to change, they needed to change their fathers’ macho expectations. Once again, the women would remind their fathers that they were no longer in Latin America and that their macho behaviour would not be tolerated without a fight. For example, Ofelia felt her father ‘just needed someone to tell him’ to help out and Ofelia often took this role on, even though this resulted in conflict. She said: ‘Sometimes I tell him and we have fights about it’. Devi said: ‘If my dad goes, “Give me the salt”, I go, “What? Get up before I break your legs” [laughs]’.

The Latin participants had invested a lot of energy in challenging macho expectations within their families of origin, and in so doing, they rejected the Latin femininity that their mothers had embodied when they first arrived in Australia. Over the years, conflict with their parents had led to changes with which most women were happy. Neruda nicely summed up the attitude of the group. When I asked her if she ever tried to challenge her parents’ attitudes about gender she answered confidently:
‘Oh, definitely! That’s what I was born to do’. When they envisioned the future, they did not want to be ‘the wife’ waiting on a macho man, and instead they wanted equality in their marriages. At the same time, they mostly planned to marry Latin men. The next section explores how the women thought they would achieve gender equality, given their aversion to the dominant construction of Latin masculinity.

**Marriage**

Only three women said they were not keen on getting married, but the other 22 women were either already married or hoping to marry in the future. Almost everyone in this sample had dated men of different ethnic backgrounds, especially Southern Europeans, and they had also dated men from their CoO communities and Latin men outside of their CoO group. Most women said that nationality did not matter when it came to choosing a marriage partner but they also said things that contradicted this. Almost everyone told me they would never marry a Muslim man, ‘because they treat women like shit’ [Matijana] and because they believed a Muslim man would want them to convert to Islam:

Gracie: You’d have to convert. And I don’t want to wear that thing [gestures to her head]. I think that they [Muslim women] don’t really have any identity at all really. They go from being under their father’s care to being given to their husbands. They don’t really have a say in their life, I don’t reckon. Well, they do, but not really.

The women also said that, while their parents had never told them who they could or could not marry, their fathers had let them know that they would be unhappy with them marrying a Muslim ‘because they are so different to us, and something about how they mistreat their wives’ [Moira].

In general the women *ideally* preferred a Latin-background spouse in the interests of cultural compatibility. That is, the women wanted to be able to share their culture with their spouse, especially the language and music; they wanted their spouse to be able to communicate easily with their families and share their family values; and also, they wanted to pass on their Latin cultural identity to their children. For these ends,
Latin men made ideal spouses. For example, Sayuri who was Argentinean and engaged to a Peruvian man, said:

To me nasho wasn’t important, but I thought it’d be nice [to marry a Latin] because I’d be able to, because I speak Spanish – you lose that with your kids. I mean you can sort of teach them but it’s hard if one parent is Spanish-speaking and the other one isn’t. I think in this society you would end up speaking English. So I felt that it would be nice. Like I wasn’t out there looking for a Spanish-speaking guy, but it just worked out like that.

All of the nine single women said they would prefer to marry a Latin man, and of the sixteen women who were in a relationship (marital or long-term), eleven had partners of Latin-background, but only three of these women had partners of the same CoO ethnicity. While some women perceived their own CoO as more egalitarian than other Latin cultures, these same women, along with the other Latin women in my sample, had a negative perception of masculinity within their own CoO communities. In an interesting contradiction, all the women believed that men from their own CoOs embodied the macho Latin identity much more than other Latin men. For example, Ingrid was born in El Salvador and was currently in a long-term relationship with a man of Italian background. She said she would never marry a Salvadoran man because she sees them as ‘macho-type guys’, but she might consider marrying a non-Salvadoran Latin man who believed in equality:

I’m going to sound really up myself but I never really pictured myself to be with someone who was Salvadoran. Maybe Spanish, maybe from another country, but not Salvadoran… most of them were brought up to be very macho-type guys. I don’t really like that. I want a guy who’s going to be equal, who’s going to be my partner, and we’re going to work both together. He’s not going to be more than me or if I’m working more, earning more, he’s not going to get upset. I want somebody who’s mature enough to see that we’re both equal.

Most women expected their marriages to be different to their parents’ marriage. The women who wanted their marriage to be the same as their parents said this because they believed their mothers ‘wore the pants’ in their family, and so they expected to be
in control rather than to be ordered around by their husband. The rest of the women stressed that they wanted their marriages to be based on friendship, communication and equality, elements that their parents’ marriages had largely lacked. Essentially, their expectations of marriage revolved around notions of the ‘pure relationship’. Giddens (1992) argued that this concept describes how people nowadays base their romantic relationships on ideals of friendship: equality, intimacy, self-disclosure, trust and emotional communication. This ideal is best put by Aylin, who said: ‘I’d probably look for… someone that would be my best friend as well’. Josfina said:

I like equality – is that what you’d call it? …Basically respect and equality, we both have to be equal. I don’t want to be the one que tiene que mandarlo [who bosses him around] and I don’t want him to tell me what to do. I just want us both to be equal and respecting one another.

The notion of equality was a strong theme in the participants’ discussion of marriage. An equal division of domestic labour was the most profound change that the participants expected of their relationships when they left their families of origin. The single women and the women in non-marital relationships wanted things to be equal between their spouse and themselves in the future. For example, Rosa said of domestic labour: ‘I think it should be both ways. Both husband and wife should be helping each other out’. Ofelia said she wanted: ‘Love, equality as well, I don’t want to do everything for them’. The married women usually said that their relationships were already equal and that they believed this equality had been achieved because their partners did not adhere to the macho masculinity of other Latin men:

Neruda: Here and overseas men are very, very macho and I could never see myself dating anyone like that. My husband came here when he was four and he’s 31 now. He doesn’t have any Chilean friends or anything like that so he’s very, very integrated into this society… He’s not like that. Equal rights – we both work, we both come home and clean the house, we both do everything. We’re married but we’ve both got individual choice even though we’re married… There’s no hierarchy like there is in other households. In other houses it’s always the man that gets the last word. You can relate to that? [Laughs] That’s a lot of responsibility to put on one man.
It was rare for the Latin women to report a sense of inequality in their expectations of future relationships and of their current practices regarding their relationships, a finding which is consistent with the literature on domestic labour (Bittman and Lovejoy, 1993). Only one of the 25 Latin women expressed an expectation of a gendered division of domestic labour when she got married. Yvonne wanted ‘everything [to be] shared and equal’ in her marriage, but at the same time she did not mind taking on the domestic work alone:

Coming from my parents’ background, yeah, it’s custom for the girl to cook and clean. Especially if he comes home, you have the food on the table. Some Australians think, ‘Oh my God! How can she do that?’, but that’s the way I was brought up, you know. The woman serves the man and cleans up. They can, the men do clean up, but it’s more known for the woman to do that.

You wouldn’t mind it?

Nah.

Two women who had previously lived with partners but were now separated from them spoke about falling into the gender patterns they had witnessed between their parents, despite their values about gender equality. Xiomara said, ‘It’s scary to get into that pattern. And now, here’s me saying, “I’m never going through that again!”’. Three of the seven women who were currently living with their partners reported some difficulties in establishing an equal distribution of housework when they first started to live with their partners. Sayuri, Cecilia and Estella all had partners of Latin background who were not ‘macho’, but this did not mean that an equal distribution of housework was automatic. They spoke of feeling more responsible for domestic labour than their partners, and of assuming responsibility for changing their partners’ behaviour towards housework. Sayuri said:

It’s just a cycle. And I think that’s what happened with my parents. I didn’t want that. And my mum was actually the one who said it to me [laughs] she goes to me, it’s funny in English if I translate it but, ‘Shape him while he’s still fresh in the mould’, or something like that [laughs]. Coz once he’s there, see ya later [laughs]. My mum recognises the fact that, she sometimes says to me, ‘Oh I know
it’s my fault’ coz he’s gotten used to it. How can she turn around to him after so many years and go ‘No! You start doing this!’? My dad will have a heart attack; the thought of him having to fold socks, I find that funny [laughs].

5:1:2 CONSTRUCTING SEXUALITY

In this section, I look at constructions of Latin sexuality from the women’s perspective. This sexuality was constructed through a rejection of Catholic and Latin cultural ideals regarding virginity, and by imagining their Latin sexuality to be different to Anglo-Australian sexuality.

Religion and sexuality

The Latin women’s religious identities did not seem to influence their attitudes towards sexuality or their practices in their premarital relationships. Devi, who had a Catholic identity, was the only Latin woman who shared the Catholic stance on issues such as abortion and premarital sex, but even then she described her views as ‘very liberal compared to the teachings of the Church’. The other women were against the conservative views of the Catholic Church. Their views were similar irrespective of their religious identity. They disagreed with the celibacy of priests, and they supported abortion, contraception, homosexual relationships and premarital sex.

Ingrid: I think it’s in every individual to make their own decision, that’s why God gave us free will, so to speak. Whoever wants to make the decision to have an abortion or taking contraception, it’s in their right to do so… So I don’t agree with those things about the Church. [Catholic]

In keeping with the previous findings presented on the Latin women and religion, the women saw the Catholic views on sexuality as out of touch with reality. The Latin women saw the anti-premarital sex and anti-contraception stance of the Catholic Church as ‘stupid’ and ‘ridiculous’, especially given that they saw these activities as widespread. Wendy encapsulated the views of the groups when she said: ‘I think that
there probably comes a time when holding onto those things is going to seem a bit silly because who’s going to do them anyway?’ [Catholic]. Pandora said of premarital sex: ‘Times have changed. Saying that it’s a complete sin, I think is wrong. Marriage isn’t seen as it was before’ [Spiritual]. The consensus of this sample of Latin women was that when it came to matters of sexuality, individuals should be able to make their own decisions without the Church’s condemnation.

Neruda: I think that we all have choice. Every individual makes their own reality and I think that the judgements are probably not a good thing... At the end of the day, every single individual is empowered to make that choice, no matter what anyone says... [Spiritual-Catholic]

Sexual Expression

The Latin women acknowledged that Latin conventions about marriage demanded that women stay virgins until they married, but they also saw that the same virtue was not required of men. The participants were dismissive of Latin values about premarital sex because they saw these as based on gendered double standards.

While you were growing up, thinking of the Uruguayan people you grew up with and your family, are there many differences between men and women?

Ofelia: [Thinks] Well the boys can have girlfriends at any age; the girls have to wait, yada, yada. The men, I think in general not just Uruguayan, they can sleep around with anyone, get girls pregnant – doesn’t matter. But when the girls get pregnant yada, yada, everyone starts talking. Why doesn’t that happen to men?

Most women felt that their parents had communicated their expectation that they stay a virgin in unambiguous terms:
Did they ever give you the impression that you had to wait until you were married before you should have sex?

Estella: Oh, absolutely! [Laughs] Yep, no doubt about that one! Message loud and clear! [Laughs]

Yvonne: … [T]hey’ve specifically said that [laughs]. The guy will respect you more if you wait till you’re married and they’ll trust me. You know, ‘Don’t disappoint us’.

Yvonne’s parents had never said such a thing to her brothers, and like the other women I interviewed, she was unhappy about this double standard:

Yvonne: That’s what really gets me angry because they put it all on the girls. I remember once my mum saying that the girls have something to show that they’re a virgin or not and the guys don’t, there’s no sign on them. Guys can tell if the girl’s been sleeping around and they’ve got no sign… It bothers me a lot because, you know, it’s not fair…

Most women gave me the impression that keeping their virginity until marriage was not important to them personally. They did this directly, by telling me anecdotes of sleepovers with their boyfriends; or they did this indirectly, by dismissing the church’s stance on premarital sex and saying that everyone breaks this rule, or by saying that they disagreed with double standards about premarital sex. For example, Moira said:

A woman shouldn’t be criticised just because she’s slept with 20 guys before she got married. It’s just like a guy sleeping with a girl 20 years before he got married, what’s the difference, really? I think that if society just accepted that it’d be much easier for everyone.

Although the Latin women understood that Latin culture enforces gendered double standards regarding sexual behaviour, they proudly described Latin culture as ‘sexy’. In the previous chapter, I showed that the participants saw passion as central to the Latin persona, but passion also refers to the sensuality of Latin people:
Claudia: The way we dance is very sensual, the way we move, the way the rhythm comes across, they’re very attractive with the typical way we have our bodies… there is something sexy in it, but I think it’s the music that makes it sexy.

Some women described Latin culture as ‘warm’ and ‘affectionate’ and they stressed that they expected this from their relationships. These women expected their marriages to be filled with passion and affection – not an unusual expectation – but it was striking that they placed such great emphasis on needing this to be a public and not just a private interaction.

Lorelei: What I notice is the big difference, is the interaction, how people interact. I just think that couples for example – I’m finding it hard to get used to because I’ve got a boyfriend here now [who’s Anglo-Australian]. I’m used to the way males are over there and they’re a lot more cuddly and touchy. They hold you all day and kiss you in public everywhere. And over here it’s a lot more colder… Over there people are just a lot more sexual. They’re just basically sexual, which here they’re not.

Some of the Latin women said that other non-Latin people in Australia saw Latin people as ‘sexy’. Aylin was one woman who did not enjoy this characterisation. She did not perceive her sexuality as being different to anyone else’s sexuality in Australia:

Although I’m proud of being Chilean, I’m proud of being Latin American, I hate the fact that men see it as a sexual thing… I just think it’s the same as any other sexuality. It’s not any different. I know that there’s this view that Latin women are beautiful and sexy and gorgeous and whatever but we’re more than that. We’re not just a pretty face; we’ve actually got a brain as well. We shouldn’t be judged on how good-looking we are.

Most other women were flattered by the ‘sexy’ characterisation of Latin people:

Claudia: Like when I get asked where I’m from, as soon as I mention that I’m Latin or whatever, straight away people go [breathlessly], ‘Oh you hot-blooded
people!’ They think of the sexuality part. I don’t know where they get that from? [Laughs].

Does that bother you?

Claudia: No it doesn’t bother me, I just laugh about it. [Laughing] I mean if they think we’re sexy then it’s better for us! Better for the culture!

The notion of the attractiveness of Latin sensuality extended to the women’s preference in men. The women’s preference towards marrying a Latin man has already been outlined in reference to cultural compatibility, but another reason was sexual attraction. Simply put, the women found Latin guys ‘more sexy’ than men of other nationalities. Lorelei, who was currently in a relationship with an Anglo-Australian man, said she ideally preferred to date Latin-background men.

I would prefer not Uruguayan necessarily, but Latin American. Just because of the fact that I think they’re sexier. *A lot more sexier.* I think actually all men and women from over there are a lot more sexier. I think people over there have a lot more sex appeal, which over here they do not... it’s this whole essence, it just comes out of you; this attractiveness that I think is all about being Latin. This whole sex appeal, this way of walking into a room, presenting yourself and everything. Over here, a girl can look absolutely fabulous but she doesn’t turn one head because she hasn’t got that *mojo* [charismatic aura], you know what I mean? Over there everyone has it. I think men here, as I say, they don’t have that sex appeal going, you know?

Poppy, who was born in Chile, saw negative qualities in Chilean men, but still found them highly attractive, an attraction that she did not feel towards Anglo-Australians:

*You keep making jokes about, ‘He has to be Chilean’ and then laughing about it, but ideally, would you prefer a Chilean guy?*

Hmmm [thinks] I don’t know, they’re all a bit – I don’t know if this is with all Chileans, but I find Chilean guys more good-looking. So it’s probably easier for me to end up with a Chilean because I feel attracted to them… I don’t think it has to be Chilean. He could be [from] any South American country or any Central
American country. Or he could just *really* be into Latin American culture – but not Australian, because I’m not attracted to them [laughs]. It could be like, I don’t know, Turkish, and speak Spanish because he really liked it and that would be fine by me.

This sample of Latin women were less interested in dating Anglo-Australian men, despite having dated men of other non-Latin ethnicities. Five of the 25 women had previously dated Anglo-Australian men, and a further two women were currently in long-term relationships with Anglo-Australians. The women who preferred not to marry an Anglo-Australian man usually said that the cultural differences would be too profound. Ofelia, who currently has a Philippino-background boyfriend, said she would not marry an Anglo-Australian man. She said: ‘I think it’s being too different; I like culture, you know, I like something in them’. So, in keeping with the findings presented in the previous chapter, Anglo-Australians were seen to be ‘too different’ in their cultural practices to Latin Americans, but they also lacked culture and this made them unattractive marriage candidates.

Alternatively, the Latin women explained their lack of sexual attraction towards Anglo-Australian men in terms of personal ‘taste’: they would say simply that Latin features were very attractive to them. Two women – Poppy and Devi – were more direct about their lack of attraction to Anglo-Australian men, and they explicitly spoke about race: they were not attracted to ‘whiteness’. Both women described facing racism in the past from Anglo-Australians, but they denied that their lack of interest in Anglo-Australian men was a reaction to Anglo-Australian racism. Devi said:

When it comes to taste in men, I could never go out with an Anglo, like blonde-haired, white. Personally, me, I’m not attracted to that, which is bizarre, because I find Asian men – who are very white, light-skinned – very attractive, so [stops]. But my preference in men are: dark skin, dark hair, dark eyes, because that’s what I like, the people that I find attractive. So you can be Italian with brown hair, brown eyes, brown skin, which are my favourite. When I think of a race, the people that I really like are Chileans, so that’s my little, I don’t know what you’d call it [pause] fetish [laughs]. No, no, definitely, Latin American men, it’s usually because of that connection with culture. A lot of Latin men that I’ve met also have that faith in the spiritual aspect of it, the family aspect of it, and the cultural
aspect of it, and they understand, so it’s much easier to just bond, rather than with a person who’s just so completely different to who you are.

Xiomara was the only woman who said that her tastes leaned specifically towards Anglo-Australians, but she said this had broadened recently:

If I stay in Australia then I think I’ll probably end up with an Anglo-Australian man. It just depends. I can’t foresee it. My tastes are [laughs] it used to be that I used to really like the Anglo-Saxon look, but nowadays I think, ‘That guy’s cute. He’s got dark skin’. I actually don’t mind anything at the moment! [Laughs] As long as he’s nice…

5:1:3 SUMMARY: RECONSTRUCTING GENDER AND SEXUALITY

Given that equality was such a strong theme, where did the women’s ideas about it come from? This section reports on the origins of the participants’ ideals on equality, by way of rounding off the themes of gender and sexuality.

While four women had an identity of being feminists, the Latin women generally cited two sources for their challenge to gender roles: their families of origin and Australian culture. First, the Latin participants learned their ideals about equality in reaction against their experiences in their families of origin. Some women had witnessed their mother’s suffering and they wanted things to be different for themselves:

When you look at your parents’ marriage and your own marriage, are there a lot of differences in the way that you approach partnership? Do you consciously try to be the same or be different from the way you saw your parents?

Moira: [Thinks] I guess in a way I consciously decided I didn’t want my marriage to be like theirs coz I didn’t like some of the things that my dad does, because it’s just the way it is over there. I would say I wanted a few things to be different.

Other women’s sense of injustice over their parents’ treatment of their brothers and themselves drove them to seek equality in their relationships:
Rosa: [Parents] sort of hold the old ‘The wife has to be doing everything’. I just see it as unfair. It’s just a personal view that I have. Also because I saw it in my own family, I used to get so angry with my brothers just leaving their plates there, not even taking it to the sink…

Secondly, the Latin participants credited the biggest influence on their ideals of equality to the Australian social context. As Yvonne said, her ideas about equality came from ‘the life I live here’. The women had learned about equality through observing their friends or through their education at school and brought those ideas home and challenged their parents.

Where do you get your inspiration for that, to break away from tradition?

Neruda: I’ve always known. I’ve always known. Living in Australia’s definitely an eye-opener for everyone. At school, they teach you about equal rights and stuff like that. I’d go home and say to my dad: ‘At school they said blah, blah’. And he’d be like ‘Well, this is my house and that’s the way it is here’. [Sarcastically] ‘Right’. So it was a bit confusing for a couple of years there.

Ofelia jokingly referred to her ideals about challenging gender inequality as ‘the gift’, and this was a telling comment. The women believed that, in Latin America, the opportunity to challenge norms about gender might not have presented itself in the way it did in Australia. Wendy said that inequality is ‘something that I wouldn’t have liked over there but maybe I would’ve been a little more accepting’.

In the previous study (Zevallos, 2000), the Latin participants identified Australian cultural ideals about egalitarianism as an important tool in challenging familial and communal codes of gender (see also Zevallos, 2003a). They referred to their challenge of Latin gender roles as their ‘Australian side’. The women in the present study spoke along similar lines. For example, Cecilia came to Australia aged two, but had been back to Uruguay twice and she had since concluded that her ideals about gender were more aligned with Australian ideals. She said: ‘I guess I identify with the Australian, your rights and everything like that as a woman here than when I was in Uruguay’. Similarly, Xiomara says that ‘embracing the Australian culture’ was instrumental in challenging Latin gender roles:
I suppose the Anglo-Saxon side of things, it’d be a community household. I really enjoyed that. I thought that’s the way it should be. Why should the wife be the one that’s always doing all the cleaning and stuff like that? I suppose also... by embracing the Australian culture and saying, ‘I’m not going to be like my mum, having to cook and clean and do everything’.

The Latin participants in my study had chosen to adopt Australian views about gender equality and used these egalitarian ideals to challenge their family and community views and to make changes within their own lives. The women portrayed themselves as defying cultural expectations of gender in their families of origin and were confident that they would be able to enforce gender equality within their marriages. They trusted that choosing a partner for their lack of ‘macho’ masculinity would eliminate the risk of experiencing of marital inequality. This was not always the case, and three partnered women in the sample could certainly attest that couples who share gender ideals of equality did not always enforce this ideal through their behaviour. The focus of my study however, was not on behaviour but on *attitudes*, and so the women’s discussion of their gender ideals in comparison to their parents’ and communities’ ideals demonstrated a shift in ideology. The participants attributed this shift to the Australian context, but ideals of equality are also central to global changes to the institution of family (Giddens, 1999). The fact that the Latin women took equality within marriage to be an Australian ideal is interesting given their rejection of Australian cultural traditions.

5:2: TURKISH-AUSTRALIAN GENDER AND SEXUALITY

5:2:1 CONSTRUCTING GENDER

In this section, I report first on the Turkish women’s constructions of Turkish femininity and masculinity, and second, I report on the women’s negotiation of gender. Lastly, I investigate influences bearing on the Turkish women’s challenge to their culture’s
expectations about gender and sexuality. The women’s constructions of gender and sexuality were shaped by their Islamic ideals.

**Turkish femininity and masculinity**

The Turkish participants often referred to ‘the typical Turkish girl’, thereby identifying an accepted code of gendered behaviour for women within their Turkish communities. According to the women I interviewed, the ‘typical’ gender identity for Turkish women described a female who was ‘good’, obedient, domestically inclined, did not date men and did not go out, was an attentive hostess, and not highly educated because she married and had children young, at around the age of 18.

*Say you’re talking to someone and they don’t know anything about Turkish culture or Turkish values. How would you describe Turkish culture?*

Melodi: How would I describe Turkish culture? [Thinks] I’d probably say, [laughs] ‘It sucks’ to them, because you can’t do this, you can’t do that. There is no really Turkish culture. There is – but it’s based around how do I put it? [Thinks] Listening to your parents, not having a boyfriend, staying at home, and being a good girl. That’s probably what the Turkish culture is based around.

Akasma: Turkish culture… typical, *typical Turkish* – all right. I’ll explain a typical Turkish girl. You study, whatever, until a certain age. You meet someone, or really, they find you someone, ‘coz I’m talking typical wog Turkish [laughs]. Yeah, you meet someone, they come and ask for your hand in marriage, you get married and that’s it. There’s nothing to it. I don’t like it. It’s just like you grow up and *bang* you have to get married, coz you’re a certain age.

The fact that this ideal Turkish femininity was epitomised by the ‘good Turkish girl’ and not by the ‘good Turkish woman’ implies that these two concepts, of goodness and girlhood, emphasised the conformity expected from Turkish women.

While Turkish femininity was marked by an expectation of quiet obedience, the participants described Turkish masculinity as brash, irresponsible, chauvinistic and
defiant. Unlike the typical Turkish girl, the ‘typical Turkish guy’ did not do as his parents asked, he expected to be waited on by women, and he was promiscuous. The women I interviewed had a highly negative attitude towards Turkish masculinity.

So what’s a typical Turkish guy?

Melodi: Turkish guy? Turkish guy – ooh [laughing] where do I start? I don’t like Turkish guys! Turkish guys, they’re narrow-minded. They think that it’s alright for Turkish guys to go around and stuff around with other chicks but when it comes to the one they want to marry, she has to remain a virgin kind of thing. They’re kinda hypocritical in that respect. And they think that Turkish girls shouldn’t go out, they should stay home with their mums and clean.

Güldeste: In the Turkish culture, I don’t know, all the guys are still babies, still young boys. A lot of them still work but they’re not brought up to be responsible and independent. Unfortunately when they do get married they do find married life hard because there’s so much responsibility.

The women had a sense that this Turkish masculinity was pervasive; it was the rule with very few exceptions. Pertev said: ‘I [have] met a few more Turkish men and realised that there’s not one in ten, not one in a hundred, but one in a thousand that’s different [laughs]’. While there was a striking similarity in the Turkish women’s description of Turkish masculinity and the Latin women’s descriptions of the Latin macho masculinity, the Turkish women did not use the word ‘macho’ to describe this gender identity. Like the Latin women, the Turkish women believed that within Turkish culture, ‘the male is more dominant’ [Manolya]. They believed that Turkish culture allowed men the right to do as they pleased, while ‘women belong in the kitchen’ [Ferah]. The women described Turkish culture as male-centred:

Kumru: In the Turkish community I think women are treated – doesn’t matter if you’re wearing the hijab or whatever – you’re treated by some males as second class; not valued for you opinion, not valued as a person, and I think we should change that. You know, get that misconception cleared up. There’s no such thing as this gender is better than this gender… equality [is important], you know?
Gender equality was important to the Turkish participants, and their discussion of gender relationships reflected this.

**Negotiating gender relationships**

Twenty of the 25 Turkish women lived with their parents (80%). The women who lived with their parents were aged 18 to 24 years, with a median age of 20. Fifteen of these women were all full-time students who were not employed in paid labour, one woman worked full-time and four women worked part-time. The five women who did not live in their parental home were aged 24 to 26 years and were all married and in full-time paid work, except for one woman who was unemployed. In this section I look into the Turkish women’s negotiation of gender relationships in their families of origin, including going out, challenging parental authority, and inequality in relation to their brothers. Next, I look into the women’s future expectations or actual experiences of marriage. Islamic ideals about gender were a critical influence in their negotiation of and challenge to Turkish gender relations.

**Families of origin**

Unlike the Latin women who spoke of reacting against their parents’ marital inequalities, the Turkish sample did not raise marital inequality as an issue in their parents’ marriages. Instead, almost everyone said that they wanted their marriages to be similar to their parents. For example Fazilet said: ‘To be honest I would want [a marriage] exactly the same as my parents. I don’t know, coz my parents’ one seems perfect’. Most women said that their fathers were not the typical Turkish men whose masculinity was problematic to their family’s interaction. At the same time, they described having to ‘serve’ their fathers food and drinks or give up their seats for them at home, but they did not see this as problematic like the Latin women, because serving their fathers was their way of showing respect for their elders.

The Turkish women were more concerned with the gender inequalities that affected them personally, especially in relation to their brothers. Going out with friends
and attending school camps or sleepovers at girlfriends’ houses were problematic activities for the Turkish women, especially when they were younger. Up until their teenage years, being allowed to go out was a source of conflict between the women and their parents. Their parents worried about their safety and the communal gossip that surrounds young Turkish women who were seen to be too independent from their families, although this was not a concern for their sons.

Solmaz: I think sometimes that you probably have to have a dick [laughs]. Why? Because we’re so strict! On Friday night I went to have a pizza with the girls. I got home at 11. We didn’t even get out of the car... [but] my mum was telling me off, ‘You’re out on a Friday night! Do you know how dangerous it is? You shouldn’t be going out! It’s not good for a Turkish girl. What if someone sees you on the street? What are they going to say? They’re going to call you a slut! This, this, that’. Yet the guys go out and they don’t come home for three days on the weekend and nothing. They don’t have to account for anything.

Twenty of the 25 Turkish participants still lived at home with their parents. All these women still had a curfew to follow, despite the fact that they were aged between 18 to 24 years. On average their curfews finished around midnight, and they often complained about their curfews. Most of the women who lived in their parental home spoke of ‘pushing’ the boundaries of their curfews, with limited success.

Rana: I have to be home at a reasonable time, when they’re still awake... With my mum and dad, that curfew man, if it was up to them it’d be five o’clock, but I can sometimes push it. If I’m with my friends and they have a car, they’re fine. But if I’m just going out and it was just public transport – mate! They wouldn’t even let me go out. So yeah I do have a curfew.

The women who were still living with their parents described how, since entering adulthood, they rarely challenged their parents’ authority or their rules, and that conflict with their parents was largely avoided. Unlike their early high school years, the activities the women wanted to participate in were now less focused on parties, as they had been in secondary school. Instead, they went to the movies, cafés, or occasionally to women-only discos organised by Muslim groups. Mostly, these activities did not
push the boundaries of their curfews, and so their participation in such activities had lessened conflict with their parents, and decreased the women’s sense of injustice about going out.

*Do you feel like your parents let you go out as much as you want to?*

Fazilet: Most of the time. I don’t go clubbing anyway, so when I go out, say I want to go to a friend’s place – the usual stuff, like I want go with my friends to the snow this year, I’m allowed to go. But sometimes, say like there’s a party or something, like at a Turkish restaurant or whatever, my parents are a bit unsure. They don’t say, ‘Look, I don’t care, you’re not allowed to go’. They go, ‘Look, we’re not comfortable with you going because you haven’t gone before’. Then I’ll be like, ‘Look it’s alright’, coz I go out enough anyway. I’m satisfied with the way I go out…

The participants complained that their parents treated their brothers differently by being ‘stricter’ on their daughters than their sons, and by giving their daughters more domestic responsibilities at home but allowing them less personal autonomy.

Pertev: There was this one situation where I asked my brother to vacuum the house because I thought he was a bit more stronger and he could help me out. My mum said, ‘What are you doing to him? He’s a guy!’ I said, ‘So what? Don’t bring him up the way my dad was brought up… He should be helping out’.

Most women said that their parents had the same rules in place for their brothers regarding curfews, intoxication and premarital relationships as they had for themselves, but in practice, their brothers were allowed to transgress parental rules with little consequence. As Akasma said, ‘my brother gets away with more coz he’s a guy’. Other women said:

Harika: I do sometimes say to mum, ‘I wish I was a boy’, because… let’s say with going out, or even when we’re at home, responsibility-wise my brother’s just so comfortable. He just goes to work, does his stuff, comes home at five o’clock, six o’clock in the morning, mum flips it yeah – but doesn’t flip it as much as when I do [the same]… She always says, ‘Daughters are much more special and I can do
more to you than your brother’ [laughs]. And just the way some men treat some women I just think, ‘Oh my God’. It’s just bullshit, sometimes I think maybe if I was male I wouldn’t have to go through that.

The women’s observance of the respect value meant that they accepted their parents’ authority and that they had come to accept the way their brothers were given more freedom. While most of the open women had begrudgingly come to accept their parents’ rules, the majority of the closed women bore less frustration over their parents’ rules because they saw these rules as complementary to Islam. For example, Amatullah said:

We’re pretty much [a] religious family so we follow whatever’s been prescribed in the Qur’an and what’s Islamic; so whatever’s not Islamic I wouldn’t want to do it anyway. If it’s not un-Islamic, then they’re not going to stop me from doing it.

Overall, the Turkish women had given up challenging their parents’ rules because they saw that this caused them nothing but frustration.

Bikem: Because my sister went through it, I didn’t really – I saw that my sister didn’t get anywhere with fighting. So I just let it be, when he said no, I’d just whinge and I’d be really upset and everything but then in the end I knew not to ask. I knew not to get my hopes up, because he’d be like, ‘Nah!’ straight away. I’d get angry and I’d cry and stuff like that but you can’t do anything like that.

The women did not think that their parents would be likely to relax their rules in the future. The only foreseeable situation in which their independence would be increased would be if they were to get married.

Melodi: Nah, I don’t think they’re ever going to change [laughing]. Nooooo way, no way. I think the only way they’ll ever loosen up is if I’m engaged or something. Otherwise no, they won’t loosen up because they’re pretty narrow-minded like most Turkish people. They have that kinda mentality, they don’t want to look at other ideas, whereas I’m more open-minded and they don’t like that.
Marriage

In the participants’ experiences, Turkish culture in Australia was organised around marriage. The women emphasised traditions regarding marriage as important, and marriage was also seen as a vehicle for achieving independence outside their families of origin. Of the 25 women, only two women said that they had never wanted to get married, but both these women wanted to adopt children. The other 23 women saw marriage and having children as positive. Overwhelmingly, the women described how their parents wanted them to marry Turkish men, but they were mostly defiant about this parental wish. Only five of the 25 Turkish women said that they had grown up hoping to marry a man of Turkish background and a further five women had no strong feelings on this issue. The other 15 had grown up with the hope that their future spouse would not be of Turkish background.

Ten of the 15 single Turkish women I interviewed were clear about the type of man they wanted to marry – and he was not Turkish.

Cennet: I’ve sort of moved away from the Turks because I’ve met a lot of people that have been with Turks and it’s not the sort of lifestyle I want for myself.

The ‘typical Turkish’ masculinity was off-putting in a potential spouse. The participants believed that this masculinity rested on exercising control over their wives, who were treated like ‘slaves’. The point of reference was not their father, but rather the masculinity of their brothers and other Turkish men in their communities.

Akasma: Some of the Turkish men come home and say, ‘I want this, this, this and this ready. I want you to wash my feet!’ [Laughs]… They’ll be sitting down, and the wife will be standing next to them, and he’ll be like, ‘Go get me a glass of water!’ He can get up and do it himself. Things like that. I’m talking like the deep, deep, typical Turkish men. That’s how they are. They just want everything. They want their wives to do – like slave work. That’s what it is. ‘Do this, do that. You can’t go out. You can’t socialise. Sit at home, cook, clean, look after the kids’. I don’t want that.
For most of the single Turkish women, the ethnicity of their spouse was not an issue – so long as he was not Turkish – but religion was. Only Cennet felt that her partner’s religious background was not important, so long as her spouse supported her religious practices. Cennet was one of two women whose parents allowed her to date, and she had recently begun dating a man of Indian background. The other single women, both open and closed, avoided Turkish men and instead hoped to marry a non-Turkish-Muslim.

Solmaz: I prefer - my ideal would be to marry a Turk. But then again if I was to meet somebody… and he was Muslim and he knew his religion and I fell in love with him well then, sorry mum, dad, I’m going to go for it.

*Does he have to be Muslim?*

Solmaz: Yep. Yep. Definitely. Like I said you can compromise with traditions, but you can’t compromise with religion *ever*.

The closed single women especially stressed that they wanted to marry a devout Muslim, especially to make it easier to rear their children as Muslims.

Sahiba: Personally I don’t mind whether it be Turkish or Arab or Malaysian or Indonesian as long as they’re Muslim… If I wanted to select my husband, it’d be for their religion because what I find is that a religious-practising person has manners which I respect and which I love. That is what I would be looking for in a Muslim man. It would be for their knowledge in Islam and their practice, and then it would be for other reasons.

Five of the 10 women in relationships (two engaged and three married) had always wanted to marry a non-Turk, but four of these women were now with Turkish men and one woman was married to a South-African Muslim man. The other women in relationships (including one woman in a long-term relationship, two engaged and two married women) were also committed to Turkish men, but ethnicity had not been a strong issue for them. All of the women in relationships to Turkish men said their partners were ‘different’ to the typical Turkish man, because they practised Islam properly and shared their ideals of equality. For example, Nural met her Turkish fiancé at her university prayer room. She said:
I was always hoping and thinking that I’d marry a non-Turkish person… [because] some Turks are very traditional, I just didn’t like it. And that tradition is not really part of Islam at all. The small beliefs that they had, or the small things they would do… I wanted someone who wasn’t like that, who respects his wife and listens to her and also his parents. Balance his life and know what is right and what is wrong and he was very easy going. For some reason I saw that only in non-Turks.

Other than religion, the qualities the 25 Turkish women were seeking in their marriage partners were described along the same lines as Giddens’ (1992) ‘pure relationship’ model. The women emphasised friendship and companionship first and foremost, then communication, trust and mutual respect as important qualities in a marriage.

*If you don’t mind me asking, what are the things you are looking for in a partner firstly and also what sorts of things do you expect from marriage?*

Ferah: What do I expect? Understanding, trust, commitment. The most important thing for me is if he really cares about me, which I know he [fiancé] does, he’ll support me with everything I want to do. He’ll be there for me to help me along.

Dilruba: The word respect has come through a lot today hasn’t it? [Laughs] Yeah, respect that’s the main thing we want though. It’s like love-respect.

The Turkish women said that Muslim marriages were based less on love and attraction in the initial stages and more on religious compatibility and companionship. Kumru explained:

To be honest, when I first met my husband I wasn’t physically attracted. It wasn’t love at first sight or anything like that. To me, after the religious aspect of things and personality, what I was really into was humour and also how that person carries himself in conversation coz I love talking… After my engagement, I think love started developing then. Then it was like I couldn’t function without speaking to him and it’s still like that now… It’s not *passionate love* where
[thinks] it’s all about sex or whatever, it’s more companionship and closeness and spirituality as well.

The Turkish women spoke at length about wanting equality in their marriages. Bikem, an open Muslim, was the only woman to report feeling doubtful about the likelihood of achieving marital equality because her fiancé had a tendency to be controlling of her. Instead of forging a marriage on unequal terms, the other Turkish interviewees sought respect and equality in their marriages.

Cennet: [I want my husband to] respect me, to respect my religion, respect the way I want to live my life, and to respect me as a person, not as someone who just cooks, cleans for them sort of thing. I would want it to be equal. I want him to believe in equality as much as I do.

The five married women said that their marriages were based on equality, and they said that their partners helped them with some of the domestic work.

Destan: [My husband] was more of a friend than a partner. It still is [that way] now, nothing really changed. Everything was equal between us. He wasn’t egoistic. If he had to cook or clean he’d do it. Or if he had to do things that most men wouldn’t do, he’d do it, he wouldn’t care what other people thought…

Generally, the Turkish women explained that men and women had different roles within Islam, but both roles are equally important, and so they ‘balance’ each other out. These roles were gendered: women were the primary caregivers and men the primary financial providers when the children were young, but, as Amatullah commented, ‘women can work: that’s one of the misconceptions that they’re just locked up in kitchens serving’. Time and again, the participants in my study proclaimed their rights as Muslim women and they said, ‘a Muslim woman actually has more advantages than a man in some cases’ [Esmeray]. As an example of this, most women referred to Islamic inheritance laws. They explained this as the law that required a man to divide his property and weekly income between himself and his wife equally, yet a working woman was not expected by Islamic law to give her husband any portion of her wealth or assets. The participants saw that in Islamic teachings men and women should be
treated ‘the same’ and be ‘responsible for themselves’, rather than allowing men to be
‘babied’ and waited on by women [Güldeste]. Amatullah stressed that Islam ensured
women’s equality in marriage:

There are so many rights, so many rights and just because there are different rules
doesn’t necessarily mean they’re not equals… I can’t see how someone would not
see it as being equal coz if anyone should be complaining it should be the man.
It’s an obligation that he provides for her but she doesn’t have to pay a cent… It’s
definitely equitable even though the roles are different, there’s equity and there’s
equality.

In comparison to Islam, which gave women rights and equality, the women
believed that Turkish culture was forged on gender inequalities. They believed that
Turkish parents turned a blind eye to men who transgressed Islamic rules.

What do you think is expected of Turkish guys?
İrem: God! [Laughing] that’s a short list! I think for guys it’s basically study
hard, get a good job, become a professional, some sort of doctor or lawyer, that’s
seen as really good. Stay out of trouble, don’t steal, don’t drink, don’t do drugs,
stuff like that. Basically everything that’s sexual is oppressed in females. It’s
more of a religious thing; it’s supposed to be oppressed in males as well but it’s
not so strict, they can get away with it more often, easy. But other stuff like don’t
gamble and that – mostly the religious rules apply but I can’t say that they
[giggles] follow it unfortunately.

Turkish culture gave these Turkish women little ground on which to demand
equality from their partners since, in their experiences, Turkish cultural practices did not
enforce the same rules for both genders. Islam however, allowed them to legitimately
demand equality from their partners because Islamic doctrine did enforce gender
equality. Perhaps Islam’s focus on equality was an added incentive for becoming very
religious. The participants believed that marrying a Muslim man who practiced their
religion properly would ensure an equal partnership.
Sahiba: Well with the Turkish men that are my age or in their 20s, I find that there’s a lack of religion and they’re immature so I understand when girls go, ‘Oh my God, Turkish man, no way!’ [Laughs] Coz they bash their wives and they do this and that’. I can understand that, but as I said, if I was to get married it would be for the religious purposes and I would choose my husband for his religion. So I wouldn’t have that problem because a person who follows his religion is not going to be unjust and is not going to be a chauvinistic pig. With many, many Turkish men, especially young men, I find that they are very chauvinistic but it’s what Turkish culture gives to them.

5:2:2 CONSTRUCTING SEXUALITY

In the following section, I explore the Turkish participants’ attitudes towards sexuality in and outside of marriage. First, I discuss the attitudes towards premarital relationships of the 14 participants who were closed and then those of the 11 open women. Next, I discuss the women’s attitudes towards sexual expression; specifically, I focus on the question of virginity and on the women’s perception of men’s sexual desire. Although the closed women and open women differed in their practices regarding premarital relationships, their attitudes about acceptable sexual behaviour converged due to the women’s shared Islamic ideals.

Religion and Sexuality

Religion was a huge influence on the Turkish women’s attitudes towards premarital sex, and these attitudes were related to the hijab. On the one hand, the closed women avoided premarital relationships. Instead, they met their spouse through the hand-in-marriage tradition, and became engaged and married within a short period. On the other hand, the open women did have non-sexual premarital relationships, largely in secret from their families. This meant that unlike the closed women, they had more than one relationship before entering marriage. The following table outlines the Turkish women’s marital status alongside their religious identities:
Table 3: Turkish participants’ marital status and religious identities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MARITAL STATUS</th>
<th>CLOSED MUSLIMS</th>
<th>OPEN MUSLIMS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long-term relationship</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engaged</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>14</strong></td>
<td><strong>11</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The 14 closed women did not enter into a romantic relationship with a man unless they intended to marry. They did not have boyfriends, only husbands, and they waited until they were engaged before getting to know a man, but these relationships were never physical. They did not hold hands with a man until they had performed the religious ceremony of *nikka*, which meant they were married in the eyes of Islam. Nural, who was engaged, was never interested in having a boyfriend when she was growing up. The only relationship she was interested in was one which led to marriage:

In high school, I knew if I was to have a boyfriend, we’re not going to get married, it’s just going to be for a fling, just for fun, that’s all it’s going to be. So… I’d be serious and say, ‘No I’m not interested’. But of course when I was at uni, after the age of 20, I knew that I wouldn’t mind if I did meet someone it would be for a long-term relationship, not just for a short-term. So in that manner, if I was to go about it, I’d do it properly if I met someone.

Eight of the 14 closed women were single, and they experienced no conflict regarding the doctrine of Islam that forbade romantic relationships between men and women before marriage. When asked to reflect upon boyfriends and dating, they focused on the negative aspects of premarital relationships and on the ‘depression’ that goes along with it. They gave examples of friends who had suffered melancholia because of relationship break-ups and they also spoke of other issues, such as being used by a man for sexual purposes or becoming pregnant from casual sexual relationships in order to highlight the perils of dating. The closed single women juxtaposed the negative consequences of premarital relationships with the wisdom of
Islam. For example Sahiba said: ‘I know friends who have gone nearly to suicide because of their relationships. It makes me understand and accept more easily why my religion has a ruling like this’. The closed single women said that Islamic rules about premarital relationships offered them ‘protection from harm’.

Fazilet: It’s just saying, ‘Don’t have lots of flings, and don’t flirt around with every guy. Don’t stuff around with your life’. That’s what it means to us, ‘Make something of your life’. Having multiple boyfriends for us is sort of like, ‘What are you doing with yourself?’.

Six of the closed women were in committed relationships (four women were married and two women were engaged). The accelerated development of these women’s relationships – that is, the swift progress from engagement to marriage – was striking. The two open women who were engaged were planning long engagements; one of these women had been engaged for over one year and had been with her partner for around three years. In comparison, the four closed married women had married within a short period following the commencement of their relationships, typically between four to six months of meeting their partner for the first time. Leyla typified this finding. Although initially reluctant to meet her now-husband when he first organised a meeting, she was married four months later. She said of her engagement: ‘We felt it was right: in four months we felt it’. I asked her to speculate why Turkish women’s engagements were so quick and she answered:

The reason what I think is because Turks are Muslims. As a Muslim – not everyone does it obviously, not everyone practises, but as Muslims you’re not supposed to have boyfriends because you’re not supposed to have premarital sex, or any sort of physical contact with the opposite sex. So the reason why a lot of Turkish girls would get married at a young age or have a quick engagement [is that] this is their way of being with someone: to get married. Because while you’re engaged you’re still not allowed to do anything physical with them; once you’re religiously married, that’s when you can at least hold their hand. So that’s why they do it quick, so they can be with them.
Unlike the closed women, the 11 open women in my sample had struggled with religious and cultural norms that forbade premarital relationships.

Irem: When you’re younger and all you’re friends are experimenting with things, like you know, coz you’re not doing it, you think, ‘What’s happening here? How come they’re doing it and I’m here?’ …Sometimes when we’re home just talking and I’ll say to my mum, ‘Oh you know my friend’s got a new boyfriend and blah, blah, blah’. She’ll go, ‘Oh we’re Turkish. We’re different. We don’t do things like that. Don’t think about doing anything like that’. And you think, ‘Oh okay’. Then some people will say, ‘Oh how come you’re not allowed to have boyfriends?’ [Deadpan] ‘Because we’re Turkish’ [laughs]. ‘So how you supposed to get married?’ [Feigns lack of interest] ‘Well the guy’s family comes over, then they ask for you, and then’ [stops] ugh! [Laughs].

Ten of the 11 open women reported having at least one premarital relationship with a man. Seven of the 11 open women identified themselves as single, but only one of these women was dating at the time of the interviews. The open women who were single reported having dated in ‘secret’, and they described having to ‘sneaking around’ behind their parents’ backs with their boyfriends. Cennet was one of only three women in the Turkish sample whose parents had allowed her to date men, but even so, her relationships still had an element of secrecy. She said: ‘I don’t tell them straight away; I hint it out to my mum and she sort of figures it out’. Unlike the closed women, who happily complied with the no dating rule, the open women wished this rule was not in place and that their parents would allow them to spend time with their boyfriends. Melodi said:

I wouldn’t tell my parents – no way! My parents would kill me! [Laughs] They’re like – I don’t know what the other Turkish girls have told you, but the Turkish culture is real different. You’re not supposed to have a boyfriend, that’s the mentality. You’re not supposed to. It’s supposed to be like [thinks] say if you’re at a wedding or something, and a guy sees you, he tells his parents, ‘Oh she’s nice!’ And they come over and that. But times have changed. My parents don’t see that.
Three of the 11 open women were in committed non-marital relationships (two engaged and one long-term), and additionally, Destan was the only open Muslim of the five married women in the Turkish sample. She had married a man with whom she’d had a long-term relationship, rather than somebody she had met through the hand-in-marriage tradition. She disagreed with the custom that encouraged Turkish women to wait until they meet a man they intend to marry before starting a relationship. She said, ‘I’m young – how am I supposed to get married if I don’t know what I want in a guy? You’ve got to be going out with a guy to know what you want and don’t want kind of thing’. She continued:

Girls that aren’t allowed to go out, I’ve noticed, get married to the first guy that they are allowed to get married to and then it doesn’t work out and they get divorced straight away; and then they get to have the life that they wanted. I think it’s the virginity aspect of it, to tell you the truth.

Despite the open and closed women’s differing stance on dating, the consensus of the Turkish sample was that sexual relationships should be reserved for marriage. The following section explores this question of virginity in more detail.

Sexual expression

The Turkish women expressed two ideas about sexuality: the ‘self respect’ in keeping their virginity and the burden of male sexuality experienced by women. First, both the open and closed women stressed ‘self-respect’ as an Islamic value that guides their sexual practices, especially regarding their virginity. This was not surprising, given that the value of respect has featured so heavily in the Turkish participants’ discussions so far. The closed women believed that wearing hijab embodied their self-respect as it related to their sexual morality. As they saw it, the hijab demanded respect from men, rather than sexual objectification. For example, Leyla said that the hijab says to men: “Respect me for who I am, not what I look like”, so if they’re going to speak to me they can’t be distracted by anything except by what’s coming out of my mouth’.
The open women’s discussion about their sexuality was also framed in terms of self-respect. For example, Pertev spoke about women needing their self-respect as it relates to sexuality through modest dress codes, even though she herself was not in hijab:

It’s up to the woman to decide if she’s to be treated like a woman who has no respect for herself… sometimes women dress up in the way that they want to be treated. If you want a lot of men to come up to you maybe you’ll dress up a bit…

According to the Turkish women, to have self-respect was to tone down their bodily expression of their sexuality, and to keep their virginity until marriage. The ‘protection’ of virginity was a recurring theme in the participants’ discussion. While I did not ask the participants direct questions about their own sexual practices, almost everyone candidly reported ‘saving’ their virginity until marriage. Even the open women, despite having had at least one premarital relationship, expressed this ideal. The open women were very clear that their premarital relationships had not been sexual, and instead they emphasized their virginity.

Cennet: I know that my mum has said it to me, in the sense where she’s said, ‘Look it's up to you, but I would prefer it if it were to be a white wedding’. I guess I was brought up in such a way where I would prefer it if I were to be a virgin when I was getting married.

Solmaz: We have to stay virgins until we’re married. This comes from our religious background mainly… Personally, I’d put tradition aside and I will state that I am a virgin, but only for the fact that I would like to keep that for my husband.

The Turkish participants’ ideas about their sexual morality and virginity are best seen through the symbolism of the hijab. As I have already noted, the participants’ description of their religious identities as open and closed Muslims were concepts that came from the participants, and according to them, the terms ‘open’ and ‘closed’ described whether or not a woman covers or ‘closes’ her hair with a headscarf or leaves her hair open. Yet these terms were also loaded with sexual imagery. Even though the
participants did not intend for the terms to be sexualised, the closed participants implied this in their own way, when they described that the hijab was a flag that signals to men: ‘stop’. In essence, then, the term ‘closed’ reflects that by wearing the hijab, a woman was sexually unavailable in unequivocal terms. This was shown in Fazilet’s comment when she said:

Then guys know their limits towards you. They’re like, ‘Oh okay this girl’s… covering herself up’ which means that I’m not the type of girl to just stuff around with every guy that comes along.

Then again, the open women also abstained from premarital sex, and so their lack of hijab did not signal that they were sexually available. On a personal level though, the fact that they were not in hijab meant that they bent some Islamic laws, specifically regarding dating, which was something the closed women did not do.

For this sample of Turkish women, closing embodied an idealised Muslim femininity, because wearing the hijab unambiguously communicated the observance of Islamic codes of sexual morality. This notion was exemplified in Manolya’s comment when she said that the hijab ‘symbolised to me modesty and virtue, basically how a Muslim woman should be’ [my emphasis]. Ideally, a Muslim woman was modest, virtuous and she saved her virginity until marriage; but this was not an ideal the participants held for men. One of the problems with the typical Turkish masculinity was Turkish men’s alleged promiscuity, which was earlier described by Melodi as ‘hypocritical’. Due to the promiscuity of Turkish men, some of the women were resigned to the fact that their husband, unlike themselves, would not be a virgin when they married. A couple of women went one step further, saying that they preferred their husbands had sown their wild oats before they married, to lessen the likelihood of infidelity later on.

_Round you expect your husband to be a virgin like you are?_

Solmaz: I’ve had many conversations about this with my father! [Laughs] Personally, no, because I’d want my husband to have experienced life. I don’t want him to firstly experience it with me and then go out and experience it with others. I’d like him to have gone out clubbing, and [have had] girlfriends and been there and done that and ready to settle down. Then find me and settle down
with me and stay only with me coz our marriages are based upon lifetime. We don’t think of divorce before we get married so that’s the main interest as well.

Although Solmaz expected her husband to have ‘experienced life’, in order to lessen the likelihood that he might cheat on her later on, she said she wanted to wear a ‘white wedding dress’ when she married, with all that implies. The Turkish participants described their virginity as a ‘gift’ reserved for one person only, but it was a gift that they did not necessarily expect from their husbands.

The second issue that the Turkish women discussed regarding sexual expression was the burden of men’s sexuality upon women. The Turkish participants believed that women needed to be wary of and guard themselves against the overwhelming sexual desire of men. The closed women believed that a woman should ‘cover her beauty’ through the hijab because men’s attraction to women was overpowering.

Fazilet: It says it in our Book, in the Qur’an, that a woman is a very attractive human being and guys are so attracted to ladies. So it’s [the hijab] a form of protecting yourself from men so that only the men that are special to you can see you, like your dad, your brothers, your relatives, your husband…

The fact that the closed women felt that the hijab ‘protected’ them from men reflected the heteronormative assumption that male sexuality was highly virile and out of control (cf. Hird and Jackson, 2001: 28). The closed women made these comments:

Sahiba: The reasons why I would cover up is crucial, and that’s because of our modesty, or the purity that we have to apply for ourselves and protect. Protection from the outside world, those kinds of things.

Amatullah: It does function as a barrier because I’ve experienced that myself where a male who might be a little bit too friendly with females knows that he has to stand back with me…

The closed participants believe that the hijab ‘protects’ themselves and other people from ‘harm’ by ‘putting a limit’ on sexual attraction during all kinds of social interaction.
Güldeste: I feel that I’m creating a better environment [by wearing hijab]. I can just imagine that if men were covered properly and if women were covered the way Allah told us to, that there would be less marital breakdowns, there would be less divorces because there would be less men having this dream woman.

The open women also characterised men as highly sexualised beings, and they believed that women were more reserved about their sexual desire. For example Pertev said that men ‘have more sexual drive than what women do’. Pertev believed that Islam had found a way to control this, through the hijab and its rules regarding premarital sex:

Maybe our religion is trying to tell us that guys really can’t control themselves. It’s just how men are made… It’s really difficult because men do get [more] easily attracted to women than what women do of men.

Despite the Turkish women’s collective emphasis on modesty, their discussion of sexuality reflected a highly sexualised view of the world because they saw that sexual attraction needed to be tightly regulated and that women needed extra protection from men’s sexuality. Such views from the participants seem to support El Guindi’s review of Islamic doctrine, which positioned the social contact between men and women as ‘potentially… sexually charged’, and that wearing hijab ‘desexualises’ inter-gender interaction (1999: 136).

5:2:3 SUMMARY: RECONSTRUCTING GENDER AND SEXUALITY

The participants did not see themselves as typical Turkish girls who accepted Turkish gender inequalities. When I asked Akasma if she felt she fitted the description of the typical Turkish-Australian woman, she answered thoughtfully, ‘Typical Australian woman, yeah. Not a typical Turk. Not a Turk, yeah’. İrem said:

The way we’ve been taught, it’s just not like that anymore. The Turkish people that have come here to Australia stayed the way they were… and I think now
people are starting to change because it’s the second generation. We’ve grown up in this culture with different ideas to our parents.

Such responses were exceptions. Rather than relying upon Australian cultural ideals, the majority of the Turkish participants challenged Turkish notions of gender through their religious ideals.

Güldeste: It’s [Islam] really detached me from all these cultural rules and norms on the girls in the Turkish culture. Now I can pick out and say, ‘Nuh! Don’t force me to do something that I don’t have to do. My religion says I don’t have to do that…’. It’s given me a voice.

Sahiba: I know my stance and I know who I am as a woman from the religious perspective. I know what kind of a status I’m given. To an extent I’m even given a higher status than men in my religion. Within my Turkish culture I would say that at times I wouldn’t want to be Turkish because the way my parents would think; they would sometimes put the son up above. The way my grandfather puts his male grandchildren more higher than the female ones makes me think, ‘God, that’s so ignorant’. That’s not right, that’s not just.

With their emphasis on the emancipatory aspect of their Islamic studies, the participants in my study spoke about gender issues in the same way as Charlotte Butler’s British-Muslim participants. One of the young women in Butler’s study said:

I think having an education, knowing all about Islam as well, so that you do not get opposition from the male members of the community, you can stand up and say, ‘Well Islam says I can do this and you have no right to stop me’. So if they’re informed about the facts then I think they’ve got more of a case to do that (1999: 150).

While the women I interviewed believed that Islam helped them to challenge gender roles and inequality, they were not consistent in applying this sense of equality in what they expected from men. They wanted to marry Muslim men who practised their religion properly, but they did not mind if their future spouse did not adhere to
traditional Islamic dress codes. Rana said that Muslim men had ‘copped out easy’ in their dress codes:

Clothes are not compulsory for them. I think the beard was compulsory for men, but like I said, not a lot of them do it. In our religion you have to show people that you’re Muslim because you have to be proud… [but] either they’re ashamed or they don’t care if they don’t do it. But that’s their choice. I don’t care…

Rana did not expect her husband to adhere to Islamic dress codes so long as he was a good Muslim, even though her own dress code reflected her religious commitment. She said, ‘I wouldn’t be too fussed about the clothes, but I would want someone that was at the same level as I am with my religion’.

While the Turkish women distanced themselves from the conformity demanded of women, they were nevertheless partially bound to gender constructions of the ‘good Turkish girl’. They did not agree with gendered double standards in Turkish culture, but they still accepted their parents’ rules, even though they saw that their brothers were not answerable to the same rules. Additionally, when it came to the Islamic dress codes that were so meaningful to their own identities, some of the Turkish women were endorsing their own double standards, which they did not acknowledge as a sign of inequality. The women’s own dress codes were a ‘flag’ of their pride and commitment to Islam, but this flag was seen as optional for men.

The Turkish women constructed their gender identities in opposition to Turkish gender ideals, but this process was limited. They rejected the double standards of Turkish culture and drew upon Islam to support their quest for gender equality, but their observance of the value of respect meant that they were unable to force change in their families of origin. Instead, they looked forward to their gender relations changing after marriage, as they believed that their partners would be good Muslims who supported gender equality. The participants’ construction of sexuality, while still driven by ideals of equality, was contradictory. The Turkish women supported Islamic ideals, which enforce the same expectations of male and female sexuality, but the women were less certain that their husbands would have stuck to these Islamic ideals regarding abstinence from premarital sex.
In this section, I focus on the Latin and Turkish participants’ constructions of gender and sexuality among Anglo-Australians in their families of origin and within marriage. The women I interviewed believed that Anglo-Australians constructed gender and sexuality with symmetrical expectations of men and women, and that this expectation was based upon a value of equality.

Families of origin

The participants in both groups believed that Anglo-Australian parents were very liberal and ‘laid back’ with their children in comparison to parents in their respective CoO groups.

How would you describe the Australian identity?

Yvonne: As in families or [trails off].

Just generally.

Yvonne: I think Australians, they’re all more accepting of everyone coz they’re more laid back. They don’t mind. Like my parents, they don’t like other people sleeping over; they just don’t see how Australian families can let their children stay over. [Small laugh] As much as I’d love to sleepover, it’s just not going to happen in this family. Australians are more accepting to[wards] everyone; they’re more trustworthy. [Latin]

The women especially made reference to the permissive attitudes Anglo-Australians had towards their daughters, and the ‘freedom’ and ‘independence’ Anglo-Australian women enjoyed within their families of origin. For example, when Ofelia was asked to compare Uruguayan and Australian attitudes towards family, she said, ‘the daughters as well, they keep them close to you, and I don’t think the Australians do’.
What do you mean by that? I think I know what you mean.

Ofelia: Yeah. Like if you’re the youngest [laughs] they won’t let you go sort of thing, until you’re old enough, and the boyfriend thing as well. I think the Australians here can have a boyfriend any time kind of thing. In general, the Uruguayans don’t. I don’t think it’s just the Uruguayans, I think it’s the whole Latin culture.

The participants saw the independence of young Anglo-Australian people as a point of difference between their families and Australian families. Yvonne said, ‘some Australians would be independent from an early age; us, we get independent later on [laughs]...’ [Latin]. Both groups of women highly valued freedom and independence. The issue of independence was a major source of conflict with their parents, as both Latin and Turkish culture legitimised the ‘freedom’ of men over women within the family. The freedoms the participants fought for within their own families of origin were seen as ‘normal’ in Anglo-Australian families:

Cennet: I know a lot of Australian people that can move out when they come to an age where they’re 18 or 19. Or moving out with a boyfriend is seen as just normal when it comes to the Australian culture, but if it comes to the Turks you’d be called all sorts of names. You’d be disowned by your father or something [laughs]. So there are a lot of differences. [Turkish]

The participants saw moving out as one of the biggest familial differences between their CoO communities and Anglo-Australian society. While almost everyone in the entire sample had thought about moving out of their parental home at some stage, moving out was one challenge to cultural norms that the women in both groups were largely unable or unwilling to overcome. Only one of the 25 Turkish women had moved out of their parental home before marriage to be closer to her university, and eight of the 25 Latin women had at some stage moved out of their parental home before marriage, mostly to live with their partners. The other 41 women’s perceptions of moving out before marriage were largely negative. They often said that their parents would ‘kill’ or ‘disown’ them if they were to move out before marriage, and this was based on their sisters’ experiences (in the Latin women’s case) or other women in their communities (in the Turkish women’s case) who had moved out with disastrous
consequences. Due to these negative examples, the women believed moving out would cost them their relationship with their parents. Melodi, a Turkish participant, had considered moving out of her parents’ home because of the way they restricted her lifestyle. She said: ‘I was sick of all their shit and everything [laughs], I couldn’t do this, I couldn’t do that, I just wanted my own life so I could do what I want’. Despite considering this move, Melodi said: ‘I don’t think it’d be worth it, not having my parents talk to me. I want to keep a good relationship with my parents so I don’t think I would do it’.

Overall, the women reported that living in their parental home until marriage was a cultural expectation that they wanted to uphold.

Rosa: That’s sort of one thing that is expected in this culture. It’s expected that you move out once you get married… [Latin].

Harika: We just don’t do it… I think if you don’t have a reason, if you just want to do it for the stuff of it, there’s no point. I just think it’s senseless… maybe if you’re like over 25 then maybe, but if you’re just 18 then I just think huh. Not necessary at all. [Turkish]

The participants underplayed the benefits of moving out, and reported being happy to live at home until marriage.

Güldeste: At uni a lot of the students, they’re all my own age, and they’re all sharing house with other people. They’re all talking about rent and I think, ‘Gosh it’s such a young age!’ It’s sort of ironic I think; your parents brought you into the world. I don’t truly see why it is that you have to move out. Like what exactly are you trying to prove, you know? You can still give money to your parents, you can still pay the bills… If we say moving out is the only thing to prove independence then I think that’s wrong. I think that’s definitely wrong. [Turkish]

The participants perceived that Anglo-Australians marked their independence through moving out, and they seemed unaware of the rising trend of young people in Australian who live in their parental home for an extended period (ABS, 2000). In
regard to moving out, Anglo-Australian women’s freedom was seen in a negative light, because the participants did not see this as a good measure of independence:

Violeta: Well, the way I see it, Australians have more freedom. They freak out if you say you’re settled in at [your parents’] home by 20. I just find that really stupid, like geez, what’s wrong with that? You could be 30 and still be living with your parents. That’s our traditional thing; you cannot leave the house until you’re married. But here in Australia, they freak out if you’re still with your parents. There’s too much freedom, I don’t know, I wouldn’t like that. I would not like that… [Latin]

The women’s ideas about maintaining their independence as adults was based on establishing independence within their families of origin (by being financially independent), not outside of it by moving out like Anglo-Australians. By the same token, moving out was almost a taboo topic within their families. The cultural expectation that they stay in their parental home until marriage left them little room for negotiation, and so they rejected moving out as a positive sign of independence. In comparison to the women’s attachment to their families of origin until marriage, the participants believed that Anglo-Australian families ‘kick out’ their children when they reach the legal age of adulthood, and that Anglo-Australian parents cared less about their children’s welfare and future than parents in their CoO groups.

Matijana: Yeah, like for example, if you compare Australian families to Latin American families, Australian families are very ‘Okay, you’re independent, move out’. They literally push you out. Whereas with my own family anyway, I’m not expected to stay at home or anything but it would be ideal that I stay at home…

In the participants’ view, the fact that Anglo-Australians were raised in a more ‘relaxed’ family atmosphere with the freedom to do as they wish was not so enviable after all.

Dilruba: We always see the Australian families as more relaxed. I don’t know, this is probably stereotyping too, but it’s as if they don’t care what their kids did. It’s just like they let them out on their streets and just as long as you’re home by
tea or something [laughs]. And ours is like... more protective than Australians maybe.

How do you feel about the Australian values that you just described?

I don’t think it’s healthy for a kid growing up without holding onto anything. You have to hold onto something growing up so you have something to fall back on, you know?

Marriage

While having freedom was not always seen as a positive aspect of Anglo-Australian culture, the women believed the practices of Anglo-Australians were egalitarian. Australian parents might treat their children off-handedly, but at least they treated girls and boys in the same way. All 50 women interviewed believed that Anglo-Australians were more equal in their gender relations than people in their own communities and other migrant communities in Australia. Yvonne said nowadays gender inequality in Australia was ‘not much of an issue; I think they’re pretty much the same’ [Latin].

Even when the participants acknowledged some inequalities between Anglo-Australian men and women, these seemed miniscule to them when spoken alongside their CoO expectations of marriage, housework and social life:

Given that Turkish culture is a bit more traditional, you could say, when it comes to gender, would you say that Australian culture has the same differences in expectations from men and women in that respect?

Güldeste: Hmm [thinks] I don’t think so. Even though they [Australians] say that they’re still not equal, I think – how equal can you get? I don’t know what they want exactly. I really don’t know what their expectations are but I really don’t think that you could get a society that is more equal than the Australians. Or perhaps maybe in America, or the West in general, but I don’t think so. I had Australian friends too, and I met their brothers and I couldn’t see any difference in the way they were being brought up… Looking from the outside in, I don’t think there is. If they were to live in our culture I think they would suffocate! [Laughs]
That’s what I would say! [Speaks softly] They take it for granted what they have. [Turkish]

The participants believed that Anglo-Australians were symmetrical in their expectations of acceptable sexual behaviour for both men and women: they thought that there were no culturally sanctioned double standards regarding sexuality in or outside of marriage. The women saw that Latin and Turkish cultural values encouraged men to have several sexual partners while expecting women to remain virgins until marriage, but in their view Anglo-Australian culture was not seen to pander to such double standards. For example, Yvonne believed that the ‘angel’ and ‘perfect little daughter’ identity which required women to be virginal and pure in Salvadoran communities was not an expectation in Anglo-Australian culture. She said that Anglo-Australians were ‘more open and they’re okay’ with sexual equality. The expectation of angelic purity in women was very much an expectation that Hird and Jackson’s (2001) Anglo participants shared. Hird and Jackson found that their young participants in Britain and New Zealand spoke of sexuality in relation to heteronormativity. Hird and Jackson’s participants believed men had rampant sexual urges and that they should have many sexual partners, and they believed women should be ‘angels’ who controlled their own and men’s sexuality. The participants in my study believed that Anglo-Australians were beyond such gendered constructions of acceptable sexual behaviour. And yet, where the Latin participants shared the liberal views about sexuality that they saw in Anglo-Australian culture, the Turkish participants did not. While Lorelei was earlier quoted as lamenting the lack of sexiness of Anglo-Australians, the Turkish participants saw Anglo-Australian sexuality as too ‘forward’.

Pertev: With the Australian culture, I don’t know if you’d call this their culture, but it’s mostly the men that you see go up to women and talk to them at the bar… But I’ve also seen that if the guy does not approach her, she will approach him.

The participants of both groups saw their sexuality in opposition to Anglo-Australian sexuality. The Latin women perceived themselves to be more sensual than Anglo-Australians, but the Turkish women were somewhat critical of Anglo-Australian sexuality. The Turkish sample believed that Australians saw them as ‘oppressed victims’ to be pitied because they were Muslim women. They denied this oppression.
The closed participants in particular saw their sexuality as ‘more liberated’ than Anglo-Australian women’s sexuality because the hijab protected them from the sexual objectification that Western women’s dress encourages in men.

Manolya: We don’t feel oppressed, we feel more liberated. We’re not getting judged for our sexuality, we’re getting judged for our intellectual capabilities, our skills.

Sahiba: I think that physically we’re just different from the Western women. We might seem oppressed because we’re dressed like this, but personally I think that they’re more oppressed than what we are. Exposing yourself doesn’t mean you’re free… I don’t understand why we’re called oppressed or why we don’t have an identity because we’re covered like this. I’m free because I don’t have to show my body to anyone.

Despite the way that the closed Turkish women believed that Islam better protected women against gender inequality than Australian culture, Anglo-Australian constructions of gender were still important to them. The women in both the Turkish and Latin samples generally believed that marrying a man from their overseas CoO was not a good idea, which suggests that constructions of Anglo-Australian masculinity were factored into the women’s marital choices. The Turkish women often spoke of women they knew from their communities who had married a man from Turkey, an ‘import’, in Solmaz words, and they all believed this led to divorce due to their differing expectations of marriage. I had the following exchange with Solmaz:

*Have you ever considered living there [Turkey]?
No. No. A lot of people get married from Turkey and then their husband comes down here. I’m totally against that. Totally, totally.

*How come?*
I think that like what I said before what I expect from marriage… if I bring an ‘import’ down I think it just makes life hard for both. Here he is, no English. Even if he’s got an education he’s not gonna carry it out here. He’s got no occupation, no English, no friends, nothing… It’s just the level of understanding might [cause] too much impact on each other; [it’s] completely different. A lot of
people that I know that have gotten married in Turkey and brought their husbands down here haven’t lasted very long.

Of the ten Turkish women who were in committed relationships, nine women had Turkish partners, despite their claims that Turkish men generally made bad spouses. These Turkish women believed that their partners were not ‘typical Turks’ partly because they were good Muslims, and partly because they were typical Australians (minus the promiscuity). So, while the Turkish women saw Islam as a vehicle for gaining gender equality, Anglo-Australian constructions of masculinity were also seen as bringing about such gender equality. As Leyla colourfully put it, their partners were ‘Ocker-Turks’, meaning they were ‘real Aussies’ who believe in egalitarianism:

_So you’re married now? And you’re married to a Turkish person?_ 
Leyla: Yes I am! [Laughs] Shock horror – I always said I’d marry an Asian guy that’s why. I love Asians! Everything I said turned out completely opposite! [In a high pitched voice] I married a Turk! Never, never, I thought never, because I find a lot of Turkish guys are arrogant and very ‘My way or no way, or the highway’. That’s why I really didn’t want to marry a Turk. But my husband is thankfully an Ocker-Turk, like me. He’s like a real Aussie [laughs]. So we get along really well. If he was a cultural person I wouldn’t have married him. If he had a lot of the Turkish patriotism cultural side, I wouldn’t have married him. I couldn’t get along with someone like that.

The Latin women did not emphasise the Australian-ness of their partners, even though most of their partners were Australian-born, but the women’s own Australian-ness was emphasised with respects to their gender ideals. The Latin women did not want to marry someone from overseas because such men would want a ‘submissive wife’, and these women were clear that they would find no such a bride here. Moira said:

I sure know wives that are like that [‘submissive’] but it’s hard to have one like that here, or especially with the young generation over here, the one after me, there’s no way I think [that] they’d be able to get one. They’d have to go to El Salvador and get married over there and bring her here. Then things change also,
the wife will think, ‘Hey, I don’t have to be submissive – I can be who I want to be over here’ [laughs].

**5:3:2 SUMMARY: RECONSTRUCTING GENDER AND SEXUALITY**

In the previous chapter, the women’s discussion of Anglo-Australian ethnicity was highly critical: they did not think that Anglo-Australian culture compared favourably with their own cultural traditions. In this chapter, the women’s discussion of Anglo-Australian culture was more positive. The Latin and Turkish women were critical of the way Anglo-Australian families allowed ‘too much’ independence in their children by pushing them to move out before marriage, but it was an independence they also envied in regards to the autonomy of Anglo-Australian women. While the participants had difficult battles with their parents regarding going out and dating men, they believed that Anglo-Australian women faced no such troubles.

The women in both groups saw gender relations between Anglo-Australians as symmetrical. Equality was something that Anglo-Australians took for granted, because, as the participants understood it, gender equality was normalised in Anglo-Australian culture. As one participant asked ‘how much more equal can they get?’ The gender equality they saw in Anglo-Australian culture was something that they strove for in their own relationships. Issues of ethnicity made Anglo-Australian culture seem weak or invisible to the participants, but issues of gender, sexuality and equality made Anglo-Australian culture clearly visible to the participants. As far as the participants were concerned, Anglo-Australian culture was founded on gender equality.

**CONCLUSION: GENDER AND SEXUALITIES**

The women in both the Latin and Turkish samples heavily invested in the ideal of equality. They had argued with their parents about the inequality in their families of origin, and they pursued equality in their own relationships. The women’s discussion of marriage showed that they all wanted a ‘pure relationship’ that was based on friendship and equality. It was most striking that the women wanted to portray themselves as
women who fought for and embodied gender equality. The Latin women portrayed themselves as outspoken and defiant in the face of gender inequality due to their Australian gender ideals, and the Turkish women reacted against the stereotype of themselves as ‘oppressed victims’ and instead emphasised their ‘higher status’ as women within Islam.

The women’s gender identities were, in essence, reconstructed identities, because they saw themselves as different to other women in their CoO groups. The Latin women were different to their mothers, who had to put up with gender inequality. Their defiance of cultural norms about gender was ‘typical’ of Latin persona, which was partly constructed around being ‘loud and outspoken’. If anything though, they were typical Australians, given their description of Australian culture, because they sought gender equality. The Turkish women’s point of reference was the ‘typical Turkish girl’, whom they held largely in contempt, and instead, they saw themselves as typical (good) Muslims, because they demanded gender equality.

These two reconstructed femininities were ideals to which the women did not always live up. On the one hand, the women in both groups largely stressed their resistance to parental and communal expectations of gender and sexuality, and they noted that their observance of such expectations was due to choice rather than coercion (cf. Pallotta-Chiarolli and Skrbis, 1994). On the other hand, the Latin women sometimes glossed over the inequalities in their parents’ or in their own relationships, and the Turkish women did not always expect behaviour to be equal between their spouses and themselves in regards to dress and virginity. The fact that both groups of women constructed their gender identities on the ideal of equality was a key finding. Even where their autonomy was limited (in regard to moving out or, in the Turkish women’s case, in challenging parental authority), the participants wanted to be seen as strong, independent women who pursued equality at every turn.

Both groups believed that gender inequality was deeply entrenched in their CoO groups. The main obstacle to gender equality in their ethnic communities was the way in which masculinity was constructed, and so both groups of women overwhelmingly believed out-marriage was the best way to circumvent gender inequality in marriage. Both groups of women initially downplayed the importance of ethnicity in a spouse. The Turkish women reported that the religious rather than ethnic background of their spouse was important to them, and the Latin women reported that CoO ethnicity was not very important to them, so long as their partner was of Latin background. In effect
then, the Latin and Turkish women looked to their respective pan-ethnic groups for a suitable spouse in order to escape the ‘typical’ or ‘macho’ masculinity of men in their immediate CoO groups. The women believed that their pan-ethnic groups harboured a reconstructed masculinity, but this reconstruction had differing origins: in the Latin case it was through assimilation to Australian gender ideals, and in the Turkish case, it was through adherence to ‘proper’ Islamic ideals.

The multicultural narrative of identity, which was a strong theme in the previous chapter, was not a theme in the women’s social construction of their gender and sexual identities. Instead, the women drew upon a narrative of Anglo-Celtic Australian identity. The interviews showed that Australian ethnicity was very important in a spouse. The women perceived Anglo-Australian masculinity as egalitarian in nature, and so this masculinity was also important in a spouse, given that the women were mostly against marrying a man who had grown up overseas. They believed that overseas-born men imported their ideas of gender inequality, but Australian-raised men in their pan-ethnic groups had, despite their migrant backgrounds, taken on Australian cultural ideals regarding egalitarianism.

Unlike their gender constructions, the women’s constructions of sexuality were vastly different: one sexuality was depicted as highly sensual, and the other was more controlled (for women only). The Latin women characterised their sexuality as sensuous and they took pride in this ‘sexiness’. The Turkish women characterised their sexuality as restrained, and they took pride in being in control of their sexuality. The most striking difference in the participants’ discussion of sexuality was their differing stance on premarital sex. The Latin women did not come out and tell me that they were virgins who were saving themselves until marriage, and if anything, they gave me the opposite impression; but the Turkish women did draw attention to their virginity. Perhaps, due to their non-observance of religion, the Latin women did not feel a need to justify or assert their virginity, but for the Turkish women, who so heavily invested in their religious identities, virginity was central to their identity. Perhaps the Turkish women’s comments might have been affected by social desirability. I do not have data to confirm that the majority of the Latin women were not virgins, and indeed, I cannot be sure that the Turkish women did in fact abstain from premarital sex. Instead, my data shows that virginity, although acknowledged by the Latin women as central to cultural constructions of Latin femininity, was not central to their own constructions of
femininity. Conversely, virginity was central to the construction of femininity for the Turkish women.

The reader should keep in mind the limitations of my sample. Throughout their interviews, the women in both groups characterised themselves as ‘different’ to other women in their CoO groups: they did not see themselves as ‘typical’ Latin or Turkish women. This might reflect the limitations of my sample, and so the women’s ‘difference’ might be an artefact of the snowballing method of recruitment I employed. Alternatively, it might mean that my participants have an unrealistic perception of other women in their migrant communities. Whatever the case, the common thread between the samples interviewed lay in their self-perception of their ‘difference’ and enlightenment on gender issues compared to other women from their CoO groups.

I have argued that both the women’s rejection of, and adoption of, Australian culture was central to their construction of gender and sexuality. The Latin women more overtly embraced Australian cultural ideals in their discussion of gender equality and the Turkish women concentrated more on their Islamic influences. Nevertheless, both groups used Anglo-Australian culture as a point of comparison in challenging the constructions of gender and sexuality in their CoO communities. In the previous chapter, I showed how the participants saw themselves as ‘the other’ in comparison to Anglo-Australians and also how they constructed Anglo-Australians as ‘the other’. The current chapter goes against such constructions of otherness, given that inequality was something from which all the women distanced themselves. Anglo-Australians were not the other in this case; instead, they represented one ideal of equality. Although the women did not always agree with Anglo-Australian norms regarding gender or sexuality, the issue of equality signalled the closest point that all three groups – the Latins, Muslim-Turks, and Anglo-Australians – will reach in this thesis, because all three groups were seen to be working towards the same end in their values regarding gender equality.
CHAPTER SIX: NATIONALITY

This chapter describes the women’s social construction of Australian nationality. As I outlined in Chapter Two, the literature defined nationality in terms of citizenship and national identity. Additionally, I argued that the Australian national identity could be thought of as a *majority ethnicity*. Most of the literature which discussed Australian national identity engaged with the tensions surrounding two dominant narratives of Australian national identity. In the first narrative, Australian national identity can be defined through Anglo-Celtic cultural institutions. In the second narrative, multiculturalism and Australia’s cultural diversity defined Australian national identity. Everyone interviewed was an Australian citizen – and so, according to Australian law, the participants were all Australians, but the women varied in the way they conceptualised notions of national identity alongside their own ethnic identities.

The participants in my study understood the concept of ‘nationality’ differently from the way in which it is described in the literature. Some women believed that their country of birth determined nationality, and other women believed that their nationality was determined by their parents’ birthplace. In most cases, the women referred to nationality as their *migrant ethnic identities*, and this meant that they equated the term nationality with their *migrant background* and not with their current legal citizenship. For example if someone asked them ‘what nationality are you?’, they would answer ‘Chilean’, because they or their parents were born in Chile, or ‘Turkish’, because this was their own or their parents’ birthplace. Although all 50 women were Australian citizens, some of them believed that their *ethnic identity* was ‘Australian’ because of their Australian citizenship, but citizenship did not always translate into an Australian ethnicity that all the women could relate to. So, in effect, many women separated the concepts of citizenship and ethnicity from the concept of nationality. My analysis of the women’s nationality however, takes into account their comments on citizenship, ethnicity, culture and race.

This chapter draws from one primary research question: How do the women conceptualise their Australian citizenship and does this understanding influence their adoption of an Australian identity? My analysis is focused on two themes: nationality and identity. The concept of nationality is explored through questions about citizenship, the women’s understandings of what it means to be Australian and how their perception
of race influences this process, and whether they felt accepted or excluded from the nation. The concept of identity is discussed in reference to the way the women constructed Australian national identity in reference to their own social identities. Jenkins defines social identities as the outcome of a socially constructed process encompassing, ‘the ways in which individuals and collectivities are distinguished in their social relationships with other individuals and collectivities. It is the systematic establishment and signification… of relationships of similarity and difference (1996: 4). In the context of my thesis, the participants’ social identities are explored through individual and collective processes. Specifically, I investigate how the women’s notions of ethnicity, sexuality and nationality influence their social identities, and how other people in Australian society influence the women’s rejection and adoption of their migrant, pan-ethnic and national identities. Effectively then, this chapter builds upon the two previous data chapters and it connects the major themes of my thesis.

This chapter deviates from the format of the two previous chapters because the logic of my analysis is empirically driven. The data presented in the previous chapters regarding the women’s ethnicity and sexuality were quite different for the two sample groups, so I separated their ideas. The two groups had similar ideas about Anglo-Australians, and so I grouped their ideas on Anglo-Australian ethnicity and sexuality. In this chapter, the two sample groups constructed nationality in similar ways and so I present the Latin and Turkish women’s ideas together. The women’s ideas about Anglo-Australians in regards to nationality were also similar, but their discussion of Anglo-Australians explicitly informs the entire chapter, and so I have not included a separate section on Anglo-Australians.

This chapter is divided into two parts. In the first part, I outline the Latin and Turkish women’s constructions of Australian nationality. I explore two themes of Australian nationality: citizenship and race. In the second part, I outline the Latin and Turkish women’s construction of Australian identity. In order to explore Australian identity, I present a typology of the women’s ethnic identities, which encompasses the intersection between their migrant and pan-ethnic identities (CoO, Latin, and Muslim) and their adoption or rejection of national identity (Australian) as an ethnicity that was meaningful to them. I will outline how these ethnic identities relate to their attitudes towards gender and sexuality, and finally, I highlight the influence of social context on the adoption of an Australian identity. I argue that the two narratives of Australian national identity (the Anglo-Celtic and multicultural) were equally influential to
women’s social construction of Australian nationality and on their subjective understandings of their ethnic identities.

6:1 CONSTRUCTING THE NATION

6:1:1 CITIZENSHIP

Citizenship is a concept that encompasses policies on civic rights, symbolic representations of nationhood, and the legal and social understandings of who belongs to the nation. Australian nationhood is sometimes constructed in reference to the ‘ethnic nation’ model, which encompasses a ‘core’ ethnic identity and shared cultural practices, values and institutions, and these have historically been modelled on an Anglo-Celtic way of life (see Davidson, 1997; Dutton, 2002). In recent times, notions of the ‘civic nation’ and, in the Australian case, the idea of ‘multicultural citizenship’, have challenged nativist and exclusionary notions of citizenship (Castles, 1997; Chesterman and Galligan, 1999; Davidson, 1997; Kalantzis, 2000). The women’s understanding of their Australian citizenship was not so much centred on shared cultural practices or the fulfilment of civic commitments (the ethnic model), but rather on civic models of the nation. They focused on the relative social privileges that their Australian citizenship created for them in relation to citizens in their families’ CoO.

When I asked the women if migrants should have to fulfil certain civic duties in order to retain their Australian citizenship, such as learning to speak English, or whether they should think of themselves as Australian, the women responded that Australian citizenship should not be premised on such obligations. Additionally, while they all believed that it was a ‘good idea’ for migrants to learn English, this was more about the benefits this would have for the migrant, rather than society.

When I asked the women about the cultural practices that epitomised the celebration of Australian nationhood, such as Australia Day or ANZAC Day, the women reported feeling disengaged from such celebrations. For example, the women might have a barbecue on Australia day but this was not done to celebrate the nation; it was more because it was a holiday. In contrast, most women did report attending their CoO community festivals celebrating their national days. Arguably, the women’s lack
of ‘celebration’ of Australian national events is not very noteworthy in relation to the way other Australians might ‘celebrate’ Australia Day, but it is noteworthy that the women did not see the symbolism of such events as important to them. Ofelia, a Latin participant said of ANZAC day, ‘It doesn’t mean anything. To be honest, I really don’t care. I know it sounds stupid, but yeah [trails off]’. In Chapter Five, we saw how the women did not identify with any cultural practices they associated with Australian national culture. The only cultural institution or belief the women held dear was the ideology of multiculturalism. When the women discussed their Australian citizenship, they discussed the benefits of Australia’s cultural diversity. Wendy provided an example of this, when she said that Australia Day was about the celebration of our multiculturalism:

_Say on Australia Day, do you feel proud?_

Wendy: [Cutting me off] I kind of did once, actually. What I am proud about Australia is that it is so accommodating… the fact that there are so many different people from all sorts of different countries here. I also think that’s a great thing. I think that it educates all of us about the fact that there is the rest of the world out there and it’s not just all about here. I think Australia is a great place. It offers so many opportunities and there is so much freedom here. There’s not a lot to complain about. It’s a beautiful place and we have a lot to be grateful of and the Australia Day, it’s about pride but it’s also about contentment to be able to belong to something like this. That's what it's about for me. [Latin]

There were three influences on the women’s understanding of their Australian citizenship: their extensive travels to their family’s CoO, their life opportunities, and class mobility. First, the women’s ideas about citizenship were influenced by their travels to their family’s CoO. Two experiences were relevant here: firstly, some women had lived in their CoO and second, everyone else had travelled back for a holiday. While all 50 women were Australian citizens, many of the women had lived overseas for a substantial period: the Latin women were largely born overseas and came to Australia typically around their sixth birthday and additionally, while the Turkish women were predominantly Australian-born, a few of them had lived in Turkey for a long period. Eleven of the 50 women had gone back to their CoO to live with their family, usually when they were around the age of six. This move was intended to be
permanent, but they had returned after their parents decided Australia was a better place to raise their children. Eight of these 11 women were Australian-born, and eight were Turkish and three were Latin. These 11 women had lived in their family’s CoO for a period between one to eight years, and two of the Turkish women had made this move to Turkey twice in their lives for a total period of five and six years respectively. All 11 women had all been enrolled in the education system in their respective CoO for the duration of their overseas stay.

Of the 50 participants, all but 10 women had been back to their family’s CoO for a visit. Twenty-nine women had gone on holidays that lasted typically between three to five months, and most women had visited at least twice in their lives, usually in their early primary school years and then again in their late teens. Two women though, had visited their families’ CoO as many as five times.

Most of the women had been back in recent years and so they had vivid memories of life in their family’s CoO. They tended to say things like ‘Life’s hard but they get the most out of life there’ [Destan, Turkish]. They spoke positively about their overseas visits, and they especially enjoyed the visits for their extended family’s company, the scenery, and they all said that the social lives of young people, especially the nightlife, was more vibrant overseas in comparison to Australia. All of the women, except one, believed that people in their CoO were much friendlier and had a better sense of community togetherness than people in Australia.

Despite their positive views about life in their family’s CoO, all the women said that Australia was their ‘home’. The women had seen negative aspects of life overseas, especially due to the poverty and political unrest they witnessed, and for the Latin women, fear of crime had also been an issue. The women said they appreciated their lives in Australia due to the ‘peaceful’ and ‘orderly’ nature of Australian society, and the ‘space’. Home ownership was highly valued because this was next to impossible in their CoO due to the lack of space. The women described life as ‘easy’ in Australia and ‘hard’ in their family’s CoO. For example,

Violeta: Oh it’s very poor up there! If you don’t work, you don’t eat, let’s put it that way. Very, very hard life, to live there [lets out a deep breath] it’s very hard … It’s very violent over there. You just cannot live over there… But here it’s just very easy, very easy, put it that way. [Latin]
Forty-seven of the 50 participants said they would never go back to their family’s CoO to live permanently. The Australian-born women who had lived overseas for a long period described life overseas as chaotic and unstable and they stressed that now they were older and in control of their life decisions, they would never return to their family’s CoO to live. One of these women said:

Harika: [In Turkey] it’s really terrible, the hospitals, the lifestyle, people, school-wise it’s very difficult. There are just too many people around and not enough space… Australia makes an issue about little things but, trust me, when you compare it to Turkey it’s nothing… It doesn’t matter what happens in Australia, it’s always that it’s a better life than anywhere else.

Other women who had only holidayed in their CoO said that they would never live overseas due to socio-economic reasons, and because they were ‘used to the life here’:

*Having been over there, do you think you might like to go over and live permanently?*

Zenia: I did; but when I went back I thought, ‘Nah’. I don’t see myself living there permanently. It was a whole new world over there. My life’s here now. I’ve grown up here, I’ve gotten used to Australia. [Latin]

The second influence on the women’s perception of their Australian citizenship related to their life opportunities and freedom in Australia. All 50 women described Australia as a ‘great country’. They endorsed notions of Australia as the ‘lucky country’ by describing themselves as ‘lucky’ to benefit from the opportunities they had in Australia as second generation migrants. They said things like, ‘We’re very privileged. I mean, we are! We’re so lucky’ [Fatma, Turkish]. Their Australian citizenship ensured them benefits that they would not receive in their family’s CoO, such as a stable socio-political system that provides a welfare safety net, accessible tertiary education, and good employment prospects.

Zenia: Being Australian, comparing it to Peru, there’s more opportunities here than say for example Peru when I went, especially for students and the elderly.
You know how you get your [youth allowance] pay. The government [there] don’t help you. [Latin]

Cennet: …I know that if I do want to get somewhere – and what a lot of people don’t realise is – that I am Australian. I am an Australian citizen. I was brought up in Australia. Australia is what has given me all my chances, [it] has given me my life, practically. [Turkish]

The Turkish women highly valued their Australian citizenship because it ensured the right to religious freedom, a right that Turkish citizens did not have in Turkey. Ferah said, ‘They say [Turkey’s] democratic but it’s really not’. As they saw it, their Australian citizenship represented being a member of true democracy:

How did you find the difference between life in Turkey and the way you’ve been brought up here?

Leyla: I hated it! [Laughing] I stayed there for a month and came back. The country is beautiful, but… I find Turkey oppressive. You have no right to say what you feel. If you say, ‘I don’t agree with the president, I don’t like Atatürk’, that’s it, you’re in jail. There’s no freedom of speech; it’s awful. It’s an oppressive country. I didn’t like it so I stayed a month and came home and then [mock emotional] ‘I love my Australia!’ [Laughs] Seriously, literally I was just so grateful to be Aussie at that time. Yeah – big time!

Issues related to gender made the opportunities they associated with their Australian citizenship more poignant. When the women compared their lives with those of women in their family’s CoO, they felt ‘grateful’ or ‘privileged’. They believed that Australian society was organised in a way that made men and women social equals who had the same rights. One common belief the women in both groups shared was that their Australian citizenship had resulted in greater ‘independence’ for them as women in the areas of education, employment, and gender relations in comparison to their female CoO counterparts in Turkey and Latin America. The women felt that they would have had a very different life overseas due to the gender inequalities in their family’s CoO.
Güldeste: It’s very good for a holiday but it’s very, very hard to adapt and accept it’s so culturally inclined coz here it’s not like that… Basic things like… ‘You have to serve your husband, cook his food, it’s a must, must, must…’ [Turkish]

In connection to their life opportunities, the third influence on the women’s perception of citizenship was class mobility. The women described themselves as being ‘middle class’ in their CoO (if they had lived there) as well as in Australia, but they qualified this. They said that there was a vast difference between these middle classes: the middle class in Australia had room for social mobility, but the ‘middle class’ in their CoO were only slightly better off than the ‘very poor’. Essentially they described the class system in their CoO as binary: people were either ‘poor’ (to varying degrees) or they were ‘very rich’. Asuman said of Turkey, ‘You’re either filthy rich, or you’re poor. There’s no in-between’. Sayuri, a Latin participant, said her family had been middle class in Argentina, and she described her class status in Australia as, ‘Middle class. In between’. When I asked her about the class system in Australia in relation to Argentina she said: ‘You can’t compare both societies… over there, when you’re poor, you’re really poor. It’s not like you get handouts, you can’t get any benefits like here. You’ve got opportunities here if you’re lower class’. Living overseas was out of the question for the women because they would not be socially mobile in their families’ CoO, but Australia provided this opportunity. They said things like:

Pandora: Going to Argentina would be taking a step back because of all that sort of stuff. [Latin]

Asuman: What would I have going for me there? It’s impossible… I’d always prefer Australia. [Turkish]

The women stressed that their parents had come to Australia to give them a better life and they noted with a sense of irony that other people in Australia were not making the most of their opportunities to be upwardly mobile. While many of these women’s parents had not completed high school, the women were in the process of, or had already completed, tertiary study. The women’s commitment to their education was striking, and it was tied to their drive for class mobility. While this finding on education seems consistent with other studies of the drive for academic achievement of
second generation migrants (see Khoo et al., 2002), it should be seen in the context of my methodology: my sample was derived largely through student organisations. Even so, the women believed that opportunities for tertiary study were taken for granted in Australia.

Rosa: I think it’s good that the government does help the people, but only those that really need it. I think it’s sad when there’s people, young people for example, who have such great potential to study, [but] they don’t even want to study. I know a few people who just can’t be bothered. For that reason they’re on unemployment… you see it go to waste on some people, they don’t really know how to appreciate it. They’d rather be on unemployment than use what they’re given. [Latin]

The women believed that they were not typical of most women their age in their CoO communities because of their education, career ambitions, and delayed fertility. They said of themselves, ‘I chose different things for myself’ [Neruda, Latin]. Some typical comments were:

Aylin: I see the Chilean girls that came to Australia and they haven’t really done much with their lives. They haven’t taken advantage of everything that’s been offered to them. They could’ve had a really good education, they could have bettered themselves but they haven’t really. I might have ended up like that. [Latin]

Akasma: If you’re not married by a certain age, they start questioning you. ‘Why isn’t your daughter married yet? Is there something wrong? What’s happening? …They see it so wrong that a girl’s studying and to have an education when a girl should be [knocks on the table for emphasis] at home, cooking and cleaning and looking after the husband. That’s how they see it. And I reckon that’s totally, totally wrong. [Turkish]

The women appreciated the opportunities of their Australian citizenship, but this citizenship status only translated into an Australian ethnic identity for some women. Their feelings about their Australian ethnicity were influenced by their perception of
how they fit in with the rest of Australian society. For example, Solmaz said of her citizenship, ‘Australia’s provided the foundation for my life’ and ‘the country does a lot for us’, but at the same time she said:

…I find it difficult because we’re stuck here at home and we have to live the Turkish way. Then when we’re at school, when we’re outside the house, we have to live the Aussie way of life... Everybody is living the same lifestyle [in Turkey]. You don’t feel that difference when you walk into the house and out of the house because it’s all the same everywhere [my emphasis].

Given Australia’s multiculturalism, where lifestyles are not the same everywhere due to our cultural diversity, this diversity should ideally make it easy to be different, but this was not the case in the women’s experiences. The next section focuses on the way that racial constructions of Australian identity influenced the women’s perception of national Australian identity.

6:1:2 RACE

Racial constructions of national identity

Having only recently returned to Australia from Uruguay, Lorelei, a Latin participant, had re-mastered the English skills she had lost over the years while living overseas, but she continued to experience some problems with tacit knowledge about Australian society, such as how to purchase a train ticket from the automated machines. She told amusing anecdotes of times she had asked strangers for help and gotten strange looks, and she said, ‘It’s pretty hard to look – not look Aussie, but speak Aussie and not have all that Aussie in me’. My conversation with Lorelei nicely highlighted issues regarding the racial construction of Australian identity. She stressed, ‘I don’t look Aussie’, and when I asked her why she thought this, she said:

Well, a real Aussie girl is blonde, blue-eyed, pale skin… very, very pale. I think you can tell an Aussie a mile away! Straight off: Australian. The blue eyes! I’m
actually quite happy with my eyes over here, because in South America everyone’s got brown eyes, so my eyes were shit over there. Yeah, and blue eyes were like, ‘Oh my god, blue eyes!’ And over here everyone’s got blue eyes, so I’ve had heaps of compliments for my brown eyes and I’m pretty happy about it [laughs and cheers] yaii!

The concept of race is socially constructed, but it nevertheless has great influence over the social construction of ethnic and national identities in Australia (Hage, 1998; Hollinsworth, 1998; Stratton, 1998; Zevallos, 2003a). Lorelei described ‘Aussies’ as a racial category. Aussies were immediately recognisable because of their ‘pale skin’ and blue eyes, and they were in the majority: ‘here everyone’s got blue eyes’. The women referred to Anglo-Australians as a social group but equally, they referred to them as a racial group primarily because they were ‘white’. The women spoke about race without making this concept explicit: they spoke about their own and other people’s ‘looks’ in terms of eye, hair and skin colour, and they also spoke of other physical makers of difference that were not biological, such as dress (in the Turkish women’s case). Most women did not think that people in Australia needed to look a particular way in order to call themselves Australian, but at the same time, they acknowledged the ‘stereotype’ of Australians which, beyond beer, footy, and meat pies, was based on race. The women were aware of their otherness in relation to ‘Australians’. As they saw it, Australian national identity was epitomised by Anglo-Australian-ness: being pale or white skinned, blonde-haired, blue-eyed, and ‘average looking’. Such descriptions reinforced the notion that Anglo-Australians were the majority group in Australia, even while the women wished to subvert the Anglo-Australian presence in the face of multiculturalism:

Matijana: Australians are typically blonde-haired and pale and average-looking [laughs]… [Latin]

Esmeray: …there’s a stereotypical Australian… I don’t fit the criteria by the way I look. [Turkish]

The women rallied against racial notions of Australian national identity; they said that only Aboriginal people were ‘true Aussies’ and equally they said that the category of Australian was based on cultural pluralism, and so there should ideally be no one way
to ‘look’ Aussie. This is why they described white Australians as a ‘stereotype’ of Australian national identity. The implication of this racialisation of ‘Aussies’ had two effects on the women: firstly, it affected how they saw themselves and how they perceived their own ‘race’, and secondly, it affected how they thought Anglo-Australians saw them, given that they did not fit the racial stereotype of an Australian.

The women’s racial construction of themselves was embraced in a positive way, but the racial categorisations that were imposed upon them by other people were often – but not always – negatively experienced. For example, returning to Lorelei’s comments above, she felt ‘happy’ not looking like a ‘real Aussie girl’, because other people perceived her difference, specifically her brown eyes, as exotic. Despite the compliments some of the women had received about their exotic looks, having their ‘looks’ perceived as ‘different’ was equal to being thought of as ‘not Australian’. On the one hand, the Latin women in particular marked themselves out to be different to Australians through ethnocentric notions of what it means to be ‘attractive’. They believed that Latin people were sexier than ‘Anglos’ and that Latins were enviable due to their darker skin, and this was why they characterised Anglo-Australians as ‘average-looking’. On the other hand, most of the Latin and Turkish women felt that Anglo-Australians did not see them as Australian because they were not ‘white’ Australians.

Phillips and Smith’s focus groups endorsed discourses of Australian-ness that did not refer to multiculturalism. Instead, they referred predominantly to an Anglo-Australian personality when describing what it meant to be ‘Australian’ (2000: 210). The researchers also reported that their participants nominated ‘the ethnic’ and migrants’ lack of assimilation as UnAustralian (Smith and Phillips, 1998). It can be argued then, that looking (as well as acting) different to white Anglo-Australians can lead to being categorised as UnAustralian. People of migrant background who are not ‘white’ or ‘Anglo’ must negotiate racial categorisations of Australian national identity which are based on looking ‘Anglo-Celtic’ (cf. Zevallos, 2003a: 94-95).

The participants in my study reported that Anglo-Australian people did not see them as Australian because they did not ‘look Aussie’, but this was based on differing criteria for the two groups: the Latin women felt that their ‘darkness’ marked them as ‘not Australian’, but the Turkish women felt their ‘Arab’ appearance marked them as ‘not Australian’. The Latin women said they were seen by Anglo-Australians as ‘wogs’ because of their dark hair, eyes, and skin colour. Being ‘dark’ was something they were
happy to be, but their darkness meant that they felt excluded from the Australian national identity.

Do you think of yourself as Australian?

Josefina: [Thinks] I used to when I was little, but because when I was still little people used to say to me, ‘Nuh. You’re dark, you can’t be Australian. What nationality are your parents?’ I’d say, ‘Peruvian’. ‘Well then, you’re Peruvian’. So in the end I just stuck with, ‘I’m Peruvian’.

Claudia: I was seen as an Aussie over there [Uruguay], but here I don’t think I am. I’m always seen as [laughs and drops her voice] as a wog. I think that you can tell because of the dark hair. It’s like anyone in Australia [stops]. No one looks like an Aussie anymore. We’re just all from different countries.

We see with Claudia’s comment that she was ‘seen as an Aussie’ when she travelled overseas, but in the Australian context, her dark hair tells people she is not an ‘Aussie’. She said ‘no one looks like an Aussie anymore’ but her experiences told her she was seen as a ‘wog’ rather than an Aussie, meaning that her ideas about who can be Australian clashed with her social experiences. In Josefina’s case, her experience of the social construction of race meant that it was easier for her to just ‘stick with’ her migrant identity, rather than to justify her Australian identity, because of her looks.

The Turkish women felt that other people would not see them as Australian because they were ‘wogs’ twice over: firstly, they had dark physical features, and secondly, they were Muslim. ‘Muslim’ is not in itself a racial category, but it is nevertheless a racialised category in Australia (see Poynting and Noble, 2004). In the participants’ experiences, being Muslim was often synonymous with being ‘Middle Eastern’ or ‘Arabic’. The women resisted such categorisations, as they saw their Turkish identities as ‘European’. Still, they felt they were seen as ‘bloody Arabs’ by Anglo-Australians. The likelihood of being categorised as belonging to an ‘Arab race’ was heightened for the closed Turkish women because of the hijab. For example, Sahiba, said, ‘They automatically assume you’re an Arab when you’ve got a scarf on. It’s like, “Oh you Arabs, oooh” [laughs]’.

The women’s understanding of race as it related to Australian national identity was informed through their experiences with the question ‘where are you from?’. The
women spoke about this question whenever I asked them about their Australian identities and when I asked them if they felt other people accepted them as Australian, and so it seems that the question ‘where are you from?’ and their understanding of Australian identity go together.

When I asked the women if they ever asked people where they were from, they all had. A couple of the women said they tried not to ask this question because it annoyed them, but they nevertheless asked this question out of ‘curiosity’ and they felt that most people did so out of the same sense of curiosity. For example, Aylin said, ‘Sometimes you can’t help it because you start talking about countries… [or] you just want to know where their features are from’ [Latin]. The question ‘where are you from’ may be asked out of curiosity, but in effect, it functions as a gate-keeping tool regarding Australian national identity, even though it is not intended this way, because the question operates through notions of race (cf. Ang, 1996; Zevallos, 2003a). Conceivably, people might ask this question of people with a foreign-sounding name or people who spoke with an accent, but only four women spoke of incidents where this had been the case. (Only a couple of the Australian-born Turkish women who had lived overseas had slight accents that I could detect, but the other participants spoke fluent English without an accent. Two Latin women who did not have accents – and did not see themselves as having accents – had been asked ‘where is your accent from?’.) All 50 women believed that the question ‘where are you from?’ was more about the way people look than anything else.

Most women were not ‘bothered’ by or offended over this question, but they sometimes found this question ‘frustrating’ or ‘annoying’ when people who were dissatisfied with their answer would badger them about their identities. In this case, the ‘question where are you from?’ led to a feeling of exclusion from the Australian identity:

> What do you think about that question, ‘Where are you from?’
> Devi: I think it always reminds people that you’re different from other people. The question ‘Where are you from?’… when you ask that question to someone you’re always reminding them that they’re not from here. Obviously if you’re clearly in a place [overseas] where you clearly don’t look like you’re native, then people will always constantly ask that. But I hear that question all the time. [Latin]
In a multicultural nation where diversity is the norm, why does this question matter? Well, it matters if we are going to honour our diversity: in order to respect someone’s cultural background, we must first establish its origin. Then again though, the women wondered about the ubiquity of this question, as they believed it should be automatically assumed that everyone is Australian. At the same time though, this presumption of an Australian identity would not fit in with some women’s ethnic identities, as not everyone thought of themselves as Australian. This question was a ‘catch-22’: if they said they were Australian, some people would not believe them, even if they were born here; if they said they were not Australian, they were grilled about this, especially in reference to their Australian citizenship. For example, Rana was born in Australia, but her life experiences have conditioned her against telling people she was Australian when she is asked where she comes from.

*Do you think of yourself as Australian? Do you call yourself Australian?*

[Thinks] It doesn’t really fuss me. When somebody says to me ‘What nationality are you?’, I say, ‘I’m Turkish’ [but] not that I was born here, because if I say ‘I’m Australian’ they’d be like, [speaks in a childish tone] ‘No you’re not! No you’re not, you’re something else!’ They want to know where my parents are from. Like, ‘Fine! I’m Turkish then’. But then if I said I’m Turkish, they’d be like, [in childish tone] ‘No you’re not; you’re Australian!’ [Laughs] So I don’t know which way to go! So if they ask me I just say, ‘What do you want to know?’ Yes I was born here, but my parents are Turkish. But I don’t say I’m Australian.

Almost everyone interviewed – irrespective of their Australian or overseas birthplace – did not believe that other people would accept them as Australian and usually, by ‘other people’ they meant Anglo-Australians.

*Do you think other people accept you as Australian?*

Wendy: Well I think you have to be Anglo. Let’s face it. Some people that are Australian don’t look, like, blonde… but if I were to think about what I consider typical of an Australian person then, yeah, you have to be Anglo and not look like me [laughs]. I know that’s really superficial but that’s what people see initially. They’re not going to stop to think about your personality when you first introduce yourself. [Latin]

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Amatullah: When you initially meet someone for the first five minutes and they’re covered and they look like they’re dark or whatever, if you said, ‘I’m Australian’, they’d be like [amused tone] ‘Where you really from?’ You know, so automatically I’d say, ‘Turkish’.

While ethnicity matters to these women, especially given their focus on multicultural narrative of the nation, it was the imposed element of the question ‘where are you from?’ that the women objected to. The question was framed in such a way that the women could only ever be either Australian or not Australian – but not both – and, in their experiences, most people judged them to be not Australian because of their migrant background, irrespective of the women’s subjective adoption of an Australian identity.

_Do you think other people accept you as Australian?

Aylin: I don’t think so. Not everybody. When I was working in retail a lot of customers would come up and ask, ‘So what nationality are you?’ And sometimes I’d say, ‘Australian’ and they’d just laugh, like I was being funny. And I wasn’t. I was trying to say, ‘I’m just like you. I’m just like everybody here. I’m Australian’. And to them that’s not an answer. They go, ‘But what are you? What nationality are you? What background are you?’ …It shouldn’t really matter what background you are. [Latin]

While the women felt conditioned against telling people they were Australian, most women still thought of themselves as Australian. This was an important distinction; being Australian was an internal identity but the women did not always externalise this identity; or to put it another way, they did not always say they were Australian. Nevertheless, despite the lack of acceptance of their Australian identity, most women felt defiant about their Australian identity:

_Do you see yourself as Australian?

Leyla: Yes, I always have this debate with my mum. I always say I’m an Aussie, and she goes, ‘No you’re not! If you ever go up to an Aussie and asked them they’d say, “You’re not an Australian”’. I go, ‘Well mum, they can’t really say that either because [whispers] they’re not Australian either unless [they’re] an
Aboriginal” [laughs]. I think most of society would accept that: ‘Yeah you’re an Aussie’ but there’s that small few that say, ‘No you’re not because your parents were born somewhere else’. I don’t care what they think, as long as I know what I am. [Turkish]

Despite the internal and external influences on the women’s construction of Australian national identity, identity was always spoken about as a choice: one can choose to be an Australian even if other people did not accept this choice. As İrem said, ‘I guess you can be whatever you want to be. You don’t have to have all these people stamp and approve your letter saying, “Yes you are Australian”. It is definitely what you see yourself as’ [Turkish]. Other studies on second generation migrants stress the ‘strategic essentialism’ of ethnicity, whereby the second generation choose elements of their migrant and Australian cultures in their reconstruction of identity (Noble, Poynting and Tabar, 1999). Studies on the second generation showed that while the second generation drew upon multiculturalism to support their expressions of ethnicity, notions of race reinforced a sense of social exclusion from Australian national identity (Butcher and Thomas, 2001; Zevallos, 2003a). As Jenkins (1997) pointed out, researchers must give primary focus to people’s subjective constructions of their ethnicity, but he also acknowledges that the objective or external forces that shape this construction are often related to race.

In my own study, the women’s insistence that Australian culture be defined in terms of multiculturalism highlights their simultaneous rejection of and compliance with racial constructions of the Australian identity in terms of ‘Anglo-ness’. In the framework of Water’s (1990) analysis, racial constructions of identity limit the ‘ethnic options’ available to the second generation. In Water’s study, her white middle-class American-born participants could choose to be part Scottish or part Portuguese, but it seemed unlikely to her that Hispanic or African-Americans could have the same ethnic options due to their non-white appearance. My study shows that my participants have a great deal of agency in the construction of their ethnicities. They pick the bits they like from Australian culture and blend this with the bits they like from their migrant culture and give this construction an ethnic label, such as ‘Turkish-Australian’. At the same time, other people’s external categorisations of them in terms of race limited the extent to which this ethnic construction worked, and so they were more often seen as ‘Turkish’ and not Australian, rather than as Turkish-Australians.
The women’s understanding of racism in Australian society complicated their sense of national belonging, as the next section will show.

**Racism and national belonging**

The women ambivalently linked the concepts of race, racism, and national belonging. The following discussion of racism focuses on the racist practices of Anglo Australians, which reflected the women’s experiences. I note, however, that two women also spoke of fights between friendship groups of different migrant backgrounds in their primary and secondary schools that involved racial antagonism, and in these cases, the women noted that Greek people, for example, could also be ‘racist’. I asked the women three general questions regarding racism: ‘Did you ever come across anything negative while you were growing up because you were of [CoO] background?’; ‘Have you ever experienced any racism or discrimination?’; and, ‘Do you think Australia is a fairly tolerant or a racist society?’

Forty-four women told me stories about the racism they had experienced in their lives, and I propose a threefold typology to understand these experiences. The women described three types of personal experiences with racism: there were 18 women who had experienced no racism, 19 women who had experienced some racism, and seven women who had experienced severe racism. I did not collect data on six women’s personal experiences with racism. While I did ask their attitudes towards racism in Australian society, these six women were excluded from these three categories because the typology refers to having personally experienced or not experienced racism or discrimination, and I failed to ask this of these six women. The following table maps the women’s experiences of racism in connection to their CoO background:
Table 4: Participants’ personal experiences with racism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TYPE</th>
<th>LATIN WOMEN</th>
<th>TURKISH WOMEN</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Open Muslims</td>
<td>Closed Muslims</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No racism</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some racism</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Severe racism</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Numbers do not total to 50 because no data was collected on six women’s personal experiences with racism.

There were literally two responses to the question ‘have you ever faced any racism or discrimination?’: yes and no. The women who said yes however, differed in descriptions of the intensity and the influence this racism had on their lives. For example, one of the women who reported that she had experienced racism said, ‘but it wasn’t severe’ [Ferah]. The difference between the ‘some’ and ‘severe’ categories comes down not so much to the nature of the incident, but to the women’s emotional responses to it.

These categories of ‘no racism’, ‘some racism’ and ‘severe racism’ are subjective: what the women perceived as racism varied, and we see this most clearly with the women who said they had experienced no racism. Some of the 18 women who reported they had experienced no racism in their lives still saw racism as a problem in Australia, but it was something that happened to other people. When asked if they had faced anything negative regarding their ethnic background or recalled facing racism or discrimination because of their CoO background, they said things like: ‘Do you mean in the sense of what nash [nationality]?’ [Thinks] Nah, always very accepted’ [Matijana, Latin]; or they said, ‘No. I don’t think so, because everyone [at school] had a different backgrounds, different cultures’ [Zenia, Latin]. The Latin women were more likely than the Turkish women to report no personal experience with racism: 15 of the Latin women and three of the Turkish women (all open Muslims) were included in this category. At other times in their interview however, the women in this ‘no racism’ category would describe incidents that could be construed as racist, for example feeling insulted by the term ‘wog’ or feeling excluded from the Australian identity on the basis
of race, but such experiences did not lead the participants to think of themselves as having experienced racism.

Of the 19 women who had experienced some racism, five women were Latin and 14 were Turkish (both open and closed). These women had faced racism on several occasions throughout their lives, but they saw these incidents as sporadic rather than as part of their everyday lives. In general, while they acknowledged these racist incidents had been painful at the time (usually during primary and secondary school), they reported that the racism had not affected them greatly on an emotional level. For example, they said things like: ‘If there was anything negative I’ve probably brushed it off. At the time I was feeling ashamed because I was the odd one out. Now I’m sort of like, proud. Like I don’t really care. It just doesn’t bother me. This is just me’ [Sayuri, Latin].

Seven women had experienced severe racism: four were Latin and three Turkish (two were closed, and one was open). These women most commonly told of feeling persecuted when they were younger in primary or secondary school, and a couple of the open and closed Turkish women also felt discriminated against by their lecturers and tutors in university. Most of these women continued to come across racism, and they described a more systematic sense of prejudice than the women in the previous category. For example, they described discrimination in their workplaces and one woman had a stranger spit on her face and verbally abuse her as she walked down the street. Given that these seven women’s experiences of racism were extreme, they felt that racism had a ‘very big’ impact on their lives and they spoke emotively about this, typically saying that they were ‘still not over’ their experiences. These women were generally wary of Anglo-Australians, and in three cases, they wrestled with a ‘hatred’ or feelings of ‘racism’ towards ‘most’ Anglo-Australian people. Poppy said:

I remember I used to cry a lot. I sort of mixed with people who were like me, so I guess that’s a way of dealing with it, by avoiding them. I hated a lot of Australian people. A lot of hatred, but I’m over it… The thing was, it wasn’t just racism from being Chilean, it was just from being different. People didn’t care what I was. They’d call me ‘curry’ or ‘wog’ or ‘Arab’ and I’m not any of those things [laughs] and so I said, ‘Okay. I guess it’s because I’m different’. [Latin]
Making sense of racism at the social level was difficult for the women: they all knew that racism exists in Australia, but what does this say about Australian society? Social scientists have argued that racialised and racist constructions of the nation have become more prominent in Australia in recent times (Markus, 2001; Stratton, 1998) and that racism is institutionalised in society despite Australian multicultural policies (Vasta and Castles, 1996; Hage, 1998; Hollinsworth, 1998). Racism in Australia is not institutionalised in a manifest way, such as with Apartheid in South Africa in former times. Australia’s political structure is set up to protect people against discrimination on the basis of race, ethnicity and religion. Racism, is however, arguably institutionalised in Australia on a more abstract level: Anglo-Australian cultural practices dominate representations of Australian national identity at the expense of cultural diversity, which is the case put forward by the previously cited Australian social scientists. The women I interviewed would disagree about the breadth and impact of racism in Australia.

There was only a minority of the total sample who believed that Australia was a racist society, but even these women were quick to say that not all Anglo-Australians are racist and that only some people in Australia were racist. The majority of the interviewees, however, believed that Australia was a tolerant society because it was multicultural. They believed this even though they have encountered racism in their lifetimes. This was an especially curious belief coming from the Turkish women, because they had also spoken at length about the stigmatisation of Muslims which had increased since September 11, 2001.

Amatullah: Yeah, even though there’s been a lot of negative results that came from September 11 and even prior to that, we can’t ignore the positives as well. There’s been a lot of support; we can’t downplay that. So definitely, there’s been a lot of support. I would say it is a multicultural society; there are a lot of open-minded people. It’s just the bigots the media loves to sensationalise, but generally, I think there are a lot of positive aspects. We can’t just sit here and say, ‘What a horrible country’. No. [Turkish, closed, experienced some racism]

The women spoke of racism in relation to ‘individual racism’ – a belief that racism comes from individual people – rather than in terms of institutional or ‘everyday racism’ – a theory which links routine everyday experiences of racism with structural
forces (Essed, 2002). The women generally believed that racist people in Australia were in the minority, and that these people were in denial about Australia’s multicultural nature. The women believed that the multicultural ideology, which was based on an acceptance of our cultural diversity, was a national belief that was ‘well accepted and well embraced by a lot of people’ [Wendy, Latin, experienced no racism]. Therefore, anyone who did not value our ethnic diversity was racist. Smith and Phillips’ participants saw racism as one aspect of the UnAustralian construct (2001: 335), and my participants would agree with this. My participants believed that because Australian multiculturalism is premised on egalitarianism between ethnic groups, people who go against this are betraying the Australian spirit. They bound multiculturalism up with the spirit of the ‘fair go’, and so within such a framework, racist people were social deviants. Solmaz said, ‘You got to learn to mix with people and give people a go. I don’t think it’s right to generalise, but a lot of people do. A lot of the Australians do that. They’re racist’ [Turkish, open, experienced no racism].

The women characterised ‘racist people’ as uneducated, older, ‘ignorant’ and mostly as Anglo-Australian. In contrast, everyone else, including the majority of Anglo-Australians, were seen as accepting Australia’s multiculturalism because they were better educated about its benefits. For example, Rana enthusiastically said that Australian society was, ‘Pretty tolerant yeah!’ Australian society was not a racist society, despite her own experiences with racism:

Like I said there’s some Australians that are very accepting of how you are. I think it’s half-half. Maybe the older generation and some of the ignorant, uneducated people are very racist – not racist but prejudiced against other religions [and] things that haven’t conformed to the Australian way. Because we haven’t conformed to the Australian way of living they find us threatening maybe. They just want everything to be the same… Whereas the other half, they’re the uni students, they’re people that are going to school, they’re younger, they’re much, much, much more accepting and so nice! [Turkish, closed, experienced some racism]

While the majority of the interviewees believed that most Anglo-Australians did not accept them as Australian, they also believed that most Anglo-Australians were accepting of people keeping up their migrant identities and their cultural and religious
traditions in Australia. This is interesting because, by and large, the women characterised ‘racist people’ as being Anglo-Australian. In Chapter Five I showed how the women described Anglo-Australians as ‘laid-back’. This laid-back persona was not only about having a friendly and relaxed disposition; it was also about accepting Australia’s cultural diversity. For example Luci, a Latin participant, described Anglo-Australians as ‘laid back’ and she added, ‘they accept you for who you are’ [experienced no racism].

Overall, the women generally gave ambivalent messages about racism in Australia. Much of this ambivalence derived from the women’s understanding of multiculturalism. They made three claims about racism and national belonging that, taken together, add up to a contradictory account of race and racism in Australia:

1. Australia is not a racist society because it is a multicultural society; they said this even if they had personally experienced racism.
2. Most Anglo-Australians are not racist, but most people who are racist were characterised as being Anglo-Australian.
3. Anglo-Australians support multiculturalism, but at the same time, the women believed that Anglo-Australians did not accept them as being really Australian.

These three beliefs about racism in Australian society tell us something very important about the women’s understanding of the ideology of Australian multiculturalism, an ideology they continued to believe in despite their social experiences of racism. Karli, an open Turkish participant, provides an apt example of the tensions in the women’s accounts of multiculturalism, race and national identity. Karli saw herself as Australian even though she had faced some racism growing up. She said:

…I got called a wog. ‘Stupid wog’, or, ‘You’re a wog, what do you expect?’, or ‘You’re a Muslim, what do you expect?’ Yeah, ‘You Turkish people are all the same’, or ‘That’s just stupid, why do your parents believe that? That’s just stupid’. Things like that.
When I asked Karli to define ‘multiculturalism’, she did so in reference to the racism she had encountered in her life from both Anglo-Australians and other migrant-Australians:

It is a multicultural country, that’s obvious. But there is a lot of racism that goes on from day to day. Growing up, in high school, it was always, ‘You’re a wog, and we’re Aussie’ or, ‘You’re Turkish, and I’m Greek. Turkey and Greece don’t get along’. Or, ‘You’re a Muslim, and yous are terrorists’. With this [September 11] bombing, [there is] so much conflict that is put towards the Muslims, you know? …I don’t think that we can go around and say that we’re multicultural – I mean, we’re not multicultural orientated because it just doesn’t happen, there’s too much racism going on.

Karli was unusual, in that she was one of the few women to say that Australia had a systemic problem with racism that undermined Australia’s status as a ‘multicultural’ society. Yet she went on to contradict this. Later in her interview, when I asked her whether she believed Australia is a fairly tolerant or a racist society, she said that Australia was not a racist society:

No, I reckon it’s a fairly tolerant society. It’s not racist; you can’t stereotype. Me saying that, I’d be contradicting myself because… saying that all Australians are racist is wrong. My best friend’s Australian. I’ve known her since grade prep and not once did we have a wog-Australian conflict.

Despite the women’s experiences of racism, they did not believe that Australia had a structural problem with racism. Although I invited the women to comment on racism at the social level, beyond the realm of their everyday experiences, they did not connect the two. They described racism through the theory of individual racism, which sees it as a problem located within individual belief systems, and it describes individuals as either racist or ‘not racist’ (see Jenkins, 1997: 83; Hollinsworth, 1998: 7). Instead of speaking of racism at the social level, the women spoke of multiculturalism, and so this suggests that the two concepts are linked for them. Below, I summarise my findings on the women’s social construction of the nation, and I discuss the links between racism and multiculturalism.
The women believed in multiculturalism because of, or in spite of, their social experiences. The ideology of multiculturalism, as they saw it, was not just about embracing cultural diversity as part of the Australian identity, but it was about reconstructing the nation as the ‘migrants’ country’. The women believed that Australian society was not racist, irrespective of their own experiences with racism and marginalisation, and, almost in the same breath, they praised Australia’s multiculturalism as positive. They believed that the Australian national identity includes all types of Australians, specifically Anglos, migrants and Aboriginals. At the same time, however, they generally believed that most Anglo-Australians did not accept them as Australian – and yet these were the same Australians who were seen to be not racist. There are three possible explanations for these contradictory findings. These explanations can be organised under the general heading of an ideology of acceptance, a phrase that encompasses their ideological support for an anti-racist, multicultural nationhood.

First, the women’s ideology of acceptance might be seen as contextual; their ideology of acceptance prevailed despite their experiences with racism and exclusion because they differentiated their individual experiences from a wider social experience. In their personal experience, Anglo-Australians might be racist and sometimes make them feel ‘not Australian’ because the women did not ‘look it’, but when they thought about the nation as a whole, they saw their own experience with racial prejudice as atypical. This is consistent with their belief that not all Australians were racist, only some Anglo-Australians were racists. Making a distinction between their individual experiences and wider social experience of racism was also contrasted with the belief that it was ‘un-Australian’ to be racist. They believed that most Australians were not racist, and that those who are racist are deviating from a shared Australian cultural norm of tolerance of cultural diversity.

Second, their ideology of acceptance can be seen as relative. In comparison to other nations, Australia was seen as a tolerant society that accommodates, rather than restricts, diversity. There was some support for this idea in the women’s interviews, especially with the women who said that in comparison to Turkey, Australia is not a ‘racist’ society because Muslims are allowed to publicly express their religious identities. Also, some of the Latin women said that in comparison to Latin America,
Australia is a peaceful society, because people could coexist without great conflict despite our cultural pluralism. All the women said that Australia was a country distinguished by its cultural diversity and they often compared this cultural pluralism with the ‘sameness’ of their CoO. In comparison to their CoOs, Australian multiculturalism, ‘helps broaden people’s minds’ [Ursula, Latin], and our cultural diversity means that, ‘There’s so much to learn from everybody’ [Asuman, Turkish, open].

Additionally, the women said that multiculturalism works well in Australia, given that there is a lack of overt racial and ethnic conflict here in comparison to countries other than their CoO, such as America. For example, Rana said about her future: ‘Right now I’d like to live here for the rest of my life. I’d like to raise my kids here. It’s a very promising country [laughs]; it’s not like in America. I wouldn’t want to live in America, there’s too much hostility [towards Muslims]’ [Turkish, closed]. Yvonne made a general comparison between Australia’s multiculturalism and other countries:

*You were saying that we’re multicultural. What do you mean by that?*

Compared to other countries, I think we’re really good at accepting other nationalities and other countries… It’s good; we’re all different. There’s Catholics; there’s mosques; the Jehovah’s, they’ve got one [a church]; Anglican, they’ve got one too. Especially how there’s such a variety of foods. Lygon Street’s Italian. Everywhere, it’s good. I love other nationalities’ foods, I love how we all get to experience it here. It’s all different. [Latin]

Third, the women’s ideology of acceptance might be explained through an analysis of hegemony. The ideology of Australian multiculturalism is premised on the idea that we are a society that embraces cultural diversity; therefore multiculturalism allows the women a legitimate basis to claim their migrant identities and to maintain their CoO practices. As Betts (1999) pointed out, when we look at ideologies extrinsically we can see that they generate losers and winners, and that it is easier for people to adopt ideologies if there is something for them to gain, such as status and group membership. The women supported the ideology of multiculturalism and it also offered them benefits as migrant-Australians. At the same time, the women’s support of the ideology of multiculturalism seemed to drown out the oppressive elements which prevail in society despite multiculturalism, such as racism and social exclusion. In
order to investigate why this might occur I draw, an admittedly limited and cautious
comparison, with a more familiar example of a problematic ideology. Bittman and
Lovejoy’s (1993) work on male-female partnerships and the ideology of partnership and
equality might be juxtaposed with the ideology of multiculturalism. Both of these
ideologies are concerned with equality, but more importantly, like all ideologies, their
ideas are not fully realised and instead, their principles are contradictory in practice.

Bittman and Lovejoy (1993) use the concept of ‘cognitive dissonance’ to describe
the way heterosexual couples espoused an ideology of partnership and gender equality
in the face of obvious inequalities in their domestic labour practices. In Bittman and
Lovejoy’s study, men and women acknowledged a belief in equal partnership and, even
though there were inequalities in their ‘sharing’ of domestic labour, Bittman and
Lovejoy’s participants employed tactics to manage and reduce the emotional impact of
this inequality on their relationships. In a similar way, I argue that the women’s
attitudes towards multiculturalism, national identity and racism might be explained
through the concepts of cognitive dissonance and hegemony. Just as Bittman and
Lovejoy’s participants felt a need to ignore inequality in order to feel connected to their
partner and continue their relationship, my participants might have been deflecting the
social inequalities they experienced – their experiences with racism and their feelings of
not being accepted as Australian – in order to continue feeling like they belonged to the
multicultural nation.

The women’s contradictory views point to the difficulties in constructing a
multicultural nationhood. On the one hand, the ideology of multiculturalism in
Australia is beneficial to the women on a personal level: it gives them a legitimate basis
to belong to the nation apart from their Australian citizenship because, as second
generation migrants, they contribute to Australia’s national culture in a way that (in
their eyes) Anglo-Australians do not, because Anglo-Australians lacked cultural
resources. This idea could also be viewed as ‘racist’ (or alternatively as ethnocentric),
because the women denigrated the cultural contribution of Anglo-Australians by saying
‘They don’t have a culture’.

On the other hand, the ideology of multiculturalism had not resulted in a truly
multicultural Australian identity in the women’s collective experience: not all
Australians accept all non-white, non-Christian citizens as ‘Australian’, and equally, the
women did not always think of themselves as Australian. In order for non-white second
generation migrants to belong to the multicultural nation, it might be necessary for them
to believe that multiculturalism works well, despite the problems of racism and exclusion that prevail. So this was why the women might say that while some Anglo-Australians might be racist, the society is not. The women did not see racism and exclusion from the Australian identity as a problematic aspect of Australian culture, even though it had been a problem for them in their personal experiences. Believing that racism is an individual and not a social problem goes against much of the social and political theory about racism. Some theorists claim that racism is a social problem even when it manifests itself as an ordinary event in an individual’s daily life, because this individual act reflects deeper cultural practices of racism (Essed, 2002; see also Hage, 2002: 247).

I argue that all three explanations for the women’s ideology of acceptance are legitimate, but the first explanation, that racism is contextual, probably best represents my participants’ ideas. Australia does continue to operate with lower levels of civic conflict relative to other culturally diverse nations. The women I interviewed maintained that to be Australian was to be multicultural. My findings are aligned with other studies in which young second generation migrants ‘described Australian culture as being multiculturalism itself’, although at the same time, these same young people ‘did not have a sense that their own cultural background was valued as being part of what it is to be “Australian”’ (Butcher and Thomas, 2001: 29; see also Ang et al., 2002; Zevallos, 2003a).

My findings show that the women’s ideals about the Australian multicultural identity were blocked by continuing ideas of race. How then, did the women negotiate their national and migrant identities given their contradictory experiences of race and racism in multicultural Australia? And how did they manage their Australian nationality given their lack of engagement with the dominant group’s cultural practices?

6:2 AUSTRALIAN IDENTITIES

In this section, I show that, as the participants described it, there was more than one way to construct their Australian nationality; there was more than one way for them to be Australian. The following analysis is premised upon two notions: first, that Australian national identity can be thought of as a majority *ethnicity*, and second, that being an Australian is a social identity. As Jenkins (1996) describes it, social identities
encompass internal and external influences, and so they require the management of our own ideas of who we are, of who other people are in relation to us, and of how other people see us. The women conceptualised their ethnic identities according to their adoption or rejection of an Australian ethnic identity, and this was done with reference to other people in their CoO groups as well as other people in Australian society, especially Anglo-Australians.

The women’s identities can be thought of as spaced along a continuum from ‘not Australian’ to ‘Australian’ because they spoke of their identities as being more or less inclined towards one identity over another. For example some women who took on their family’s CoO ethnicity as well as an Australian ethnicity said they were ‘more Latin than Australian’ or ‘more Australian than Turkish’. Further to this, some women spoke of themselves as being ‘somewhere in the middle’ or ‘in-between’ two or more identities. They also spoke of their identities in terms of ‘parts’ and percentages, making such statements as ‘that’s the Australian part of me’, ‘my Australian side’, and ‘I can’t say I’m 100 per cent Australian’. Given this emphasis on signifying which ‘parts’ of themselves are situated ‘more’ or ‘less’ or ‘in the middle’ of some imagined continuum between their migrant and Australian cultures, it can be seen that my participants were involved in a hierarchical categorisation of their own identities. That is, they gave emphasis to one aspect of their ethnicity over other identities according to the importance of their ‘primary’ ethnic identity.

I have developed a threefold typology that outlines the women’s adoption of their Australian nationality as an ethnicity. This typology is based on the women’s answers to the questions ‘How would you describe your ethnic identity?’ and ‘Do you call/think of yourself Australian?’ The three types are: ‘Australian’, ‘partly Australian’ or ‘not Australian’. It is the nature of typologies that they in effect ‘simplify reality’ (De Vaus, 1994: 194), and so the categories presented necessarily simplify the complex reality of the participants’ negotiation of ethnicity. An elaboration of this reality recognises that the participants’ primary ethnic identities are specific to social context. This chapter develops a typology which rings true for the participants within the Australian social context. It concludes by showing how the participants’ primary ethnic identities were subject to change when they travelled overseas to their family’s COO. The typology encompasses three general identities in the Australian context:
1. Migrant: either CoO Latin or Turkish.
2. Pan-ethnic: either Latin or Islamic.

The threefold typology explored in this chapter is as follows. The first type is ‘not Australian’. This category includes all women who did not see themselves as Australian, but who instead adopted their family’s CoO ethnicity and a pan-ethnic ethnicity. Overall, 13 out of the 50 participants were classified as ‘not Australian’, and this figure includes women from both groups. In all these cases, the participants vehemently rejected an Australian ethnic identity. The second type is ‘partly Australian’. This category includes women who adopted hyphenated migrant/pan-ethnic and Australian ethnic identities. Overall, 36 of the 50 participants were classified as ‘partly Australian’. This was the biggest category, as this type represents almost three quarters of the total sample (72%). The women in this category adopted an Australian identity with varying degrees of enthusiasm. The third type is ‘Australian’. This category included only one woman from the Latin sample who adopted an Australian identity and who rejected her family’s CoO ethnicity. There were no Turkish participants who fell into this category.

The typology seems more straightforward for the Latin participants and more complicated for the Turkish participants because of the compounding effect of religion, which was adopted by many of the Turkish women as an ethnicity. The Turkish participants held multiple ethnic identities which were based around migrant culture (Turkish), pan-ethnicity (Muslim), and nationality (Australian). These identities were generally not interchangeable for the Turkish participants; meaning that these identities were ranked and these ranks did not change. Instead, their identities were ranked according to a hierarchy of importance of each identity. So for example they said things like, ‘I’m a Muslim first and then I’m Australian and then I’m Turkish’. The Latin women held multiple ethnic identities based around migrant culture (CoO), pan-ethnicity (Latin), and nationality (Australian). The Latin participants did not establish priorities between their migrant and pan-ethnic identities: for example, being Argentinean, South American and Latin were interchangeable identities, and one was not specified to be more important than the other. Instead, the Latin women ranked their migrant and pan-ethnic identities as more important than their national identities.
And so they said ‘I’m more Latin than Australian’ rather than ‘I’m Argentinean first and then I’m Latin and then I’m Australian’. (Appendix 7 illustrates the typology and distinguishes between the women’s hierarchical identities.)

While the typology itself addresses ethnicity and nationality, the ideas presented in the previous chapter on gender and sexuality, and specifically, the topic of gender equality, were integral to the three types. Issues regarding gender equality influenced most of the women’s adoption of an Australian identity. Some women rejected an Australian identity even though Anglo-Australian gender ideals were important to them, and other women adopted an Australian identity partly as a reflection of their appreciation of these gender ideals. The typology provides an apt way to bring together the three themes of my thesis – ethnicity, gender/sexuality, and nationality – as they relate to the concept of identity.

6:2:1 TYPOLOGY: AUSTRALIAN IDENTITIES

The following table provides a snapshot of the typology and it shows the numerical difference between the two groups in each type. Below, I describe the typology in detail (for more detail, see Appendix 7).

Table 5: National identities of Latin and Turkish participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BIRTHPLACE</th>
<th>TYPE</th>
<th>NOT-AUSTRALIAN</th>
<th>PARTLY-AUSTRALIAN</th>
<th>AUSTRALIAN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LATIN</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TURKISH</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Overseas</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td></td>
<td>13</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Not-Australian

Thirteen of the 50 participants rejected an Australian identity. The majority of the women in this category were Latin (ten women) and they were mostly Australian-born
The ten Latin women described their ‘not-Australian’ identities in the same way, by emphasising their migrant and pan-ethnic ethnicities and rejecting an Australian ethnicity. So they said things like ‘[I’m a] Latina. I’m a Peruana. That’s where I’m more cultural; I’m more Peruana de nada [I’m more Peruvian than anything]. I always say “Peru, South American”’ [Josefina]. In addition, there were three Turkish women in this category, and they had two ways of describing their ‘not-Australian’ identities, by emphasising their migrant and pan-ethnic cultures. Two of the Turkish women said they were ‘Turkish’ but not Australian; both of them were open Muslims. For example, Pertev described herself as a ‘Turk’ but she said ‘I don’t see myself as Australian’. Bikem, who had once ‘hated’ her culture and religion now described herself as a Turkish-Cypriot, and said: ‘Now I’m like, “I’m Cypriot and I’m proud of it”’. In this instance Bikem was taking on both a CoO (Turkish) and a localised migrant identity (Cypriot). The other Turkish woman in this category, Rana, was a closed Muslim who described herself as a ‘Muslim-Turk’. This was a hierarchical identity because her Turkish ethnicity was secondary in importance to her Muslim identity. She said:

A lot of Turks are very nationalistic, where they say ‘I’m Turkish and then I’m Muslim’ where as I would say, ‘I’m Muslim and then I’m blah, blah...’. In our religion, first thing is Muslim, you should be proud of your religion, and then I’m Turkish...

The women in this category rejected an Australian ethnic identity on the basis of four elements related to Australian nationality: birthplace, culture, citizenship, and race. The first influence on the women’s not-Australian identities was birthplace. Eight of the 13 women in this category were Australian-born, and these Australian-born women did not believe that their Australian birthplace was a strong influence on their ethnic identities. Instead, along with the other overseas-born women in this group, their parents’ birthplace and the traditions that their families have kept up in Australia were seen to influence their ethnic identity. Despite being born in Australia, they have not grown up the ‘Australian way’, and so they did not see themselves as Australian.

Claudia: I’ve always said this, I’ve always said: ‘I was born in Australia, but I consider myself Uruguayan’, because I feel more Uruguayan. Although I’ve
grown up here, I’ve lived my whole life here, but I consider myself Uruguayan because of the way I was raised, the traditions I already learnt… [Latin]

It seemed that the Australian-born women of Latin background in this category believed that their Australian birthplace somehow undermined their migrant ethnic identities, and so they downplayed the importance of their own birthplace in regards to their ethnicity. Of the ten Latin women in this not-Australian category, six were Australian-born; a substantial figure given that there were only eight women in the total Latin sample that were born in Australia. This tells us something important about the process of rejecting an Australian ethnic identity for the Latin women in particular. Pandora, who was born in Australia, will often tell people she was born in Argentina: ‘More because of the whole identity thing. I totally identify with Argentina more than I do Australia’. She recounted an exchange she had with a man the day prior to her interview with me. She had filled out a form and under ‘birthplace’ Pandora cheekily wrote, ‘Australia – unfortunately’. The man who read over her form was put-off by this and said, ‘Yeah right. Are you racist against Australia or what?’ Pandora’s answer perfectly encapsulates the articulation of birthplace and ethnicity for the women in this category. In reply to the man’s charge of racism, Pandora said: “Nah, I just meant that in absolutely everything else apart from the fact that I was born here, I relate to Argentina and it’s just a shame that the most crucial thing – I was born here”. I’m not ashamed of it at all’. The comment ‘I’m not ashamed of it all’, which she repeated a few times when discussing her Australian nationality, was in stark contrast to her comments that she was ‘proud’ of being Argentinean.

The second influence on the women’s not-Australian identities was emotional antipathy towards Australian culture. The women in this category all emphasised that Australia did not have any traditions or its ‘own’ culture. This attitude was typical of all the women I interviewed, as we saw in Chapter Five. The distinctive aspect of these women’s claim that Australia does not have its own culture was that they drew on this idea to explain why they did not think of themselves as Australian. Poppy was less than three years old when she arrived in Australia from Chile. She had lived in Australia for over 18 years, but she did not feel Australian. She described Chilean culture as ‘steeped in tradition [laughs]. Really interesting. Vast’. In contrast, she said Australia has ‘no culture’ and said she did not ‘feel Australian first of all... [because] the Australian culture doesn’t affect me – except for my accent [laughs]’. 
Given that these 13 women thought that Australia had no culture, and that they could not say who was a ‘true’ Australian, other than Aboriginal people, they held onto their family’s CoO culture because they had no doubts that this migrant culture did exist. Their own inability to perceive an Australian culture was reflected negatively on Anglo-Australians, and in turn, meant that they distanced themselves from an Australian identity. For example, Matijana was born in Peru and had been living in Australia for 16 years, ever since she was six years old, but she was dismissive of ‘Australians’ because most Australians do not have a culture. When I started to ask specific questions about her ethnic identity, she was quick to warn me that she was Peruvian and she said ‘I hate it when people say I’m Australian, so don’t say it. I hate it’. I asked her why she felt this way and she answered:

Because if you look at the Australian public in general, they’re such – ugh! They’re such bums. They’ve got no culture, for starters. Not all of them, that’s a generalisation, because I know some and they’re really, really, nice but in general [pause] of course I’d never say this to them! In general they have no culture, no respect for others. Oh, I can’t say it in English! Like, no tienen ni por venir [they haven't got anything to look forward to], do you know what I mean? Like, I don’t want to be associated with that. Sorry, that’s why I hate it.

In addition, these women described Australian culture in terms of its multiculturalism, but this multiculturalism was only drawn on to legitimise their ties to their migrant cultures. It did not make them feel Australian. While they said that anybody could be Australian, it was clear that they saw Australian culture in terms of Anglo-Australian culture rather than in terms of diversity. For them, to reject an Australian ethnicity was to reject Anglo-Australians.

The third influence on the women’s not-Australian identities relates to their separation of citizenship and ethnicity. All of them saw Australia as ‘home’ but this did not influence their ethnic identities. Josefin was born in Australia but she rejected an Australian identity even though her holiday to Peru had made her ‘homesick’. She said, ‘When I came back from Peru, I said, “There’s nothing like home...”’. The women might be Australian citizens who valued their citizenship, but this did not make them feel Australian. Sayuri is typical of the women in this category because she said that she was not Australian, despite the fact that she was born in Australia. Instead she said,
'I feel Argentinean living in Australia… I mean, [Australia] is my country, but I feel like Argentina is who I am. Like the way I am, my background, and yeah, I feel a connection to [Argentina]’. While these women conceded that their Australian citizenship might make them legally Australian, they did not personally see their citizenship as a source of ethnic identity. For example Zenia had arrived in Australia aged 6 and she said:

I’m not [Australian]. I’ve always had that [idea]. Under my dad’s name I’m Australian, in citizenship, but I don’t consider myself Australian… I am, in a way, but… I tell everyone I’m Peruvian, I’m not Australian. I tell my friends that and they say, ‘But you live here. You’re under your dad’s name’, whatever. I sort of am Australian but I don’t think in that way.

The fourth influence on the women’s not-Australian identities was race. This was because other people’s racial categorisations of the Australian identity had affected the way the women viewed their own ethnicity. These women were evenly split in their personal experiences with racism: six women had no personal experiences with racism, and six women had at least some experience (four reported ‘some’, and two reported ‘severe’ experiences). But personal experiences with racism did not provide a clear picture of why they rejected an Australian ethnic identity. Rather, their experience with an exclusionary Australian identity based on race was more telling. While the women did not generally see the question ‘Where are you from?’ as racist, it was clear that, for this group of women, the question alienated them from their Australian nationality. Ofelia is a case in point. Ofelia, was born in Australia but she described her ethnic identity as ‘Uruguayan’, and said part of the reason she did not think of herself as Australian was due to the disbelief she has faced when she has tried to tell people that she is ‘from’ Australia.

_Do you feel a connection to Australia as a country?

Ofelia: I was born here. I live here. I feel a bit Australian – not really, but a little bit.
[Later on] So, you were saying you feel a little bit Australian. Do you think other people would accept you as Australian?

Ofelia: You know when people ask you what your nationality is? I think this is why I think I’m Uruguayan. People ask me, ‘What nationality’, and I go, ‘I was born here’, but they don’t care! They go, ‘Where are your parents from?’ anyway. So that’s why I go, ‘I’m Uruguayan’. If I say, ‘I’m Australian’, they go, ‘Where are your parents from? What background?’

Similarly, when I asked Rana if the way other people saw her as being not Australian was stopping her from seeing herself as Australian and she answered;

Rana: Yeah it does, because if other people don’t believe it, how can you? You start doubting it, ‘Where am I?’ [Laughs] If people started accepting me as Australian and accepting me as I am, and not without it [hijab], if people said, ‘Alright I accept you, you’re Australian’, then maybe, like you said, I could start thinking of myself as Australian, because then you think, ‘They accept me as I am’. Who says they’re Australian themselves? Australia was only colonised recently so they can’t say that – to some people being Australian is being white and being preferably Christian or whatever and if you’re anything challenging their ideals then they make you feel like, ‘Nup. Can’t accept you…’ [Turkish, closed]

A significant finding with this not-Australian group concerns the question of gender. In the previous chapter, I showed that, without exception, all the participants’ negotiation of their gender relationships and their drive for social mobility was influenced by their experiences growing up in Australia. Being Australian went hand in hand with upholding ideals of gender equality. All 13 women in this category spoke of wanting gender equality in their marriages and of challenging gender constructions in their CoO communities, and they often described this gender challenge in terms of the influence of Australian culture. Even so, this ‘Australian side’ was separate from these women’s sense of ethnic identity.

Poppy provides the best example of the rather disjointed intersection of the women’s ethnicity, sexuality and nationality. When I asked her to describe her ethnic identity she answered, ‘Chilean and feminist’. Poppy’s feminist consciousness arose
from watching the inequality in her parents’ marriage, which she felt was contradictory to Australian ideals of gender equality. She said that in Chile women might put up with macho attitudes, but Chilean women like herself who live in Australia ‘don’t put up with it’. There was an obvious link between these women’s gender identities and their Australian nationality, but this link is not compelling enough for them to adopt an Australian ethnicity. So, as Poppy said, ‘I don’t feel Australian’ [my emphasis] even though her feminist identity is grounded within Australian cultural values.

Denying any ethnic ties to Australia and any influence of Australian culture on their identities strengthened the women’s migrant and pan-ethnic identities. For them their non-Australian ethnicity signalled their difference from Anglo-Australians, whom they saw as lacking any cultural identity. Zenia said she saw herself as ‘Latin’ and she said, ‘I’ve never thought of me being Australian… [because] I think I just want to hold onto being a Peruvian, being someone else’.

**Partly-Australian**

Almost three quarters of the entire sample held a partly-Australian identity; that is, 36 of the 50 women held migrant and pan-ethnic identities alongside an Australian ethnic identity. This group was predominantly Turkish (22 women) and Australian-born (23, of whom 20 were Turkish). Some of these women described their identities as being ‘in the middle’ or ‘in between’ their migrant and national identities, and they said things like, ‘Yeah I think I’m in the middle. Definitely in the middle’ [Moira, Latin]. The women also described that they were Australian because they have an ‘Australian side’, an ‘Australian touch’ or an ‘Australian part’ to themselves. For example, Esmeray said, ‘I don’t think I could ever live there [in Turkey] forever and not come back coz I’m partly Australian and that’s the thing’ [my emphasis]. Notably, all 11 women who had gone to live in their families’ CoO were represented in this category. The fact that these women had spent considerable time living overseas had not led to a rejection of an Australian identity. Additionally, 13 of the 19 women who were born overseas in the total sample thought of themselves as partly-Australian, and so living in another country for the first formative years of life had not led to a rejection of an Australian identity in the majority of these cases.
There were 14 Latin participants in this category, and there was one way for them to be partly-Australian, and that was by embracing their migrant, pan-ethnic and Australian ethnic identities. While one woman included her religious identity when she cited her ethnic identity, her discussion on Catholicism showed that this was her ‘faith’ and not an ethnicity. This was in stark contrast to the Turkish women who took on their religion as an ethnicity. A religion becomes an ‘ethnicity’ when a person speaks of it as a ‘culture’ or as a ‘way of life’ rather than as a faith that gives their lives meaning or as a system of belief that instructs their everyday life (cf. Jacobson, 1998; Schmidt, 2002). Instead, while being Catholic was integral to Devi’s identity, Catholicism was not a ‘culture’: her Argentinean, pan-ethnic and Australian cultures made up her ethnicity. Devi said ‘[I am a] young, Latin-Australian-Catholic woman. That would be it. Obviously I’m Latin and I live in Australia and acknowledging both is just as important’.

This group of Latin women encompassed the opposite trend of the Latin women in the previous category. The Latin women who held partly-Australian identities were predominantly overseas-born women (11 out of 14) who embraced both their Latin and Australian sides, but at the same time, they still described themselves as ‘more Latin than Australian’. Only one woman said that her migrant and national identities were equally important to her, and another two women said that they were ‘more Australian than Latin’. The other Latin women tended to say that their Latin identities were more important than their Australian identities, thereby showing a hierarchy between these identities. For example, Wendy said:

I think I kind of see myself as a bit of both, but probably more Salvadoran than anything… I kind of take on board the things that I like from the environment where I am and obviously that environment is Australia, so I think I’m a bit of both. Oh! No, I should say [I’m] mostly Salvadoran but there’s a bit of the Australian in me. I think I’d be different to someone who lives in El Salvador all their life.

Twenty-two Turkish participants were partly-Australian and, unlike the Latin women, they were predominantly Australian-born, with only two of them immigrating to Australia as infants. Ten women were open Muslims and the other 12 women were closed Muslims. Islamic dress, then, did not make much of a difference to the Turkish
sample’s adoption of an Australian identity, because almost every woman of Turkish background was represented in this partly-Australian category. Islamic dress, however, did have an impact on the way the women described their ethnicity. There were two ways in which the Turkish participants assumed a partly-Australian identity. First, 10 women described themselves as ‘Australian-Turkish’, and these women were predominantly open Muslims (eight women) who were Australian-born. The Turkish women exhibited the opposite trend to the Latin women in this partly-Australian category, because they saw themselves as leaning ‘more towards’ their ‘Australian side’ rather than their Turkish side. Their Australian-Turkish identities were hierarchical, and their Australian identities were ranked as more important than their Turkish identities:

Akasma: I still got that Turkish identity; I can’t say that I don’t. And I’ve got the Australian side. It’s just both. I can’t say ‘I’m Turkish’ or ‘I’m just Australian’. I’m just in the middle. But [I’m] more leaning towards the Australian side, definitely.

The second way that the Turkish women described their partly-Australian identities was as ‘Muslim-Australian-Turk’. These women believed, unlike the other Turkish-Australian women above, that their religious identity was an ethnic identity. When I asked them to describe their ethnic identities, these women specifically discussed how their Muslim identity was an ethnic identity, and one which was more important than being Turkish or Australian. Twelve Turkish women described themselves as Muslim-Australian-Turks and they were all closed Muslims, with one exception. Karli was the only open woman to assume her religion as an ethnic identity. She said ‘basically I’m an Australian-Turk who’s a Muslim’. Eleven of the 14 closed women I interviewed described themselves this way, meaning that the closed Muslims in my sample were more likely than the open women to adopt all three identities – pan-ethnic, migrant and national – as their ethnic identity. Most of these women with Muslim-Australian-Turkish identities said that their Muslim identity was their primary identity, and additionally, being Australian usually took precedence over being Turkish.

Fatma: I’m a Muslim-Australian… First we’ve got Islam, but our culture’s sort of mixed with the Australian culture as well. We’re a bit more Australian compared to my parents. They’re more attached to the Turkish culture. We are as well, but
with us we’re Muslim and then Australian. We consider ourselves Turkish but not as much as we consider ourselves Australian.

Overall, of the 36 women in this partly-Australian category, seven women exhibited a sense of ambivalence about their identities. For example, Huriye described herself as Turkish and Australian during her interview, but she also said of her identity, ‘You sort of feel in between sort of Australian and Turkish. That’s really how I feel. I don’t really feel like I belong strongly to either one’. The other women mostly felt ambivalent about being Australian. They wanted to think of themselves as Australian, but they were in two minds about this identity. For example, Aylin said, ‘I’d like to think of myself as Chilean-Australian [laughs]… but I also don’t feel like I’m Australian. I’m a bit of both’. (For more comments on ambivalence refer to Appendix 7. The highlighted quotes in Appendix 7 denote the women’s comments on ambivalence.)

Despite their ambivalence, I have included these seven women in this partly-Australian category (instead of in a separate category or outside of the typology altogether). I made this decision because this partly-Australian category, which is premised upon a hybrid migrant-Australian identity, is one which embraces contradictions. Noble, Poynting and Tabar’s work (1999) on the strategic essentialism of Arabic-speaking youth goes some way towards explaining this process of ambivalence. In their work, strategic essentialism referred to the willingness of second generation youth to inhabit hybrid spaces on their own terms. Their young Lebanese-Australian participants adhered to the cultural beliefs of their parents and community to a point, and they also aligned themselves with the Australian majority in a way that actively contested the racism and marginalisation they experienced in Australian society. The hybrid identities of their participants were ‘a way of holding often incommensurable differences together – a tension which provides the basis for both strategies of survival and continuity’ (Noble and Tabar, 2002: 144). İrem, an open Turkish woman, highlights the notion of hybrid essentialism and ambivalence nicely. She said she was both Turkish and Australian, but she also said:

It depends on what context I guess... If I’m talking to someone who is from Turkey and has been born and raised there, yes I see myself as an Australian. But
if I’m talking to someone who is from Australia, is Australian or Asian or is European or any other nationality, I kinda see myself as a Turkish person.

Looking at the group as a whole, there are four influences on the Latin and Turkish women’s partly-Australian identities: gender, citizenship, race, and culture. The first and most significant of these is Australian cultural ideals of gender. Being Australian enabled them to escape the fate of the ‘typical Latin/Turkish girl’: they did not have to simply get married and be subordinate to their husbands’ demands. Australian gender ideals were pivotal to their identities in a way that was less important to the women in the not-Australian category. As they saw it, Australian culture encouraged women to seek out gender equality. Nural said: ‘I think we grew up with the Australian culture, going to the public schools and all that, always being taught to be assertive and speak our minds and never let anyone hurt us’ [Turkish, closed]. These 36 women highly valued their life opportunities and social mobility as women, which they believed was possible only due to their Australian upbringing, and for this reason, they adopted an Australian ethnic identity.

Kumru: ….I really can’t describe it [Australian culture] in my own words, but all I can say is it’s somewhere you are just free. Australia’s a place where you’re free to do anything you want to do. You’ve got the ability to do it, which is why I love Australia so much. You want an education; you go ahead and do. You want to work; get your foot in the door. An Australian might be someone who gives 100 percent to everything. [Turkish, closed]

The second influence affecting the women’s partly-Australian identities was their Australian citizenship. Two women spoke of their bloodlines to Turkey as important to their ethnicity, and some women said they were partly-Australian because they were born in Australia. But the majority of the women in this group did not place much emphasis on birthplace or other primordial ties as a rationale for their ethnic identities. These women saw Australia as their country, even when they were not Australian-born.

How do you feel about that question, ‘Where are you from’? Does it bother you? Moira: No, it doesn’t bother me. It’s just that, the way I figure, I was born there but I’m not really from there. To me, this is my country; it’s not over there. To
me, over there is going to another country, basically… I wouldn’t say, ‘That’s my country’. You know, I would say, ‘That’s where I was born’, but that’s not my country. [Latin]

Instead of birthplace, their Australian citizenship was a bigger influence on their identities. Cennet was born in Turkey and she arrived in Australia before the age of two. She held strong feelings about being both Turkish and Australian because of her Australian citizenship. She was forceful when she asserted what she would say to another person who challenged her partly-Australian ethnic identity:

I guess I sort of look at myself as I’m Turkish or an Australian citizen but I do have a Turkish background... I do take it very seriously in the terms that I’d stick up for it, ‘Hey, I’m a Turk, and there’s nothing you can do to change that’. But I am an Australian citizen and I am Australian in a sense. I do have a Turkish background, I was born in Turkey and I’m Turkish and no one can say anything about that really. If someone was to turn around and say, ‘Hey what nasho are you?’, I’d say, ‘I’m Australian’. [Open]

Unlike the women in the not-Australian category, these partly-Australian women did see their citizenship as an influence on their sense of their ethnic identity. The women’s Australian citizenship gives them great benefits and ‘freedoms’ that they would not have in their families’ CoO.

Sahiba: I would say [I’m] Australian because I feel more at home here and I feel like I’ve got more freedom. I feel ‘myself” in Australia, that’s why I would say I’m Australian secondly [to being Muslim]. [Turkish, closed]

The third influence on these women’s partly-Australian identities was the rejection of race as a marker of Australian ethnicity. The women in the not-Australian category rejected an Australian ethnicity partly because of racial constructions of Australian national identity, but the women in this second category were able to move past such categorisations. The vast majority of women who had some personal experience with racism were still able to call themselves Australian. Of these 36 women who claimed a partly-Australian identity, ten women had experienced no racism and 20 women had
experienced racism (15 women reported ‘some racism’, five women reported ‘severe’ racism, and no data was collected for six women). While these women defied racial categorisations of Australian identity in claiming their Australian identity, such categorisations still had an impact upon them. Because of them, they might think of themselves as Australian, but they did not often call themselves Australian. Take Wendy for example; she was born in El Salvador and she came to Australia at age nine. Wendy described her ethnic identity as, ‘Mostly Salvadoran but with a bit of Australian in me’. She had no personal experience with racism, but the question ‘Where are you from?’ had taught her that other people did not want to hear, or ‘believe’, that she thought of herself as partly-Australian. When I asked Wendy if she felt other people accepted her calling herself Australian she said,

…I think that because of the way I look they probably wouldn’t. Not that I’m saying that they wouldn’t accept me but they wouldn’t believe me [laughs]. I kind of think [pause] the way you define yourself is the important thing, but it’s about who you are and whether people are going to give you a reasonable chance to decide whether or not they accept you or whatever… I don’t think I would ever describe myself as Australian – just Australian – because I’m not! There’s a part of me that isn’t [Australian] – a substantial part, so I don’t think I would.

The fourth influence on these women’s partly-Australian identities is Australian culture. While the women did not see much value in Anglo-Australian traditions, they believed that, due to multiculturalism, Australia had ‘embraced’ migrant cultures as part of its national identity. Ingrid was born in El Salvador and she went back to live there for six years at age 11. Even though she had spent considerable time overseas, she said of her ethnic identity, ‘I’m a Salvo-Australian girl’. Ingrid believed that multiculturalism had produced a hybrid identity in which ‘anyone can be Australian’. She said, ‘I think that being Australian is also being able to be who you really are and respecting that’. Australian national identity then, was about being ‘different’, and multiculturalism gave support to their partly-Australian identity. As Asuman said:

When I say [there’s] ‘cultural richness’ here, I think Aboriginal culture is Australian history, then you’ve got its recent culture that is more multicultural than anything. It’s okay to be Turkish in Australia, it’s okay to talk about your
Turkish culture as an Australian, you don’t have to think, ‘Oh my God, this is not Australian to say!’ Being Australian is having some sort of cultural background. A lot of Australians have a mixture – I mean whether they’ve come from England or Ireland, then you’ve got Europeans who came out at the same time as my parents to earn money, so it’s emerged like that. I don’t think it can change.

Although the not-Australian women rejected Australian ethnicity as a way of rejecting Anglo-Australians, the partly-Australian women saw all Australians as having ‘some sort of cultural background’, so there was no need to reject this identity. This attitude made it ideal to be Australian, because all Australians were a ‘mixture’. At the same time though, the multicultural Australian identity was still positioned against an Anglo-Australian majority identity. As these women saw it, the multicultural Australian identity was premised upon the celebration and maintenance of migrant cultural practices, and the women only supported multiculturalism so long as there was no complete assimilation. Take Moira’s comments below, where she talks of how happy she was to be an Australian, so long as she could still be Salvadoran:

_Do you feel that people have to be born in Australia in order to think of themselves as Australian?_

No, I don’t think so. That’s not the case; but I think to be able to call yourself Australian you have to be and act more like an Australian [stops]. Because I think like so many people from my background, I do think more as a Salvadoran would, not as an Australian would. So for me, to be 100 per cent Australian would be to give up all of my culture. I don’t know, that’s the way I see it.  

The multicultural Australian identity had its limitations, as the women in this category described it. The women in this category were, after all, only partly-Australian; being 100 percent Australian was seen as the surrender of their migrant ethnicities, and this was not something they were prepared to do.
Xiomara was the only woman in the entire sample of 50 participants who thought of herself as exclusively Australian. She stood in stark contrast to the first group of Latin women who were overwhelmingly Australian-born and yet adamant that they were not Australian. Xiomara thought of herself as Australian even though she was born in Chile and had lived there for the first eight years of her life. Xiomara was the only woman in the entire sample to reject her migrant ethnicity, and she expressed great ambivalence about Chilean culture in general. Xiomara sometimes described herself as Latin during her interview, but her discussion of her ethnic identity was specifically centred on her CoO and Australian ethnicities. There were three influences on Xiomara’s Australian identity: culture, race, and gender.

First, Xiomara’s birthplace was not important to her sense of ethnicity, but her Australian citizenship was important. Her parents had always planned to return to live in Chile, but they eventually gave up on this idea. Xiomara however, had long decided her life was in Australia. She said:

> Even if I went back [to Chile], I would always plan to go back to Australia anyway. I decided really early that I was Australian not Chilean... As soon as I turned 18 I wanted to become an Australian citizen as soon as I could.

Xiomara saw herself as Australian and not Chilean because she felt estranged from Chilean culture. While the women in the not-Australian category felt emotionally estranged from Australian culture, the opposite was true of Xiomara: she embraced Australian culture but was ambivalent towards Chilean culture. Xiomara rejected her Chilean ethnicity even though she spoke positively about Chilean traditions (food, language, music, festivity, and the value of family), and said she wanted to continue these CoO practices when she had children. Despite the warmth she displayed about these Chilean traditions, she felt equally positive towards Anglo-Australian culture and values. This sets her apart from the other women I interviewed, all of whom spoke mostly negatively of Anglo-Australian culture, apart from its ideals about gender equality.
Xiomara’s description of Australian culture at first seemed to be no different to the other participants in this study because she saw Australian culture as ‘multicultural’. And yet in Xiomara’s eyes, Australia’s multiculturalism did not swallow up or invalidate Anglo-Celtic traditions, as it did for the other participants. Xiomara described Anglo-Australians as a cultural, or ethnic, group who have a ‘great culture’. She continued:

Australian culture, I really enjoy it. If you go to the country especially, they’re very friendly. They’re a lot less willing to have a party without drink, without grog. Once they get going, you just can’t stop them talking… I think Australians are a lot more open-minded than most people think they are, if you give them a go. A lot of the time they’re a bit slower to take things in, you have to explain it right, but they’re certainly as open-minded as everyone else. Because they’ve been living here and everything’s been coming at them, they’ve had to be open-minded, even though they didn’t want to. I think that’s a real tribute to them.

Xiomara’s description of Anglo-Australians was glowing in comparison to her description of Chileans. While she described both groups as ‘friendly’, she went on to describe Chileans as ‘dodgy… manipulators’, who were ‘players’ with a ‘hidden agenda’. In contrast, she described Australians as ‘open-minded’ people whose collective flaws were not worth mentioning. She believed that her perception of Australian culture was not like that of other Latin people living in Australia, including her siblings, whom she believed would describe Australian culture as ‘bland’. I think a lot of Latin people, they get very narrow minded about Australian people. They think, ‘They’re not like us!’ And that stops you from really getting to know their culture. I’ve never done that. I like intermingling with other cultures, and not just the people that look like me. I’ve made friendships with Asians. To [my sister] I think that would be really strange. I don’t think that she could ever relate to Asians or Australians because she’s got the dark skin, big eyes, brown, whatever.

The second influence on Xiomara’s Australian identity was race. Xiomara was critical of her sister for not ‘relating’ to Anglo-Australians and other Australians due to
notions of race. We can see this when she said, ‘I like intermingling with other cultures, and not just the people that look like me’. Xiomara found it difficult to comprehend why some people of migrant background, such as her sister, felt that they were different from Anglo-Australians. Xiomara said that Anglo-Australians were ‘normal people just like everybody else’. Xiomara perceived no difference between herself and ‘everybody else’ in Australian society. More specifically, she refused to see herself as different to other Australian people on the basis of race. Xiomara said that she had not experienced any racism, although she did say that she might have ‘blocked out’ any racist experiences. She said it was her policy not to ‘focus on the negative energy’ of life.

Hey I was called a wog the first time I came to Australia. I could’ve let it get me down and not talked to anyone and got really depressed about it. But I just got out my dictionary and I looked up what the word ‘wog’ was and it actually meant parasite or something. I went back to school and said, “Do you know what you’re calling me?”’, in my really broken English. I said, ‘The word “wog” means parasite. Do I look like a virus to you?’ …I never saw myself as different. If I found that they were treating me differently then I’d ask why or I’d figure out what the problem was and then deal with it. Whereas [my sister], no matter what it is, she’ll always take it back to the fact that she’s from a different country and a different culture…

Xiomara spoke about her sister being ‘shy’ and not standing up to the racism she encountered. Speaking about herself, Xiomara said, ‘I always made a lot of friends and it was fine’. She stated that she was able to make friends with lots of different people, including ‘Australians’ because she was so ‘friendly’. She then isolated her individual attributes (‘friendly’, ‘outgoing’, not being a ‘negative’ person), as the reasons she was able to overcome racist constructions of Australian identity in order to claim an Australian identity. Xiomara described her sister as having ‘dark skin’. Xiomara could be described as having ‘white’ skin. While these categorisations of Xiomara and her sister are problematic because they are based upon Xiomara’s and my own perception of race, it is necessary to include this observation. The concept of race refers to aspects of a person’s appearance that others can readily perceive. While it is a socially constructed concept with no biological validity, the impact of race, as it relates to Australian identity, was profound in my study. Xiomara cut off my question about
whether she believed the way she looked influenced her perception of her Australian identity and of Australian culture. Instead, she turned immediately to her sister’s sense of ‘difference’ because of her ‘looks’, and then went on to dismiss this as a legitimate reason for her sister’s rejection of Australian culture:

*You talk a lot about your [siblings], and a lot of what’s coming through is that you’re guessing that the way they looked influenced how they think of Australian culture. Do you think the way you look –?*

[Cutting me off] Oh definitely. I know for a fact that [my sister] experienced the negative side. But I think it’s more that she sees herself as different, whereas I don’t. I see myself and I look at everyone else and I don’t see a difference. Whereas I think she does. She looks at herself and she sees herself as very different even though she probably isn’t. There’s a lot of people who’ve been here for generations and they look like her. She’s always felt that she’s different and I think that really affects how [she sees herself]…

Xiomara was quick to isolate race and racism as the reasons that her sister did not see herself as Australian; but she was just as quick to block the idea that her own physical features might enable her to see herself as Australian more easily in comparison to her sister. Xiomara looks at herself and then looks at everyone else around her and does not see a difference; but her physical appearance was one contributing factor to this process of self-inclusion with ‘everybody else’. Her resistance towards racial categorisations of what it means to be ‘Australian’ helped to decrease her perception of her own difference to that of other Australians. Her ‘difference’, however, was not as marked in relation to Anglo-Australians as it might have been for the other participants I interviewed, who felt that their physical appearance stopped them from being seen as Australian. But race, in the sense of physical appearance, is not in itself an absolute explanation for Xiomara’s Australian identity. The third and most important influence on Xiomara’s Australian identity was gender.

Xiomara was ambivalent about her CoO ethnicity because of her gender experiences in her CoO community, on her family of origin, and going on a five-month trip to Chile when she was 18 with her then boyfriend. This holiday was the catalyst for Xiomara’s rejection of Chilean culture. As a result of that trip, she discovered that
she ‘hated it [Chilean culture] with a passion. I absolutely hated it. I just said, “I’m never going back”. I’ve changed my mind [laughs] I’m going to go back this year’.

Xiomara told of how, growing up in Australia, she had struggled against her father’s ‘chauvinistic’ practices, but the gender double standards she encountered while traveling around Chile alienated her all the more from Chilean culture.

In Chile, Xiomara’s relatives had ‘traditional opinions’ regarding gender, and these were epitomised by the belief that, ‘girls shouldn’t do this and girls shouldn’t do that… [but] I came from a culture at that time when I was allowed to do anything’. Xiomara said that because she was Australian, ‘I just felt like I didn’t connect with anybody over there, nobody understood what I did’. Her gender ideals clashed with the people she encountered whilst travelling around Chile. She said:

I was expected to do everything for [my boyfriend] in every place that I went to [including hotels]… I kept thinking to myself, ‘If I had to live in this environment I’d go nuts!’ I pretty much – what’s the word? *Cachetada*, push away, I just pushed that culture away. In my mind I just didn’t want to be a part of it anymore. When I came back I was like [whistles with relief] thank God, you know? I hated it.

Xiomara felt empowered in the Australian context: in Australia, being a woman was not an obstacle. She had a tertiary degree, a professional career, and a sense that she had done much better than most other Chilean women because she had taken advantage of her life opportunities in Australia. When I asked her about the disadvantages of being a woman she said, ‘In Chile it was a big disadvantage. When I was in Chile, I hated being a woman over there. I wished constantly that I was a guy. I love being a woman here in Australia’.

Gender relations in Australia proved to be the most significant influence in Xiomara’s case. The women with not-Australian identities rejected Australian culture as a way of rejecting Anglo-Australians, and the women with partly-Australian identities did not think of themselves as ‘100 percent Australian’ because that would be symbolic of rejecting their migrant identities. For Xiomara, rejecting her migrant ethnicity symbolised her rejection of the gender inequality in Chilean culture. She felt some connection to Chilean traditions, but ultimately, she ‘pushed away’ Chilean culture and her Chilean ethnicity due to Chilean constructions of femininity and
masculinity. Unlike the other women I interviewed, who saw Australian gender ideals as a means to reconstruct their CoO femininities and masculinities, Xiomara opted out of this reconstruction process altogether.

6:2:2 SUMMARY: AUSTRALIAN IDENTITY AND SOCIAL CONTEXT

The typology presented in this section concerns the women’s construction of Australian identity in reference to their ethnicities. This typology had three categories and they were:

- Not Australian: the women rejected an Australian identity and adopted only their migrant and pan-ethnic identities.
- Partly Australian: the women adopted an Australian identity alongside their migrant and pan-ethnic identities.
- Australian: the woman adopted an Australian identity and rejected her migrant identity.

Of the 25 women of Latin background interviewed, the majority (60 percent) held an Australian ethnic identity (partly-Australian and Australian), and the rest of the sample specifically identified themselves as not having an Australian ethnicity (40 percent). The Latin women who were partly-Australian tended to say that they were ‘more Latin than Australian’. Of the 25 women from Turkish backgrounds, almost everyone (88 percent) held an Australian ethnic identity and a small minority of the sample identified themselves as not having an Australian ethnicity (12 percent). The Turkish women with partly-Australian identities tended to say that they were ‘more Australian than Turkish’. At the same time, though, being Muslim was more important than being Australian and Turkish for over half of the sample (14 women), and these women were mostly closed Muslims (13 women).

Looking at the whole sample of 50 women, taking on a hyphenated migrant-Australian ethnic identity was more common than rejecting an Australian identity altogether. A total of 37 women (47 percent) in my study adopted an Australian identity (partly-Australian and Australian). Significantly though, only one of these women rejected their migrant and pan-ethnic identities in favour of an Australian
identity. Perhaps with a larger sample, or a sample derived from more varied sources other than snowballing from student groups, might have produced a different outcome. A larger sample might have seen more participants rejecting their migrant identities. As I argued in Chapter Four, however, the recruitment process for a qualitative study about specific ethnic groups limits the boundaries of the sample. It seems more likely that people who identify with their CoO group, rather than reject it, would volunteer for a study such as mine.

The Latin women were more likely than the Turkish women to reject an Australian ethnicity. The relationship between an Australian birthplace and the rejection of an Australian ethnicity for the Latin sample is perhaps best understood by the patterns of migration of the two groups, although this is a tentative explanation, given the limitations of my sample. Turkish migration to Australia was strong during the early to mid-1970s, whereas Latin migration mostly occurred during the mid to late 1980s. My sample, as I have pointed out in Chapter Four, reflected these migration patterns given the women’s age cohort: the Turkish women were mostly Australian-born, whereas the Latin women were mostly overseas-born. It is possible that most of the Australian-born Latin women rejected their Australian ethnicity because they were born in Australia, in order to feel more legitimate in their claim of their migrant identities. After all, most of these women’s Latin cohort was born overseas, and so being overseas-born was the norm for Latin people their age.

There was some support for this in the interviews. Some of the Australian-born Latin women, told of being teased by their cousins or friends about being born in Australia, and said that they were jokingly referred to as ‘skips’. The Australian-born Turkish did not mention this. These Turkish women were more likely to be surrounded by other Turkish people in their age group who had, like them, been born in Australia. Given that being Australian-born was the norm for the Turkish women I interviewed, their Australian birthplace was not seen to undermine their migrant identities as it may have for the Australian-born women of Latin background. This might explain why only three Turkish women appear in the not-Australian category (two of these Turkish women were also Australian-born).

The Latin women predominantly answered the questions ‘How would you describe your ethnic identity?’ and ‘Do you call/think of yourself Australian?’ in terms of their migrant CoO identities, and less in terms of their pan-ethnic identities. Only five of the 25 Latin women mentioned their pan-ethnic identities when I asked them to
describe their ethnic identity. The majority of the women said ‘I’m Chilean’ or ‘I’m Uruguayan-Australian’ rather than ‘I’m Latin’ (see Appendix 7, Table 6, for more detail). As my analysis in Chapter Five showed, all the Latin women referred to themselves using their pan-ethnic identities during their interviews. In this chapter, however, we can see that the Latin women’s ethnic identities were firmly anchored in their CoO identities. Latin pan-ethnicity serves a purpose in that it allows the women to identify with a bigger group outside their own CoO community, but by no means does this Latin pan-ethnicity supersede their CoO identities, as was the case with some of the Turkish women’s pan-ethnic Islamic identities.

The Turkish women’s responses to the questions about their ethnic and Australian identities showed that the closed Turkish women were more likely to take on their pan-ethnic identity as an ethnicity in comparison to the open women, and this pan-ethnic identity superseded their Australian and CoO identities (for more detail, see Appendix 7, Table 7). This reiterates the women’s notion that the hijab was a ‘flag for Islam’, and it supports my analysis in Chapter Five that the hijab literally embodied these closed women’s Islamic identity. In the two previous chapters, we saw that the women’s understanding of the hijab was firmly centered on the hijab as a religious practice, but clearly the hijab means something more. The open women overwhelmingly wanted to close in the future, but they had not done so as yet, and it was no coincidence that, as open Muslims, they had not taken on their religion as an ethnic identity. In this context, wearing hijab is a marker of ethnic identity as well as a religious identity. This process is difficult to comment on, and it might be better understood with a sample of Muslim women from different CoO backgrounds. It is noteworthy however that even though my sample was limited, there were two ways for these Turkish women to be ‘religious Turks’, and this was related to dress: they could be religious Turks who wore hijab or they could be religious Turks who did not wear hijab. At the same time, they all felt like they belonged to a pan-ethnic Islamic community as well as being Australian, irrespective of their outer dress.

In Chapter Five, we saw that the women’s (lack of) understanding of Anglo-Australian traditions made them question whether there was an Australian identity. The data presented in this chapter reiterates this finding, with the women seeing multiculturalism as the main resource in the construction of Australian national identity. In the Australian context then, most of the interviewees could only feel Australian while being migrants at the same time. When they went overseas however, there was no
question that they were Australian, and there was less of a focus on their migrant ‘background’. For example, when I asked Wendy, a Latin woman, if she participated in any Australian cultural traditions she said:

Whilst I am happy to live here, and if I went overseas I’d probably be like ‘Yes, I am from Australia’ or whatever, I don’t really understand what I’m subscribing to [giggles]. [Thinks] Traditions? What else? I don’t know... There’s not even a lot that comes to mind in terms of traditions [my emphasis]. [Partly-Australian identity]

Social context changed the meaning of the women’s identities. As I showed in Chapter Two, the meanings attached to social identities are negotiated through social interaction and they are contingent upon social context. Jenkins writes, ‘Meanings are always the outcome of agreement or disagreement, always a matter of convention and innovation, always to some extent shared, always to some extent negotiable’ (1996: 4). In the Australian context, the women’s negotiation and contestation of identity was referenced to multicultural and Anglo-Australian narratives of Australian identity. Overseas, the women’s social interaction with other people opened up different possibilities about their Australian identities because the meanings of this identity changed. The Australian identity overseas was less about contested narratives of migrant-ness and Anglo-Australian-ness; instead, it was one about national and cultural belonging.

The typology presented in this chapter was framed within the Australian social context. All the women felt Australian – or more Australian – in an overseas context and they also felt accepted as an Australian when they travelled overseas, irrespective of the identities they adopted in Australia (Not-Australian, Partly-Australian, Australian). Their visits to their family’s CoO had shown them that they were seen as Australian overseas because they were different to everybody else there: their life outlook was different, especially in terms of their gender ideals and career goals; their clothes were different; they spoke their CoO language with an accent; and they were perceived as affluent in comparison to the locals.

Significantly, the women who rejected an Australian identity in Australia (the not-Australian category) assumed an Australian identity when they travelled back to their family’s CoO. Since other people saw them as Australian overseas, they were willing
and ‘proud’ to adopt this identity. Equally, they saw themselves as different to people overseas, and this highlighted their own Australian-ness. The following quotes are from the women who held not-Australian identities:

Claudia: [I]n Uruguay I’d be called ‘The Aussie’, ‘the kangaroo’, coz they knew I was from here. They’d be like, ‘You’re Aussie, you’re Aussie!’ And to be quite honest, when I was over there I was actually quite proud to be Australian! [Laughs] Like even more, ‘Yeah I’m from Australia’, coz they loved it! It’s like [excited tone], ‘Oh my God, you’re from Australia!’ [Latin]

Pandora: The weird thing is that when I go to Argentina they say that I’m Australian and I’m comfortable with that. But when I’m here I want to be known as Argentinean. When I’m over there they say, ‘Oh, there comes the Australian girl’. I don’t have a problem with that… it’s just funny how they think I’m Australian because I don’t look Australian – if I was blonde or something I’d say, ‘Oh okay, fair enough’. [Latin]

The women who adopted a partly-Australian identity in Australia felt an even deeper sense of their Australian-ness in an overseas context. In Australia, these women thought of themselves as Australian, but it was rare for them to voice this identity. Overseas, as we saw with Wendy earlier, the women were proud to say they were Australian. Additionally, the women felt ‘more Australian’ overseas than in Australia, even though in Australia they held an Australian identity. For example, while the Latin women with partly-Australian identities said that they felt ‘more Latin than Australian’ while in Australia, their trips back to their CoO made them feel ‘more Australian than Latin’ while they were holidaying. Estella said, ‘here I can sense myself as Uruguayan but when I go to Uruguay I can really feel my Australian [laughs]’. As we saw with Xiomara, although she felt Australian and not Chilean from an early age, it was her trip to Chile as a young adult that made her feel even more Australian than ever before.

In the women’s experiences, racial constructions of Australian identity were less acute overseas than they were in Australia. The women still carried their own ideas of race overseas, as we saw with Pandora above, when she said that if she were blonde, she would more easily understand why she was seen as Australian overseas. At the same time though, the women found it easier to contest other people’s ideas of the Australian
‘race’ in an overseas context. While Rosa held a partly-Australian identity, she ‘hated’ having to justify her Australian identity to others because of her ‘dark skin’, and so she often did not tell people she thought of herself as Australian while in Australia. When she travelled to Bali though, she felt more confident in explaining her ethnic identity to the locals:

[D]o you refer to yourself as Australian?

Rosa: Yeah. Well when people ask me specifically what nationality I am, I tell them I’m Salvadoran, I speak Spanish and everything. But for example I went to Bali about a year ago and they asked me, ‘Where are you from?’ I said, ‘I’m from Australia. I’m Australian’. And they said, [speaks in an astonished tone] ‘No! You don’t look Australian’. And I had to explain to them, ‘Look I’m Spanish but I live in Australia’. I classify myself as Australian, yeah.

Overseas, when people asked the women ‘where are you from?’, this was less due to their physical appearance, and it was more often asked in reference to other social markers, most notably their accent, but their clothes were sometimes a giveaway (they were seen as ‘well-dressed’ relative to the locals). Moreover, the women’s identities were accepted overseas: when they said they were Australian, this identity was accepted. They were not harassed over their identity, and even when there was an initial disbelief, such as with Rosa’s Balinese example above, their identities were ultimately accepted. It was in Australia where the women encountered the strongest rejection about their Australian identities. Karli, who had a partly-Australian identity, made this clear when she said:

I went to Turkey two years ago and [was asked] ‘Where are you from?’ ‘I’m from Australia’. I didn’t go around saying I’m from Turkey. ‘I’m from Australia’, that’s what I’d say. When I’m in Australia and people ask me, ‘What are you?’ I say, ‘Turkish’ because they already know I’m Australian, because I live in Australia, they should automatically know that. They should automatically accept that. But… even when I say, ‘I’m Australian’ they go, ‘Nuh, but what language are you?’ Do you know what I mean?
CONCLUSION

The women’s social construction of Australian nationality had two overall influences: citizenship and race. There were three ways for these 50 second generation migrant women to be Australian while in Australia. Some of these women felt like they belonged to the nation without feeling the need to think of themselves as Australian. They could reject an Australian identity, even though they were Australian citizens and even while they took on some cultural ideals of Australian culture, especially ideals of gender equality and an acceptance of cultural plurality. Other women believed that they could be Australian by taking on some Australian cultural ideals as well as keeping up their migrant practices and identities. Only one woman thought that she could be Australian and reject her migrant ethnicity, but still keep up some of her migrant practices.

I argue that the participants’ social construction of Australian nationality has been influenced by the dual narratives of national identity of multiculturalism and the Anglo-Celtic identity. I see that their construction of Australian nationality in terms of multiculturalism is an extension of seeing Anglo-Australians as ‘the other’, which in turn, is a reaction of being othered in the first place. The women I interviewed felt that Anglo-Australians did not accept them as Australian, but they reduced the impact of this social exclusion by constructing Australian identity as multicultural rather than an Anglo-Australian. This left them three options. They could:

1. Reject an Australian identity, thereby rejecting Anglo-Australians.
2. Reject Anglo-Australians as the only Australians and claim an Australian identity through multiculturalism.
3. Adopt an Australian identity and diminish the difference between Anglo-Australians and themselves as migrant-Australians.

The third option might seem most aligned with a truly multicultural identity, because, as Xiomara showed, this convinced her that she was no different to ‘everybody else’ in Australia (especially Anglo-Australians). And yet this was the least appealing option for the other 49 women, because, to them, it meant sacrificing their cultural difference. This need not necessarily be so, but this was not the way the women perceived it. Xiomara effectively proved their fears, because in claiming an exclusively
Australian identity, she rejected her migrant ethnicity (although not entirely, because she still wanted to keep up some Chilean traditions such as speaking Spanish).

Another potential reason that influenced the women’s rejection of an exclusively Australian identity could lie in the construction of Australian identity in relation to race. I found that ‘whiteness’ was a powerful and complex notion as it related to Australian national identity. When the women claimed an Australian identity alongside their families’ cultural identity, they drew their ideas of the nation from the narrative of multiculturalism. Their lived experience of the multicultural nation, however, was one where tensions around whiteness and ethnic/racial diversity stopped the ideology of multiculturalism from being a reality. Not being seen as Australian was related to not embodying whiteness. Whiteness and Australian national identity seemed normalised despite the multicultural narrative of identity, even as the women rejected racial constructions of Australian identity. We see this in the way that the women interchangeably referred to ‘Australians’ as ‘Anglos’ or ‘white Australians’. For example, Pandora noted that it was ‘weird’ in her travels to Argentina that the locals saw her as Australian even though people here did not, and she remarked, ‘it’s just funny how they think I’m Australian because I don’t look Australian – if I was blonde or something I’d say, “Oh okay, fair enough”’ [my emphasis]. This comment shows how the women, who were frustrated by not being seen as Australian, also took issue with seeing themselves as Australian because they did not look ‘Anglo’. As Wendy said, in order for her to be seen as Australian in the eyes of others ‘you have to be Anglo and not look like me’. She thought it was ‘superficial’ to judge Australian identity on the basis of racial markers, although, by her own admission, what she considered ‘typical of an Australian person’ was an ‘Anglo’ appearance and blonde hair.

Having a hybrid migrant-Australian identity was the women’s most favoured option. This way, they could signal their difference to Anglo-Australians in terms of their cultural traditions, but at the same time, they could benefit from the egalitarianism that Anglo-Australians were seen to exemplify. My thesis has been centrally concerned with the way that the women simultaneously rejected and adopted their identities in reference to Anglo-Australians. The next chapter will comment on the major themes of my thesis and draw a conclusion from my findings.
CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSION

In this thesis, I have argued that the women I interviewed constructed their ethnic, gender, sexuality and nationality in relation to two narratives of national identity: the Anglo-Australian and multicultural identities. I established the premise for my argument by reviewing the literature relevant to my research area. Australian academics who support a model of Australian identity in terms of the ‘civic nation’ have argued that Australia cannot have a strong and ‘truly inclusive’ national identity based upon cultural pluralism, as this would stretch the limits of multiculturalism. Instead, Australians can only share a sense of national identity through our civic institutions and shared history rather than through a shared sense of ethnicity.

My study was focused on the concept of social identities: specifically, ethnicity, gender and sexuality, and nationality were examined as constructions that were given meaning through social interaction at the interpersonal and wider social levels. First, I examined the social construction of ethnicity. Using Jenkins’ (1997) framework, I focused on the dialectic of similarity and difference. Ethnic identity was seen as a subjective process of identification with migrant and national cultures. I found that the 25 Australian women of Latin background that I interviewed identified with their respective CoO communities (Argentina, Chile, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Uruguay, and Peru), as well as with a wider pan-ethnic Latin ethnicity. The women described their CoO culture with respect to five emblems of ethnicity: food, language, music, festivity and the emblem of family. Equally, the women saw these emblems as belonging to other migrants from South and Central America, with only slight variations in the expression of these customs. The women readily defined Latin pan-ethnicity through the Latin persona, which was proud and loud, and they emphasised the similarities, rather than the differences, of the cultural traditions of migrants from Latin America. The Latin women did not see a strong link between religion and their ethnicities, and instead, their discussion of Catholicism highlighted that irrespective of their religious identities (Catholic, Spiritual-Catholic and Spiritual), the women were highly critical of the Catholic Church’s teachings.

The 25 Australian women of Turkish background that I interviewed identified with their Turkish communities as well as with a wider pan-ethnic Islamic ethnicity.
These women described Turkish culture in reference to their religious traditions, including religious festivals, marital rites, and the value of respect. These religious-cultural traditions had obvious links to a pan-ethnic Islamic ‘culture’. The participants identified with an Islamic pan-ethnicity by establishing themselves as ‘religious Turks’ and ‘Muslim-Turks’ rather than as ‘cultural Turks’, and through emphasising the similarities in the religious traditions of Muslim migrants, rather than focusing on their cultural differences. The women’s discussion of religion showed that there was an irrevocable link between Islam and their Turkish ethnicity, but, as they saw it, there were two ways to be ‘religious Turks’: one was by being a closed Muslim who wore the hijab, and the other was to be an open Muslim who did not wear the hijab.

All 50 women described Australian ethnicity through the lack of legitimate cultural traditions of Anglo-Australians. Australian pan-ethnicity was constructed through Australia’s multiculturalism and by emphasising that Anglo-Australians were not the ‘true Australians’. At the same time, in the course of the interviews, the women treated the category of ‘Australian’ as synonymous with the identity of ‘Anglo-Australian’. That is, while the women emphasised that ‘anyone can be Australian’, they mostly spoke of ‘Australians’ as ‘Anglos’ or ‘white’ Australians. These findings highlighted the tensions between multicultural and Anglo-Australian narratives of the nation. While the women supported the view that Australian identity was multicultural, Anglo-Australians were the main reference point in their constructions of Australian ethnic culture.

My analysis of the women’s social construction of gender and sexuality showed that the women in both groups constructed their gender identities in opposition to the femininity and masculinity of their CoO groups. Instead, they adopted Anglo-Australian cultural values of egalitarianism in order to reconstruct their CoO gender ideals, which they felt were premised upon unequal double standards. The women mostly wanted to out-marry from their CoO groups, and they looked to their respective pan-ethnic groups to find a spouse. The women tended to couple with Australian-born men, which would suggest that Australian ethnicity was important in selecting a marriage partner. I examined the women’s construction of sexuality in relation to the concept of heteronormativity. Specifically, I looked at the notion of the double standard and narratives about virginity and how these concepts influenced the negotiation of cultural and religious norms pertaining to gender and sexuality. The Latin women challenged Catholic and cultural expectations of female sexuality. The Turkish women
supported conservative ideals of sexuality on the basis of religious rather than cultural beliefs, although the two were complementary. The narrative of Anglo-Australian identity featured prominently in the women’s discussion of gender and sexuality. The women mostly took on Anglo-Australian ideals, except on matters of premarital sex, where the Turkish women rejected Anglo-Australian constructions of sexuality in favour of Islam.

My analysis of the women’s social construction of nationality was focused on notions of citizenship and race. The women’s social construction of Australian identity was heavily influenced by a narrative of multiculturalism. Against this multicultural backdrop, I found that the women identified with three Australian ethnicities: not Australian, partly-Australian and Australian. All 50 women perceived that Australian identity was inclusive regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, or birthplace, but not all the women applied such multicultural notions when it came to their own ethnicity. Some women rejected an Australian ethnicity on the grounds of a fragmented multicultural identity: in this instance, because of our cultural plurality they asked, ‘who can say who is an Australian?’ The overwhelming majority of the interviewees, however, adopted an Australian ethnicity on the grounds of a wholly multicultural national identity: to be an Australian was to be a ‘mixture’ of cultures, and so the women felt justified in adopting their migrant and pan-ethnic ethnicities alongside an Australian ethnicity.

The limitations of my sample, including the snowball recruitment method and my recruitment of women on the basis of pan-ethnicity, limit the generalisability of my findings. This snowball technique was likely to have produced homogenous samples in regards to the ethnic and pan-ethnic pride of the Latin women and the religious pride of the ‘Muslim-Turkish’ women I interviewed. Due to the qualitative nature of my study I cannot make generalisations from my study. Instead, my findings shed light on the social construction of identity by second generation migrants of Latin American and Muslim-Turkish backgrounds who closely identified with their CoO and pan-ethnic communities. My findings would be enhanced by further study on the social construction of Anglo-Australian ethnicity, especially through interviews with second generation migrants of Anglo-Celtic backgrounds.

My thesis was concerned with the ideology of multiculturalism and how this ideology informed the women’s social construction of identity. The cornerstone idea supporting the ideology of multiculturalism is that society should be organised around its cultural diversity (Lopez 2001; Vasta 1993). As the participants described it, the
ideology of multiculturalism has wide implications; not only does this ideology frame Australian society as multicultural, but it implies that Australian identity should be multicultural.

Despite the women’s support for a multicultural narrative of Australian identity, they still spoke of ‘Australians’ as a unitary, homogenous category which was based around an ‘Anglo-Celtic’ ethnicity. This showed that while multiculturalism was integral to the women’s reconstruction of their migrant community identities, multiculturalism was ambiguously influential to the women’s reconstructions of Australian national identity. The women wanted to challenge exclusive and racialised notions of Australian identity. They wanted to think of Australian identity as multiculturalism personified. At the same time, they felt that their migrant identities were marginalised by dominant representations of Australian-ness, and they noted that they, as migrant-Australians, were seen as ‘wogs’, while Anglo-Australians were seen as ‘Aussies’.

At the everyday level, the Anglo-Celtic identity is unclear, with few studies providing true insight into the social construction of this identity, other than through the concept of Britishness or whiteness. While it has become an academic convention to refer to ‘the majority’ of Australians as ‘Anglo’ or ‘Anglo-Celtic’, it is unknown whether this identity resonates with the individuals it supposedly represents. The extent to which this identity is subjectively understood as an ethnicity and a culture remains a relative mystery. For example, historian Ann Curthoys best described the ambivalence of the ‘Anglo-Australian’ identity when she attempted to apply it to herself: ‘I cannot find words for myself, stumbling around with phrases like Anglo-Australian… or Anglo-Celtic Australian, feeling ever more clumsily named and ever less clear about how to describe myself and those like me in current debate [about identity]’ (cited in Dixson, 1999: 2).

Anglo-Australians have always played an implicit role in empirical studies of the second generation (see Baldassar, 1999; Butcher and Thomas, 2001; Noble and Tabar, 2000; Zevallos, 2003a). Such studies of second generation migrants position ‘Anglo-Australians’ as a social category, but I felt that the second generation’s construction of Anglo-Australians needed specific attention. My thesis endeavoured to bring to the forefront the integral role of Anglo-Australians as a foil for second generation migrant constructions of identity. This imaginary category was isolated for discussion because Anglo-Australians inhabited such an important space in the background of every
interview I conducted. Without this category, it seemed that the women interviewed would have found it more challenging to define their own ethnicity. For this reason, I argued that the women saw ‘Anglo-Australians’ as the other.

The women’s discussion on the construction of their identities suggests that othering Anglo-Australians was crucial to their self-understanding and to their discussions of their ethnicity, gender, sexuality and nationality. At the same time, my analysis shows that the concept of otherness was not all encompassing. First, while I have applied the concept of otherness in my analysis of the interview data, the women did not use this concept. They spoke of ‘difference’ and they often highlighted their difference to Anglo-Australians, but at times, they highlighted their difference to other non-Anglo-Australians. In particular, the Turkish women continually drew comparisons between themselves as ‘religious Turks’ and other Turkish people in Turkey and in Australia who were ‘cultural Turks’. Second, Anglo-Australians were not always seen as ‘the other’, as the women sometimes positioned themselves alongside Anglo-Australians. This was especially the case in relation to the women’s egalitarian ideals of gender and ethnic/racial/religious tolerance.

The women had a vested interest in supporting the ideology of multiculturalism because multiculturalism allows Australians of migrant background to draw an important sense of belonging to the nation. According to multicultural policies, the cultural diversity that migrants offer the nation is valued for its social and economic benefits. As the women saw it, multiculturalism facilitated the celebration of their migrant cultures and still be Australian citizens, and it elevated their contribution to the nation. At the same time, the participants’ understanding of multiculturalism also relegated the contribution of Anglo-Australian culture in their eyes.

The experiences of second generation migrants are pivotal to broader issues of identity negotiation, community boundaries, and social exclusion. Sameness and otherness, belonging and not belonging, are ongoing processes that these second generation migrants negotiate in their everyday lives, and these processes are contingent upon social context. In the context of Australian multiculturalism, being a second generation migrant means embracing some aspects of their migrant, pan-ethnic and Australian cultures while rejecting others, and it also means engaging with complex discourses of inclusion and exclusion. Notions of race and racism complicated, but did not entirely block, the women’s sense of belonging to the nation. Despite their personal experiences of racism, in their view, Australian society was not constructed in terms of
racism, but in terms of multiculturalism. Even though some Anglo-Australians were seen as racist, most Anglo-Australians were seen as supporting the ideology of multiculturalism.

My study shows that the construction of second generation social identities is a flexible but ambiguous process. The women’s reconstructed social identities are flexible: they actively negotiated their ethnicity, gender, sexuality and nationality by choosing certain aspects of their migrant, pan-ethnic and national cultures and amalgamating these ideas together into a reconstructed social identity. The contingency of socially constructed identities is best exemplified in an overseas context, where the women felt more Australian than ever before, but they were also bemused by their status as Australians overseas. As one woman said, ‘it’s just funny how they think I’m Australian because I don’t look Australian’.

Similarly, the women’s social identities are ambiguous, and we see this in the way in which the Anglo-Celtic narrative of national identity is just as influential to the women’s socially constructed identities as the multicultural narrative. While the women’s construction of identity was influenced by their self-identifications, their ethnicity choices were restricted by imposed categories of identity provided by other people. This was why, as I outlined in the introductory chapter, the women saw themselves as ‘Australians’ and ‘non Australians’ at the same time. The women cheered for Australia as ‘our country’ in some contexts, and yet they spoke of Australia as ‘our country that we don’t belong to’ in other contexts. The women’s confidence in, and support of, the ideology for multiculturalism fills them with optimism that Australia is a ‘great country’ that is worth belonging to, even when they were not ‘seen’ as Australian by other people, and even when they experienced difficulty claiming their Australian-ness. In their experiences, it was possible to ‘feel’ and ‘be’ Australian, even when they did not ‘call’ themselves Australian. The women challenged the Anglo-Celtic narrative of the nation as a ‘stereotype’ by claiming that Anglo-Australians were not the ‘true Australians’ and that Aboriginal people and migrants were also Australian. At the same time, they also perpetuated this ‘stereotypical’ identity in their own conceptualisation of Australian identity. So, despite the women’s claims that in order to be Australian, ‘you have to be Anglo and not look like me’, they were still able to claim a partly Australian identity.

My thesis has investigated the social construction of identity of 50 second generation migrant-Australian women of Latin American and Turkish backgrounds.
Despite the women’s ambivalent feelings towards Australian culture, they felt ‘privileged’ to be living in Australia. They said, ‘the country does a lot for us’. They were self-assured in their contribution to Australian society through their migrant cultures and they were enthusiastic about Australian multiculturalism. They felt that Australia is ‘a great place’ because ‘it is a multicultural society, [and] there are a lot of open-minded people’. In the women’s experiences, the multicultural Australian identity was not a fully realised reality, and yet they felt confident about this identity. Ultimately, these second generation migrant-Australians believed that to be Australian ‘means to be multicultural in every sense’.
REFERENCES


Multiculturalism: Reflections on the Twentieth Anniversary of Jean Martin’s The Migrant Presence. Sydney: Research Institute for Humanities and the University of Sydney.


APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS

Table 1.1: Latin participants’ demographics (N= 25)

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Pseudonym</th>
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<th>Birthplace</th>
<th>Parents’ birthplace</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Employment</th>
<th>Marital status</th>
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<td>Single</td>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td>Salvadoran-Australian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ursula</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Chile</td>
<td>Chile</td>
<td>Current TAFE degree</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Spiritual</td>
<td>Chilean-Australian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neruda</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>El Salvador</td>
<td>El Salvador</td>
<td>Current PhD</td>
<td>Full-time</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Spiritual-Catholic</td>
<td>Salvadoran-Australian</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Age, Birthplace, Education, Employment, Marital Status, Religion:**

- **Median age:** 22
- **Australia:** 8
- **Latin America:** 17
- **Current Student:** 13
- **None:** 3
- **Single:** 9
- **Casual:** 6
- **L/T r/ship:** 9
- **Spiritual-Catholic:** 11
- **Engaged:** 1
- **Spiritual:** 7
- **Part-time:** 4
- **Married:** 6
- **Full-time:** 12

(No women had children)
Table 1.2: Turkish participants’ demographics (N= 25)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pseudonym</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Birthplace</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Employment</th>
<th>Marital Status</th>
<th>Self-identified ethnic identity</th>
<th>Self-identified religious identity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Akasma</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>Current Bachelor Degree</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Australian-Turkish</td>
<td>Open Muslim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cennet</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>Current Bachelor Degree</td>
<td>Part-time</td>
<td>Single, but dating</td>
<td>Australian-Turkish</td>
<td>Open Muslim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asuman</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>Current Bachelor Degree</td>
<td>Part-time</td>
<td>Long-term relationship</td>
<td>Turkish-Australian</td>
<td>Open Muslim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dilruba</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>Current Bachelor Degree</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Turkish-Australian</td>
<td>Closed Muslim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fazilet</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>Current Bachelor Degree</td>
<td>Unpaid work</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Muslim-Turk-Australian</td>
<td>Closed Muslim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rana</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>Current Bachelor Degree</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Muslim-Turk</td>
<td>Closed Muslim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karli</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>Current Bachelor Degree</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Australian-Turk-Muslim</td>
<td>Open Muslim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Huriye</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>Completed Bachelor Degree</td>
<td>Full-time</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Muslim-Australian-Turkish</td>
<td>Closed Muslim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bikem</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Cyprus</td>
<td>Current Bachelor Degree</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Engaged</td>
<td>Turkish-Cypriot</td>
<td>Open Muslim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leyla</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>Completed Bachelor Degree</td>
<td>Full-time</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Muslim-Australian-Turkish</td>
<td>Closed Muslim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melodi</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>Current Bachelor Degree</td>
<td>Part-time</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Turkish-Australian</td>
<td>Open Muslim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sahiba</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>Current Bachelor Degree</td>
<td>Unpaid work</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Muslim - Australian-Turkish</td>
<td>Closed Muslim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nural</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>Current Bachelor Degree</td>
<td>Part-time</td>
<td>Engaged</td>
<td>Australian-Muslim-Turkish</td>
<td>Closed Muslim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fatma</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>Completed Bachelor Degree</td>
<td>Full-time</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Muslim-Australian-Turkish</td>
<td>Closed Muslim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amatullah</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>Completed Bachelor Degree</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Muslim-Australian-Turkish</td>
<td>Closed Muslim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Güldeste</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>Completed Bachelor Degree</td>
<td>Full-time</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Muslim-Australian-Turkish</td>
<td>Closed Muslim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Birthplace</td>
<td>Current Education</td>
<td>Employment</td>
<td>Marital Status</td>
<td>Religion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manolya</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>None Bachelor Degree</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Muslim-Turkish-Australian</td>
<td>Closed Muslim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kumru</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>Completed Bachelor Degree (Hons)</td>
<td>Full-time</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Muslim-Australian-Turkish</td>
<td>Closed Muslim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pertev</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>Completed TAFE degree</td>
<td>Full-time</td>
<td>Engaged</td>
<td>Turkish</td>
<td>Open Muslim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harika</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>Current Bachelor Degree</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Turkish-Australian</td>
<td>Open Muslim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Destan</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>Completed Bachelor degree</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Australian-Turkish</td>
<td>Open Muslim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Esmeray</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>Current Bachelor Degree</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Muslim Oz-Turk</td>
<td>Closed Muslim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>İrem</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>Current Bachelor Degree</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Turkish-Australian</td>
<td>Open Muslim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ferah</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>Current Bachelor Degree</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Engaged</td>
<td>Turkish-Australian</td>
<td>Closed Muslim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solmaz</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>Completed Bachelor degree</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Australian-Turkish</td>
<td>Open Muslim</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Age**
- Median age: 22
- Turkey: 3

**Birthplace**
- Australia: 22

**Education**
- Current Student: 16

**Employment**
- None/Unpaid: 15
- Part-time: 4
- L/T r/ship: 1
- Full-time: 6
- Engaged: 4
- Married: 5

**Marital Status**
- Single: 15
- Engaged: 4
- Married: 5

**Religion**
- Open: 11
- Closed: 14

(1 woman has a child)
# APPENDIX 2: PEOPLE OF TURKISH AND LATIN ORIGIN IN AUSTRALIA

## Table 2.1: Demographic information about Turkish, Chilean, Argentinean, Salvadoran, Peruvian, and Uruguayans in Australia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Number of overseas-born migrants</th>
<th>Number of second generation migrants</th>
<th>Estimated total population</th>
<th>Number living in Victoria</th>
<th>Education or occupational qualifications percent</th>
<th>Of those with qualifications: higher qualification(^2) percent</th>
<th>Percent of 15+ migrant Employment</th>
<th>Percent of 15+ Unemployment</th>
<th>Citizenship percent</th>
<th>Most common language spoken at home percent</th>
<th>Most common religion (number)</th>
<th>Information Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TURKISH</td>
<td>29,820</td>
<td>24,775</td>
<td>54,596</td>
<td>15,220</td>
<td>29.3</td>
<td>12.4</td>
<td>48.9</td>
<td>15.6</td>
<td>90.7</td>
<td>Turkish: 81.6, Islam: 23,450 Western Catholic: 15,770</td>
<td>2001 Census</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chilean</td>
<td>23,370</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>6,670</td>
<td>52.9</td>
<td>20.3</td>
<td>66.9</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>72.3</td>
<td>Spanish: 86.1, Western Catholic: 15,770</td>
<td>2001 Census</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Argentinean</td>
<td>10,800</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>3,380</td>
<td>51.1</td>
<td>22.9</td>
<td>68.1</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>88.7</td>
<td>Spanish: 74.5, Western Catholic: 7,040</td>
<td>2001 Census</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>El Salvadoran</td>
<td>9,873</td>
<td>1,865</td>
<td>11,738</td>
<td>3,113</td>
<td>41.1</td>
<td>15.3</td>
<td>56.7</td>
<td>30.6</td>
<td>90.3</td>
<td>Spanish: 96.0, Western Catholic: 6,245</td>
<td>1996 Census</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peruvian</td>
<td>4,879</td>
<td>2,225</td>
<td>7,104</td>
<td>676</td>
<td>63.8</td>
<td>30.1</td>
<td>67.2</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Spanish: 84.9, Western Catholic: 3,858</td>
<td>1996 Census</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uruguay</td>
<td>9,709</td>
<td>4,803</td>
<td>14,512</td>
<td>1,751</td>
<td>42.4</td>
<td>11.6</td>
<td>66.9</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>91.2</td>
<td>Spanish: 86.2, Western Catholic: 6,593</td>
<td>1996 Census</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table adapted from DIMIA community summaries. For information on Turkish, Chilean and Argentinean communities see DIMIA (2004a, 2004b, 2004c). For information on El Salvadoran, Peruvian and Uruguayan communities, see DIMIA (2002a, 2002b, 2002c). All information refers to overseas-born migrants, except second generation numbers, which refers to Australian-born individuals with one or both parents born overseas.

\(^2\) Higher education percentages includes people with bachelor, graduate and postgraduate degrees and diplomas

\(^3\) Information on number of second generation and estimated total population for Turkish group was obtained from DFAT (2004: [2]).
APPENDIX 3: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

DEMOGRAPHICS

Date: ___________

Time: ___________

Name: ____________________________________________________________

Age: ______________

Country of origin/ age or arrival/ parent’s CoO:
____________________________________________________________________

Education: Uni/ Degree/ Major/ Year:
____________________________________________________________________

If student; aspired career: _____________________________________________

Work: _______________________________________________________________

Suburb:
____________________________________________________________________

Marital Status: ______________________________________________________

Religious identification: ________________________________________________

Family: ______________________________________________________________

Mum work: ____________________________________________________________

Dad work: ____________________________________________________________

Approx Length of Interview: _______________________________
Just to begin the interview, tell me a little bit about yourself

**ETHNICITY:**

**Family and migration:**
Tell me about your family - how do you all get along?
Do you have an extended family living in Australia?
When did your family first came to Australia?
   - Reasons
   - Migration plan
Have your parents told you much about life in (CoO)?
What was the experience like to settle into a new country?

**CoO Culture:**
Does your family keep any (CoO) traditions or rituals?
   - Language schooling?
   - Do you know much of CoO history and role models?
   - Keep up with news from o/s?
What was it like to go to school and have that (CoO) influence at school?
   - Did you find that other people were accepting of your background?
   - Were there other kids with (CoO) background?
Can you tell me what it was like for you personally to grow up with your (CoO) background?
If you had to explain your COO culture to someone who had never heard of this country, how might you explain it to them?
Do you perceive any differences in cultural values between Australian and (CoO) society?
   - Do you think that (CoO) family life is centred on similar cultural values as ‘Australian’ family values?
What does your CoO culture mean to you?
Have you been to (CoO)? Would you like to go back?
Can you see yourself living in (CoO), or do you envision yourself continuing to live here?

**Friends:**
Think about the five people you are closest to. [Who/what relationship?]
What ethnicity are your friends?
Do you think it’s important that people maintain friendships with people of their own ethnic background?

**Religion:**
Do you see yourself as a religious person?
Did you attend religious schools?
How important is your religion to the person you are today?
Is it important to you to have friends of the same religion?
What do you think about [your religion’s] teachings?

**Identity:**
Describe your identity - what makes up your sense of self?
What would you say is your ethnic identity?
Has this changed over the years?
Can you think of any differences about your (CoO) identity compared to your parents and family?

**Australia:**
Describe Australian cultural traditions.
If you had to describe Australian society to someone who’d never heard of this country what would you say?
How has growing up in Australia influenced the person you have become?
How important is it to you to think and call yourself Australian?
Generally is it easy for people to have both an ethnic background and also feel Australian?
In your experience, do people accept you as ‘Australian’?
Are you an Australian citizen? What does this mean to you?
Do you think that people who come to Australia from overseas have certain responsibilities as Australian citizens?
**If mentioned multiculturalism:** How do you understand the word multiculturalism to mean?
Generally, what are the positive aspects of your (CoO) culture? Negatives?
-What are positives and negatives of Australian culture?

**Discrimination:**
Have you come across any stereotypes you think other people have about your culture?
Have you ever had any negative experiences from people reacting against your (CoO) background?
Have you ever experienced any racism or discrimination because of your (CoO) background?

**GENDER AND SEXUALITY:**
*Before we move onto the next sections of the interview, I’ll just remind you again that because I’ll be asking you questions about sexuality, that you are free to not answer questions if they make you uncomfortable. You can withdraw from the study at any time, if you change your mind about the things you tell me.*

**Femininity:**
Thinking generally, how would you describe (CoO) cultural values when it comes to gender?
Do you think that both men and women in (CoO) community are treated as equals?
What about in the wider Australian community?
Do you feel like there is a particular ideal when it comes to (CoO) femininity?
Is there an ideal Australian femininity?

**Family:**
What has been your personal experience in your family of growing up female?
Did your parents have any specific expectations of you because you are a woman?
Did your parents treat you and your siblings the same while you were growing up?
Have your parents ever restricted your freedom to go out with your friends or boyfriends?
How would your parents feel about their daughter dating?
Have you ever disagreed with the way your parents have brought you up?
Did you discuss sexual matters openly whilst growing up in your home?
Did your parents ever give you the impression that you should ‘wait’ to have sex?

**Relationships:**
What sorts of qualities do you look for in a partner?
What do you think it takes to achieve a successful and long-lasting relationship?
Have you ever thought to yourself that your ideal partner had to be of a particular ethnic background?
Thinking back over the past few years of your life, what was the ethnic background of the people you have dated?
Would you ever bring your partner home to meet your family? Under what circumstances?

**Marriage:**
While you were growing up did your parents ever give you the impression that they’d like to see you married?
Was there an emphasis that they wanted you to marry some one from (CoO)?
Do you think there is one particular nationality that your parents would have objected you dating?
Do you think it’s possible for two people who have different ethnic backgrounds to have a satisfying and long-lasting relationship?
Do you think it’s possible for two people who have different religious backgrounds to have a satisfying and long-lasting relationship?
Did you grow up thinking that you would one day like to get married and have children?
What expectations do you have of marriage?
If you were to have kids, would you bring them up in the same way you were?
What ethnic identity would you like your children to have ideally? How might you ‘pass on’ a feeling of being (CoO) to your own children?
How would you feel about your children thinking of themselves as Australian, and not at all as (CoO)?

**WRAP UP:**
Do you have anything else you wanted to say?

Did you have any questions for me?
If you think of anything later on, you have my contact details.
APPENDIX 4: COPY OF FORM OF DISCLOSURE AND INFORMED CONSENT FORM

**Project Title:** The intersections of ethnicity, gender and citizenship of young Australian women of Latin American and Turkish backgrounds.

**Investigators:** Zuleyka Zevallos (Principal investigator). Michael Gilding (Thesis Supervisor).

**EXPLANATION OF PROJECT:**
This study will compare the experiences of young women of Latin American and Turkish backgrounds. The purpose of this study is build a detailed account of what it is like to grow up in Australia having the influence of another ethnic culture. This study will involve a one-on-one interview that will last one hour to one and a half hours, comprised of three sections. These three sections will cover demographics; migration and ethnicity; and finally gender issues. The interview will be audio-recorded on cassette tape, and will be later transcribed into written form. The questions will focus on the importance of culture, family, religion and education in shaping women’s identities. I am interested in the way young women negotiate gender relationships, and the influences that their ethnic community and Australian society have on their attitudes. I hope this study will benefit the individuals being interviewed by allowing them to contribute their opinions about the reality of growing up with two cultures. This will in turn benefit other Australians by providing a well-rounded account of what it means to be an ethnic Australian. Hopefully, this study will dispel any misconceptions or stereotypes people have formed about the communities being studied, and develop an understanding about these cultures.

The participants should be aware that they are free to withdraw from the study any time. If at any stage during the interview, you feel uncomfortable with the questions, you are free to not answer such questions, or to stop the interview. You may withdraw from the study after the interview has been conducted, if you feel upon reflection that you do not wish to be associated with it. You can contact me any time with questions about this study on 0413 146 838 or 9571 2917. If you have any other comments or questions regarding the project entitled, ‘The intersections of ethnicity, gender and citizenship of young Australian women of Latin American and Turkish backgrounds’, you can contact the Senior Investigator, Michael Gilding of the Department of Sociology on 9214 8102.

**PRIVACY PROTECTION:**
I will be keeping all the interview material, including the cassette tapes and transcripts of the interview locked in drawer to which only I, Zuleyka Zevallos, have access. No other person shall listen or read the material collected during the interview. You will be given a pseudonym to protect your identity, and no personal details will be included about any participants. I will be the only person that shall have access to the pseudonym and corresponding identities of the participants. All participants who are interested can receive a copy of the transcript of their interview and also of the finished thesis, and offer comments or suggestions. I anticipate publishing the results of this study in the future, and so upon reading a copy of my thesis, participants are welcome.
to withdraw their contribution if they feel uncomfortable with this prospect. Bear in mind that no participant shall be identified within the study or in any future publication of its results, as your privacy shall be guarded at every step of this study.

**COMPLAINT PROCEDURE:***
If you feel that you have been treated unfairly, or have any complaints about my conduct as interviewer or the nature of this study, feel free to contact the Head of School of Social and Behavioural Studies, Dr Julie Mulvany on 9214 8209. Alternatively, you can forward a written complaint to the following address:

The Chair  
Human Research Ethics Committee  
Swinburne University of Technology  
P O Box 218  
HAWTHORN. VIC. 3122  
Phone: (03) 9214 5223

Thank you for participating in this study and please feel free to contact me at any time about this study.

Zuleyka Zevallos
AGREEMENT:
The following section will require you to give written consent to your involvement in this study. Your signature is required solely for the purposes of acknowledging that you have understood the information contained in the previous pages. Sign this only if you fully understand the nature and purpose of this study.

I ________________________________________ have read (or, as appropriate, have had read to me) and understood the information above. Any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction.

I agree to participate in this activity, realising that I may withdraw at any time.

I agree that the interview may be recorded on audio tape as data on the condition that no part of it is included in any presentation or public display.

I agree that research data collected for the study may be published or provided to other researchers on the condition that anonymity is preserved and that I cannot be identified.

NAME OF PARTICIPANT

SIGNATURE ............................. DATE……………………
APPENDIX 5: EXAMPLE OF POSTER ADVERTISING THE STUDY

Are you a woman with a Turkish background aged 18-25 years?

What does your Turkish identity mean to you? Would you like to talk about what it has been like for you growing up in Australia?

My name is Zuleyka, and I am a young PhD student studying in Swinburne University. I am looking for volunteers to be interviewed about what it means to be Turkish in Australia. I am hoping to give other people in Australian society a better understanding of what Turkish culture is really like. What does your Turkish community mean to you? What is it like to grow up in a multicultural place like Australia? How important is it to you to keep up Turkish traditions in the future?

If you are interested in speaking with me about what it means to you to be a young Turkish woman in Australia, give me a call!

You can contact me on 0413 146 838.
Table 6: Typology: Latin women's religious identities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pseudonym</th>
<th>Do you consider yourself a religious person?</th>
<th>Do you agree with Church's teachings?</th>
<th>When qualified answer given for religiosity question, reason stated</th>
<th>Is religion important to you? **</th>
<th>Regular church attendance</th>
<th>Comments made regarding religiosity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Violeta</td>
<td>y</td>
<td>y</td>
<td>Belief in God more spiritual than religious but no need for church</td>
<td>y</td>
<td>y - Spanish</td>
<td>Yes, I would have to say that Catholicism is important to me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yvonne</td>
<td>y</td>
<td>y</td>
<td>Belief in God but anti-religion / categories</td>
<td>y</td>
<td>y - Spanish</td>
<td>On being Catholic, I guess it's pretty important, I like to be informed about things.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violeta</td>
<td>y</td>
<td>y</td>
<td>Belief in God but anti-religion / categories</td>
<td>y</td>
<td>y - Spanish</td>
<td>I don't separate that religiously.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Devi</td>
<td>y</td>
<td>y</td>
<td>Anti-religion / categories</td>
<td>y</td>
<td>y - Spanish</td>
<td>efore Devi.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wendy</td>
<td>y</td>
<td>y</td>
<td>Belief in God but anti-religion / categories</td>
<td>y</td>
<td>y - Spanish</td>
<td>Yes, [I'm Catholic]. I believe in God... I go to church every Sunday.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debi</td>
<td>y</td>
<td>y</td>
<td>Belief in God but anti-religion / categories</td>
<td>y</td>
<td>y - Spanish</td>
<td>Catholicism is very important, very important... Everything revolves around us being Catholic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ingrid</td>
<td>y</td>
<td>y</td>
<td>Belief in God but anti-religion / categories</td>
<td>y</td>
<td>y - Spanish</td>
<td>Yes, I think of myself as having a spirituality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sajri</td>
<td>y</td>
<td>y</td>
<td>Belief in God but anti-religion / categories</td>
<td>y</td>
<td>y - Spanish</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nelly</td>
<td>y</td>
<td>y</td>
<td>Belief in God but anti-religion / categories</td>
<td>y</td>
<td>y - Spanish</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jade</td>
<td>somewhat</td>
<td>y</td>
<td>Anti-religion / categories</td>
<td>y</td>
<td>y - Spanish</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estella</td>
<td>somewhat</td>
<td>y</td>
<td>Anti-religion / categories</td>
<td>y</td>
<td>y - Spanish</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estrella</td>
<td>somewhat</td>
<td>y</td>
<td>Anti-religion / categories</td>
<td>y</td>
<td>y - Spanish</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cecilia</td>
<td>y</td>
<td>y</td>
<td>Anti-religion / categories</td>
<td>y</td>
<td>y - Spanish</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cecilia</td>
<td>y</td>
<td>y</td>
<td>Anti-religion / categories</td>
<td>y</td>
<td>y - Spanish</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amaya</td>
<td>somewhat</td>
<td>y</td>
<td>Anti-religion / categories</td>
<td>y</td>
<td>y - Spanish</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aylin</td>
<td>somewhat</td>
<td>y</td>
<td>Anti-religion / categories</td>
<td>y</td>
<td>y - Spanish</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aylin</td>
<td>somewhat</td>
<td>y</td>
<td>Anti-religion / categories</td>
<td>y</td>
<td>y - Spanish</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ursula</td>
<td>somewhat</td>
<td>y</td>
<td>Anti-religion / categories</td>
<td>y</td>
<td>y - Spanish</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xiomara</td>
<td>somewhat</td>
<td>y</td>
<td>Anti-religion / categories</td>
<td>y</td>
<td>y - Spanish</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outside typology (1 participant)</td>
<td>y - Christian</td>
<td>y n - Catholic</td>
<td>Anti-religion / categories</td>
<td>y</td>
<td>y n - Catholic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes: 8</td>
<td>16 Catholic</td>
<td>8 15 6 13 7 2</td>
<td>Anti-religion / categories</td>
<td>y</td>
<td>y n - Catholic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No: 6</td>
<td>7 non-Catholic</td>
<td>5 18 15</td>
<td>Anti-religion / categories</td>
<td>y</td>
<td>y n - Catholic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* 'Somewhat' denotes women's comment 'I'm not very/really religious' ** This question was also phrased, 'Is religion important to your everyday life/ the choices that you make in your life?'
### Table 7.1: Latin participants’ comments on their identities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NOT AUSTRALIAN</th>
<th>PARTLY AUSTRALIAN</th>
<th>AUSTRALIAN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sayuri: I feel Argentinean living in Australia.</td>
<td>Lorelei: I’d say both [Uruguyan and Australian]… I’m South American.</td>
<td>Xiomara: I decided really early that I was Australian, not Chilean.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Claudia: I'm Uruguayan… To be honest, I've never thought of myself as Australian.</td>
<td>Rosa: I’d say I’m Salvadoran… Yeah I think of myself as Australian.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poppy: Chilean… I don’t feel Australian…</td>
<td>Estella: Both Uruguyan-Australian. I’m somewhere in between.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matijana: Peruvian and I hate it when people say I’m Australian, so don’t say it.</td>
<td>Cecilia: Yeah well I call myself an Australian-Uruguayan.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Josefinar: Latina. I’m a Peruana. That’s where I’m more cultural; I’m more Peruan of nada. I always say ‘Peru, South American’. Not Australian.</td>
<td>Wendy: I think kind of see myself as a bit of both, but probably more Salvadoran than anything… there’s a bit of the Australian in me. I think I’d be different to someone who lives in El Salvador all their life.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gracie: Argentinean. Because I mean, I didn’t grow up with any Australian traditions, if they have any, you know? Only the Argentinean way.</td>
<td>Yvonne: Both Australian and Salvadoran [or] Australian with a Spanish background.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pandora: I’d definitely say Argentinean… although I was born in Australia and I am Australian and I’m not ashamed of being Australian-born, I’m Argentinean.</td>
<td>Devi: [I am a] young, Latin-Australian-Catholic woman. That would be it. Obviously I’m Latin and I live in Australia and acknowledging both is just as important.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zienia: Latin, I guess. I’ve never thought of me being Australian… [because] I think I just want to hold onto being Peruvian, being someone else.</td>
<td>Moira: Both Salvadoran-Australian… 50/50, yeah [laughs] I wouldn’t say I’m 100 per cent Australian because I wasn’t born here [pause]. Yeah I think I’m in the middle. Definitely in the middle.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jade: I wouldn’t call myself Australian, not because I don’t like it but because I just don’t see myself as Australian. I see myself in the Salvadoran tradition. I say ‘Costa Rican’ or ‘Spanish’.</td>
<td>Violeta: Yeah, I’m glad to say that I’m Latino, but we are Australian I guess. I’m proud to say I’m Salvadoran. It’s good to have both, I guess. The good thing of that is that we can speak the two languages.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ofelia: I consider myself Uruguayan. I don’t know why - yeah I do [laughs] I was brought up like that. I don’t think I was brought up in the Australian way… I was born here. I live here. I feel a bit Australian - not really, but a little bit.</td>
<td>Ursula: Yeah, I guess I do think of myself as Australian and Chilean. I mean, it’s just borderline. Okay, I was born in Chile but I’ve lived here basically all my life. I guess to some extent I am Chilean and to some extent I am Australian.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neruda: I think of myself as both… I do consider myself as a Salvadoran but I also consider myself as an Australian. But I think that because I lived there for a year, I’m very proud to be El Salvadoran.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Luci: I think of myself as a half-breed [laughs] I do, because I do feel Salvadoran, because I have the language, I have the values, but I think I’m also Australian because I live here and it’s basically turned me into the person that I am.

Ingrid: I think I’m a Salvo-Australian girl [laughs] I’m kind of divided… I’m just Latin-American.

Aylin: I’d like to think of myself as Chilean-Australian [laughs]… but I also don’t feel like I’m Australian. I’m a bit of both.

The highlighted comments denote women with ambivalent identities.
## Table 7.2: Turkish participants’ comments on their identities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NOT AUSTRALIAN</th>
<th>PARTLY AUSTRALIAN</th>
<th>AUSTRALIAN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total: 3 participants</td>
<td>Total: 22 participants</td>
<td>Total: No participants</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Turkish</th>
<th>Muslim-Turk</th>
<th>Turkish-Australian</th>
<th>Muslim-Australian-Turkish</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Bikem: Turkish-Cypriot. **[Open]**

Pertev: I’m Turkish... I’m not Australian **[Open]**

Rana: I’m just a Muslim woman… and then I’m Turkish… But I don’t say I’m Australian **[Closed]**

Ferah: I’m a Turkish-Australian. **[Closed]**

Karli: …basically I’m an Australian-Turk who’s a Muslim… **[Open]**

Dilruba: …in between: Turkish-Australian. **[Closed]**

Leyla: I’m a Muslim and I’m Australian from a Turkish background. **[Closed]**

Melodi: I’m a Turkish-Australian. **[Open]**

Sahiba: I first identify myself to be a Muslim person and then Australian, [then] Turkish… **[Closed]**

Solmaz: …I’m an Australian with a Turkish background. **[Open]**

Manolya: First it’d be I’m a Muslim. Then I come from a Turkish background, Australian. **[Closed]**

Akasma: It’s just both. I can’t say ‘I’m Turkish’ or ‘I’m just Australian’. I’m just in the middle. But more leaning on towards the Australian side, definitely. **[Open]**

Fatma: I’d say I’m a Muslim-Australian… with us we’re Muslim and then Australian. We consider ourselves Turkish but not as much as we consider ourselves Australian. **[Closed]**

Destan: My morals and all of that are Turkish I think but I think – [sighs] how can I say it? I’m more Australian? …I’m Turkish but I just live in Australia I guess with a bit of Australian influence. **[Open]**

Kumru: …first of all I’m Muslim, and I consider myself to be an Australian-Turk, Turkish person… but I consider myself more of an Australian, I think, than a Turkish person… **[Closed]**

Asuman: I’m a Turkish-Australian, or an Australian-Turkish. I always get confused if I should say one or the other first. **[Open]**

Esmeray: I’m a Muslim Or-Turk… My belief goes before anything else. As for the nationality, they’re both equal to me. I really wouldn’t know which one to put before the other. **[Closed]**

Cennet: …I sorta look at myself as I’m Turkish or an Australian citizen but I do have a Turkish background. **[Open]**

Güldeste: Muslim… [but] I take what is good from both [Australian and Turkish cultures]. If I like it, if it feels good, I’ll do it… **[Closed]**
Harika: ...being a Turk is always going to be at the front. Being Turkish with an Australian citizenship, that’s what I’d say... I wouldn’t say I’m Australian... But as I said, I would never reject Australia, for god’s sake I live here! I will be living here. It’s just Turkish-Australian it would be. I’d classify it that way.

Nural: I’m a Muslim youth, an Australian-Muslim youth, more than a Turkish female... We’re sort of in-between the Australian culture and the Turkish culture. [Closed]

İrem: It depends on what context I guess... If I’m talking to someone who is from Turkey and has been born and raised there, yes I see myself as an Australian. But if I’m talking to someone who is from Australia, is Australian or Asian or is European or any other nationality, I kinda see myself as a Turkish person. [Open]

Huriye: I’d probably say I’m a Muslim, that’s like the most important thing to me... I can’t say I feel Australian either... You sort of feel in between sort of Australian and Turkish. That’s really how I feel. I don’t really feel like I belong strongly to either one. [Closed]

Fazilet: I think of myself more as a Muslim than a Turk. I just see myself as a Muslim-Turk, but I just focus more on the Muslim... When I’m talking I say ‘I’m Australian with a Turkish background’. [Closed]

Amatullah: ...I don’t really feel Turkish if there was a way to feel Turkish. Just a Muslim really... I don’t know if there’s a way to feel Australian either... [Closed]

The highlighted comments denote women with ambivalent identities. ‘Open’ refers to ‘open Muslim’, a woman who does not wear the hijab. ‘Closed’ refers to ‘closed Muslim’, a woman who wears the hijab.
LIST OF PUBLICATIONS PRODUCED AS A RESULT OF THE PROJECT