Mixed Families: The Joint Construction of Cultural Identity within Intercultural/Interracial Migrant Families in Australia

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Thesis Declaration

I, Maki Meyer, certify that:

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Details of the work:

Location in thesis:
Chapter 6

Student contribution to work:
This work has been prepared for publication based on the data, which I have collected and analysed during the course of the research process. The data was closely examined collaboratively by my supervisor (Assoc Prof Farida Fozdar) and me, and the work was jointly written. As publications during the candidature period are encouraged, writing this chapter based on my research findings has given me an opportunity to contribute to the current body of knowledge with highly relevant materials so far.

Co-author signatures and dates:

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Coordinating supervisor signature:
Date:
Abstract

One consequence of globalisation is the mixing of people of different cultures and races through migration, tourism, study abroad, trade, and business relations. One of the results of this global population mobility is a rise in intermarriage—the formation of partnerships between people from different nationalities, cultures, races, and ethnicities. In migrant nations such as Australia, there has been a steady increase in the numbers of such families and of children of mixed cultural/racial heritage.

Based on 30 in-depth interviews with all family members of eight mixed, mostly Asian/European, migrant families and five mixed couples, this thesis explores the various ways in which migrant families of mixed backgrounds engage in acculturation and socialisation processes, negotiate multiple cultures, and develop identities to integrate into Australia. It examines the ways in which cultural transmission is negotiated within the family, with a focus on choice of languages, foods eaten at home, parenting practices, children's education, and the social life of children from mixed families. It also examines the influence of ‘race’/‘mixed race’ (skin colour and physical appearance) on the development of cultural identity.

In essence, the thesis is concerned with the integration process of mixed migrant families into the host society and how parents and their children jointly construct cultural identity/identities. I argue that mixed migrant families are sites of multiculturality writ small, in which new forms of cultural identity are created and recreated. They are sites in which the complexity of cultural negotiations and the ordinariness of family life co-exist.

The methodology used for this study is grounded in the phenomenological and qualitative paradigm of symbolic interactionism. Aspects of autoethnography, which positions the researcher as both an insider and an outsider, are also used. The research processes and analysis are underpinned and framed by Berry’s acculturation theory and two concepts from Bourdieu’s theory of practice—namely *habitus* and *cultural capital*. In addition, analysis of mixedness is informed by and based on theories of race (biological versus constructionist approaches) and mixed race.

The results revealed that while multiculturality within the family can be a challenging factor in the processes of acculturation and socialisation, everyday family life
surrounded by cultural diversity was filled with common experiences shared with other “ordinary” families. The cultural and racial mixedness is at the same time unique and complex but was viewed by most participants as a strength, enriching their lives. Four key findings are outlined— the complexity of cultural negotiations, the ordinariness of daily family practice, the apparent influence of sociopolitical context on acculturation, socialisation, and formation of cultural identity, and the presence of everyday multiculturalism and cosmopolitanism in the family life as a whole. These key findings are woven throughout the analytical sections of the thesis. It is argued future research would benefit from using a whole-family approach and being inclusive of heterogeneity and cultural/racial diversity, which would enable a deeper understanding of mixed migrant families in Australia and elsewhere.
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Chapter 1: Introduction

Background

My interest in how cultural negotiations among mixed migrant families take place, especially between migrant parents and their children, was sparked by my own experiences as a parent in an intercultural/interracial family, which consists of a father from Germany, a mother from Japan, and two children born in Germany, and which settled in Australia when the children were young. This thesis attempts to show the internal workings of mixed migrant families, which are on the rise worldwide. My central interest lies in understanding how, in the process of integration into a new society, these families—parents and children—jointly construct cultural identities.

One consequence of globalisation is international migration on an unprecedented scale. Castles and Miller (2009, p. 1) argue that such migration “has changed the face of societies.” Statistics show that 232 million people were international migrants in 2013, compared with 154 million in 1990 (United Nations, 2013). The immigrant population is on the rise in immigrant-receiving Western nations (Bornstein, Deater-Deckard, & Lansford, 2007; Tyyskä, 2007). One result is the mixing of people of different cultures/nationalities through migration, but also through travel across national borders, study abroad, and through conducting trade and business (Sam & Berry, 2006). People of different nationalities, ethnicities, and cultures meet, form partnerships, marry, and start families.

In migrant nations, including Australia, there has been a steady increase in the population of mixed cultural/racial heritage (Penny & Khoo, 1996; Khoo, 2010, 2011; Khoo, Birrell, & Heard, 2009; Lee & Beans, 2010; Smith et al., 2011; Fozdar & Perkins, 2014; Tindale, Klocker & Gibson, 2014; Tizard & Phoenix, 2002; Aspinall, 2003; Parker, Morin, Horowitz, Lopez & Rohal, 2015). Some of these mixed families settle in a “third” country, which is neither parent's home country. This is the group of people I am researching—migrant families in which the parents are each from a

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1 The world population in 2015 is reported to be 7.3 billion (Population Reference Bureau, 2015).
different country and from different racial backgrounds, raising children together in Australia. I refer to these families as mixed migrant families.

In Australia, statistics indicate the steady rise in the population of multiple ancestries. In total, 28 per cent of the whole population are of multiple ancestries, a quarter of whom are reported to be a combination of Australian/European and non-European ancestry (Khoo, 2010, 2011). Tindale et al. (2014, p. 395) noted that intercultural/interethnic partnerships not only foster social interactions between different cultural/ethnic groups, but also tend to blur the socio-economic boundaries between these groups. Their research findings on inter-ethnic partnerships demonstrate the shifting population demographics in Australia:

Our findings signal that the ethnic geographies of Australia’s major immigrant cities are likely to experience profound shifts with the increasing prevalence of ethnic majority–minority partnerships over time. An increasingly diverse array of inter-ethnic couples will become a feature of Australian life in the coming decades, challenging existing understandings of ethnic difference, integration and segregation. (p. 412)

This thesis aims to investigate how intercultural/interracial family members form new cultural identities through interactions within the family and with the surrounding society. In so doing, it is pivotal to consider the societal context in which the families live and how socio-political situations such as Australian immigration policies have influenced the lives of migrants and their families. Australian immigration policies and their developments since the 1800s are discussed in more detail as part of literature review of migration studies in Chapter 2.

Aim of the study

The main aim of my research is to explore the cultural negotiations in the day-to-day family life of migrant families in which parents are of two different cultural/racial backgrounds. In so doing, I examine the processes of acculturation and socialisation, through which challenges, conflicts, and benefits of living with diversity at home are

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2 The authors refer to the term “ethnic majority–minority partnerships” as “a subset of a total array of inter-ethnic couples: those households in which a member of the numerically and culturally dominant (white) Anglo/European-Australian ethnic majority was partnered with an individual from a ‘visible’ ethnic minority group” (Tindale et al., 2014, p. 397).
identified. Evidence of the complexity of negotiation processes within “ordinary” family life is woven throughout the thesis. While the study of these negotiation processes is key to the investigation, my research also looks at how socio-political factors such as multiculturalism can influence the lives of mixed migrant families, and seeks to understand how the complexities of “race”/“mixed race” are played out in the process of cultural identity construction.

The key overarching question for my project is: How do migrant families of intercultural/interracial heritage negotiate multiple cultures and develop identities enabling them to integrate into a new culture? This question has two aspects: firstly, how are the multiple cultures negotiated within culturally and racially mixed migrant families in Australia? and, secondly, how do these negotiation processes influence the (re)construction of cultural identities, which are at the core of integration into a new society?

More specifically, I investigate how parents of intercultural marriages acculturate into a new cultural environment in Australia, how their children are socialised into the host society, and how multiple cultures are negotiated through interactions within the family. The research sub-questions include:

- How do parents negotiate cultural transmission, acculturation into a new society, and their children’s socialisation, in daily family practice?
- How do the children respond to such negotiations in the process of growing up?
- To what extent does this process of negotiation reflect/produce cosmopolitan identities among the offspring?
- How does “race” and “mixed race” affect the sense of cultural identity and its development among the mixed-race children?

At this point, it is useful to return to the foundation of the meaning of culture at a broader level, as the negotiation of cultures is at stake throughout the thesis. The concept of culture is complex and broad. There have been many disagreements in various research fields (see, for example, Rutherford 1990; Spencer-Oatey & Franklin 2009; Apte 1994). Although there are many different definitions, I apply the definition by the prominent anthropologist Edward T. Hall, which is widely recognised by researchers:
Culture is man’s [sic] medium; there is not one aspect of human life that is not touched and altered by culture. This means personality, how people express themselves (including shows of emotion), the way they think, how they move, how problems are solved, how their cities are planned and laid out, how transportation systems function and are organized, as well as how economic and government systems are put together and function. (1976, p. 14)

Hall described three main characteristics of culture: first, culture is learned; second, the various elements of culture are closely interrelated; and third, culture is shared (1976, p. 13). That is, culture manifests itself in human behaviour through multilayered and complex interactions that are shared and at the same time draw boundaries between groups. Below is a selection of other definitions, from different fields, emphasising the ways values, beliefs, and practices are socially transmitted aspects of culture:

Culture is a set of basic assumptions and values, orientation to life, beliefs, policies, procedures and behavioural conventions that are shared by a group of people, and that influence (but not determine) each member’s behaviour and his/her interpretations of the “meaning” of other people’s behaviour. (Spencer-Oatey, 2008, p. 3)

[Culture] is the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another. (Hofstede, 1994, p. 5)

[Culture is] a unique meaning and information system, shared by a group and transmitted across generations, that allows the group to meet basic needs of survival, pursue happiness and well-being, and derive meaning from life. (Matsumoto & Juang, 2008, p. 12)

In addition, Bauman (1973) asserted that culture and social structure are not separate entities, but two parts of the same social reality in which people live. Thus culture is “simultaneously, the objective foundation of the subjectively meaningful experience and the subjective ‘appropriation’ of the otherwise inhumanly alien world. Culture, as we see it universally, operates on the meeting ground of the human individual and the world he [sic] perceives as real” (Bauman, 1973, p. 117).

Given that these definitions all focus on the ways in which group membership influences one’s attitudes, beliefs, practices, meaning-making, and well-being, my question is this: How does the cross-cutting influence of different cultures based on
different group memberships (those of mother, father, and host society) impact the identity, culture, and orientation of children of mixed backgrounds? The focus on this intersection of cultural influences offers key insights into the nature of culture and its transmission.

My research has taken a multidisciplinary approach in the review of the literature. A more detailed literature review follows in Chapter 2. Here, I introduce briefly the relevance and importance of the bodies of knowledge in four different fields, but also point out some gaps. First, the field of family studies offers foundational knowledge about family structure, system, and functions. However, the literature assumes that families are monocultural and monolingual, based on the Western nuclear family model. Second, migrant family studies offer great depth and breadth of knowledge in relation to migration experiences of families, for example: cultural transmission, retention of culture of origin—values, religious belief, and language—and immigrant youth issues. While these cover a wide range of areas of study, the assumption is that immigrant families are of a single-ethnic background. Third, immigrant acculturation research provides a framework for the study of migrant individuals and groups. However, mixed culture or mixed race families are not considered in this literature either. Finally, mixed race studies provide foundational knowledge of identity issues arising from “racial” difference, and are important in the study of how different physical appearance might affect children of intermarried parents. However, the existing research on mixed race does not focus on migration and culture, but on race—physical appearance. What is missing is how migration, culture(s), and race intersect and influence the processes of cultural negotiations within mixed migrant families. This is the gap that this thesis attempts to fill.

In understanding the negotiation processes within families, different perspectives are examined: parents’ experiences of parenting practices, children’s experiences of growing up, and what it means to be a mixed migrant family in Australia for the whole family. This thesis contributes to existing bodies of knowledge by drawing together the following four key findings from the study. First, this thesis demonstrates the complexity of negotiations between the father and the mother, between the parents and the children, and between the unique family environment and the wider society. Inter-cultural couples have two cultures to negotiate. As migrants, they also undergo the acculturation process between their cultures of origin and the culture of the host
society. As migrant parents, they oversee their children's socialisation in a tricultural/multicultural and/or trilingual/multilingual home environment. For these migrant parents, child socialisation is a field of continuous negotiation and compromise between the maintenance of their culture of origin and the adaptation to the host society (Becher, 2008; Grillo, 2008; Li, 2001, 2009). In addition, children are not only the socialisees but also the socialisers: as active agents, they bring home customs, norms and values of the host society through social interactions outside home—at school, with friends, and through community contacts. Multiculturality for these families is deeply ingrained in their family life. My inquiry into mixedness began with Asian-white mixing. In this thesis, my data show some positive effects on the lives of the mixed children. However, these results are limited to a particular mixedness group, with other groups likely to present a different picture (Ford, 2009; Frankenberg, 1993).

Second, alongside multiculturalty, the ordinariness of family life is mapped. My data show that while negotiations of culture in these families are complex, they are also experienced as normal and ordinary, and thus become part of the ordinariness of family life. Family practice in the households of participant families is just as ordinary as it is in others: filled with ordinary family routines, habits, and activities in daily interactions inside and outside the home. In exploring this family life, this thesis looks at aspects of food, language, children’s education and social life. This ordinariness is echoed by the findings of a study concerning mixed families in the United Kingdom (Caballero, Edwards, & Puthussery, 2008; Caballero, 2007). In Caballero’s words,

the emergent findings dispute the idea that mixed families suffer from inherent ‘culture clashes’, and that their children are doomed to be ‘identity stripped’ or ‘marooned between communities’. The overwhelming picture coming across from speaking to parents is just how ‘normal’ they feel their family is: for the majority of the parents, being in a mixed family is simply another part of their identities and lives. (2007, p. 23)

Third, the findings indicate that these complexities and the ordinariness of mixed migrant family life need to be considered in the specific social context of multicultural Australia. The influence of sociopolitical factors at large (Bourdieu, 1984, 1986; Bottomley, 1992; Hartley, 1995; Caballero et al., 2008; Fresnoza-Flot,
such as multiculturalism policies and often the multicultural living environment was evident in the accounts of the participant families. The findings suggest that those social environments that acknowledge cultural/ethnic diversity provide an opportunity for the families to become part of the fabric of Australian society. The multicultural environment of Australia appears to have generated positive experiences among the mixed migrant families, allowing them to develop a unique family identity. However, it must be noted that the findings are limited to those from mainly Asian-white children. For the children, the evidence suggests that they have developed cultural identities with a cosmopolitan outlook (openness to diversity and differences), due to the multicultural environment they grew up in, being exposed to cultural/ethnic diversity both in and outside the home.

This brings me to the fourth key finding—everyday cosmopolitanism, practised at the level of everyday life of ordinary people (Lamont & Aksartova, 2002; Werbner, 2008; Noble, 2009). Noble (2009) demonstrated the presence of everyday cosmopolitanism in the daily life of migrants to Australia, transcending the notion of cosmopolitanism as a phenomenon that is a privilege of affluent individuals. He suggests that this sense of “everyday cosmopolitanism” is born out of ordinary social interactions at the intersection of cultural differences. My data support this, with openness to cultural/racial differences and diversity a common feature of many of the participants, especially among the offspring (Meyer & Fozdar, in press). My findings demonstrate that everyday life of mixed migrant families is filled with cultural diversity. Some examples of diversity include a home environment with multiple languages, surrounded by materials and artefacts from the homelands of the parents, acquisition of tastes from the countries of the father and the mother in addition to the foods of the host culture and, at school, exchange or sharing of school lunch that is different to ‘ordinary’ lunch of others. Given that it is in the primary and secondary socialisation stages that the foundation of identity, values and beliefs are formed and internalised in children (Berger & Luckmann, 1991), multiculturality is fostered and internalised early in the child’s life at a cognitive level. Martin and Shao (2016, p. 2) call those who grow up in a multicultural home environment “innate multiculturals.” In effect, they embody the “culture mixing through their parents’ transmission of values, norms, and perceptions reflective of multiple cultures” (Martin & Shao, 2016, p. 4).
Methodology and theoretical framework

This thesis applies a qualitative research approach using semi-structured, in-depth interviews for collection of data. It also includes auto-ethnographic aspects, as the researcher’s own life experience is partly used as a primary source of information (Chang, 2008). More detailed discussions follow in Chapter 3, but this section gives a brief overview of the methodology.

Phenomenology is used as the underpinning theoretical framework of the study. Phenomenology in essence refers to the study of people’s experiences as they are perceived, and people’s interpretations of reality. It seeks to understand the lived social world through observations of the intersection between macro and micro worlds (social structure and everyday practices). According to Patton (2002, p. 105), all our understandings of phenomena derive from “sensory experiences of phenomena,” which are interpreted to make sense of the world. This, in turn, allows us to develop a certain worldview. A phenomenological approach focuses on “exploring how human beings make sense of experience and transform experience into consciousness, both individually and as shared meaning” (Patton, 2002, p. 104).

Within the broader framework of phenomenology, symbolic interactionism is of particular relevance due to the principal nature of the theory that understanding of social phenomena lies in the interactions between social actors and external lived circumstances. The phenomenological approach emphasises the role the actors have, through the meaning-making process, in understanding the social phenomena that arise from interactions with others (Patton, 2002, p. 112). Drawing on the principle of the whole-family approach (Hess & Handel, 1959; Handel, 1997), this thesis examines how family members influence one another in shaping and reshaping their cultural identities, their ways of thinking, their attitudes to others and, ultimately, their worldviews.

Based on the afore-mentioned principles, sampling criteria for the research participants were set as follows. Both parents were to be first-generation immigrants from different cultural and racial backgrounds; children were either to have been born in Australia or to have arrived in Australia at a young age, and at the time of interview were to be aged between 15 and 29; the families were to have lived in Australia for at least three or four years, with the intention to stay. Initially the criterion for the
parents’ countries of origin limited them to couples of “European” (West European or North American) origin and “Asian” (such as Korean, Japanese, Thai, and Chinese origin). However, due to the difficulty in recruiting participants, I broadened the countries of origin of parents, which resulted in a wider range of cultural/“racial” mixing. The sample frame was also broadened from families with teen-age to adult children to include families with young children. More details of the process are described in Chapter 3. This opened up a new dimension of research, in that it allowed a comparison of intergenerational differences in parenting practice and ideas. The data were transcribed, coded into themes, and analysed applying the thematic analysis method.

The data is examined through the lens of a combination of two main theoretical frameworks. One is the immigrant acculturation theory (Berry, 1992, 1997, 2001, 2003, 2005, 2007; Sam & Berry, 2006; Ward, 2006), which allows the researcher to identify various influencing factors in the process of acculturation for immigrants. The concepts of “habitus” and “cultural capital” are elements in the theory of practice (Bourdieu, 1977, 1984, 1986; Maton, 2008), which is the second theoretical framework. These concepts provide insight into the influence of external structural forces on the life experiences of migrants. In addition, theories of race, in particular biological/constructionist approaches, and of mixed race are also applied in the analytical process concerning mixedness.

**Chapter outline**

Following this overview, the thesis proceeds with a review of the literature in Chapter 2, which outlines current knowledge in relation to the study of the life experiences of mixed migrant families. The discussion of four key areas of research (family studies, migrant family studies, acculturation, and mixed-race research) and their significance to the thesis reveals the gaps that require further research. The review of the literature also provides the ground from which my research questions developed.

Chapter 3 outlines the development of the project, from the research design, through the underpinning theoretical frameworks, to the data collection methods. It also discusses problems and dilemmas encountered in the process. I apply a qualitative approach to gain a deeper understanding of the negotiation processes in shaping and reshaping the cultural identities of both parents and children in intercultural/interracial
migrant families. Thematic analysis, as the most appropriate method of data analysis, is also discussed. For the analysis chapters from Chapter 4 to Chapter 6, brief descriptions of all participant families are provided in Appendix 1.

Chapter 4 introduces four family stories, to give the reader a “thick description” (Denzin, 2001) of what family life is like for mixed migrant families negotiating multiple cultures within the home. Thick description creates “a space for the reader to imagine his or her way into the life experiences of another (Denzin, 2001, p. 99). It is a valuable source of data, from the phenomenological perspective, in which stories of lived experiences of informants are interpreted and analysed by the researcher. This meaning-making process is one of the key principles of phenomenology. Along with the uniqueness and diversity of each family, Chapter 4 also demonstrates their commonality—they are all “ordinary” families. While cultural and racial diversity are not the only sources of challenges for many mixed families, they are an important part of their life, and these families acknowledge that differences do affect their sense of identity and belonging.

In Chapter 5, negotiations in different aspects of daily life are explored through examination of the relational interactions of family members. Through the analysis of mundane day-to-day activities such as eating, having a conversation, and going to school, the chapter demonstrates the complex and multidirectional negotiations stemming from the multicultural family environment. While the cultural negotiations and their outcome are influenced by the social structure and external living environment, parents and children are all active agents in the construction and negotiation of cultural identity.

Chapter 6 shifts the focus to the theme of cultural identity formation among “mixed-race” children. In contrast to past research that reports negative aspects of mixed race, the data analysis demonstrates mostly a positive picture of growing up mixed in Australia, where the social and political environment supports multiculturalism. However, it also points out the significance of historically shifting public policies and ideologies on the life experiences of mixed migrant families.

The thesis concludes with Chapter 7, weaving together the key findings and themes of the research. Triangulation of the cultures of father, of mother, and of Australia has created a space of cultural negotiation through which both the uniqueness and the
ordinariness of family life has prevailed. Cultural diversity and racial difference and mixedness matter to the families because of the way they enrich their lives, rather than troubling them. I argue that mixed migrant families are sites of complex cultural negotiations in which multiculturality is normality.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

This chapter outlines the key bodies of knowledge crucial to understanding the theoretical frameworks and research focus of my study. My research is multidisciplinary, drawing on the disciplines such as sociology, anthropology, psychology, and social psychology. This literature review takes into account four different fields of research: family studies, migrant family studies, acculturation studies, and “mixed race” studies. Each research field is enormous, and it is not my intention to cover all the areas, but to select some of the key literatures that are relevant to my research. There are also some overlapping concepts among the different bodies of knowledge.

Research on family provides the context for understanding the socialisation processes of children, parenting practice, and child development. My study is based on examining nuclear families, but my findings may be relevant to other types of families, such as the extended family. The scope of my research, however, is limited to the interactive process between parents and children in socialisation and is less concerned with child development.

Migrant family studies is a field of inquiry that is important for my research, as each parent couple in my cohort of participants were overseas-born and arrived in Australia as adults. The new living environment inevitably affects immigrant families—having to adjust to a new set of social norms and values, and language, which may be different to the culture of origin (Berry, 1997; Bornstein & Bohr, 2011; Bottomley, 1992; Gold & Nawyn, 2013). English was not the first language for any of my research cohort parents. Previous research, however, has dealt primarily with challenges for parents and their children from homogenous ethnic groups (Li, 2001, 2009; Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2002). Parents and children were usually dealt with separately, and little research has been done with the family as a whole.

Research on immigrant youth, for example, provides an insight into the formation of cultural identity among second/third generation migrants (Baldassar, 1992; Phinny, Romero, Nava & Huan, 2001; Harris, 2013). Parents raising children in a host society that is not their own face several issues relating to cultural transmission in daily life,
such as food prepared and eaten at home, language(s) spoken within the family, and values and beliefs that they feel are important to pass on to the next generation (Becher, 2008). Because research on migrant families often assumes that migrant families are ethnically homogenous rather than multicultural/multiethnic, there is a gap in knowledge which my research aims to fill. The lives of migrant families are also influenced by the wider social structure such as government policy concerning multiculturalism. This is elaborated on in Chapters 2 and 6.

Acculturation studies focused on immigrants have been undertaken primarily in the fields of psychology and, in particular, acculturation psychology. Of particular relevance to this study is research on the acculturation process of individuals or ethnic groups, as well as the development of cultural identity/identities among immigrant children and adolescents. It is generally assumed, however, that immigrants are of a single-ethnic/cultural background and that the adaptation process is linear (Berry, 1997, 2001, 2003). Few studies have examined the dynamics and negotiations of cultural practice between parents and children. My research extends the existing literature and explores the negotiation processes through interactions within intercultural families.

An important element in cultural maintenance is the retention of language of origin. However, the normal assumption is that there is one language at home and English is spoken outside the home (Clyne, 2003; Harding-Esch & Riley, 2003; Pauwels, 2005; Barron-Hauswaert, 2004). Most research has thus focused on bilingualism and biculturalism, but a family environment that is trilingual and tricultural (or multilingual/multicultural) necessitates consideration of another dimension in the choice of language or languages to speak at home, as well as a sense of cultural identity and belonging.

“Mixed race” studies are also important in examining a possible impact of race on intermarriage and on children’s identity formation (Luke & Luke, 1998, 1999; Parker & Song, 2001; Brunsma, 2005; Edwards, Caballero & Puthussery, 2010). The concept of “race” points to the perception that people are defined by their physical appearance including skin, eye and hair colour, or facial features (Banton, 1998; Malik, 1996; Tizard & Phoenix, 2002). While the notion of race is mostly accepted as a social construct, many scholars argue that it still impacts the lives of mixed unions or “mixed race” individuals. Most of the research on mixed race and inter(-racial)
marriage has emerged from the United States along with some from the United Kingdom. Literature from the United States, for example, focuses on racial identity rather than cultural identity with particular emphasis on black-white unions (Root, 1992; Ifekwunigwe, 1999), with Latino and Asian mixed race in more recent years due to their increasing immigration (Lee & Bean, 2010; Chang, 2016). I have attempted to understand the negotiation process taking into consideration the difference of sociohistorical backgrounds between the existing literature and the Australian context.

The review of the literature from these four fields has enabled me to identify my research position, which has given direction to my research and the identification of areas to fill the gaps in research. I challenge the assumption of unidirectionality and a linear process in cultural adaptation (Tardiff-Williams & Fisher, 2009; Cabassa, 2003). Research shows the complexity of acculturation processes, which in turn influences socialisation and cultural transmission. The review process also prompted me to question the idea of a single cultural identity, suggesting the possibility of multiple identities.

My main argument is that cultural identities for members of mixed families are constructed and reconstructed in a complex manner, intertwined with multiple layers of processes such as acculturation, socialisation, and negotiation of multiple cultures. My research demonstrates how these families jointly construct and reconstruct cultural identities. This chapter begins with a review of literature on socialisation and its importance in the process of cultural transmission, followed by the issues of acculturation, which all international immigrants face to greater or lesser degree. It then examines the literature on how these processes influence the formation/transformation of cultural identity. In addition, the influence on children’s cultural identity of being perceived as different because of being mixed-race is discussed. Finally, the under-researched area of investigation into intercultural/interracial migrant families is reviewed.

Family studies—socialisation and cultural transmission

A literature review of the field of family studies, in particular understanding the ways in which children learn fundamental cultural values within the family environment, is crucial as background information for my research. While family structures and forms
vary across the world and the meaning of family changes over time, there are commonalities: families provide care and nurture for children; they provide financial support for family members; and they transmit cultural values and moral codes to the next generation (Hartley, 1995; Poole, 2005; Morgan 1996). Family is the primary contact for the child and “the most important agency of socialization” (Wyness, 2006, p. 129).

**Socialisation as the foundation of the cultural transmission process**

Very broadly, socialisation is a process of day-to-day interaction through which individuals learn to behave in an acceptable manner as part of a group or society they live in (Elkin & Handel, 1991; Maccoby, 2007). It is also about conformity of individuals to the rules of the social group they belong to in which transmission of culture takes place (Parsons & Bales, 1956). Socialisation is an instrument to instil a “motivated commitment to sustain responsive participation in society” (Elkin & Handel, 1991, p. 28, italics in original), which in turn provides and maintains social order. Merton (1968) took a slightly different view and contended that family is not only about teaching children to conform to norms. He emphasised that the socialisation process includes the impact of implicit daily occurrences within a family on the sense of normality for children. He states:

> The process is, at least in part, inadvertent. Quite apart from direct admonitions, rewards and punishments, the child is exposed to social prototypes in the witnessed daily behavior and casual conversations of parents. Not infrequently, *children detect and incorporate cultural uniformities even when these remain implicit and have not been reduced to rules.* (Merton, 1968, p. 212, italics in original)

The implication of this in relation to my research is that, in migrant families of mixed heritage, life with two different cultures from the father and the mother is a normal daily occurrence. For the children, that is their “normality.”

Socialisation processes comprise two stages: primary socialisation and secondary socialisation (Berger & Luckmann, 1991). Primary socialisation is the process of learning and internalising culture, values, and beliefs in childhood, through which individuals become members of a given society or group. In primary socialisation children learn to socialise and their “first world” is constructed through the influence of “significant others,” who are usually parents, particularly mothers. Secondary
socialisation is the subsequent process that occurs at an institutional level such as schools and the wider community.

The two stages of socialisation processes have an important implication for the transmission of parents’ cultures of origin in my research. While the parents have a major influence on cultural transmission in the first years of their child’s life, as children begin their schooling the cultural influence of the host society’s wider community, such as peer group, teachers, and so forth, becomes more important (McDonald, 1991). This means the influence of the parents in cultural transmission becomes limited as children begin the second socialisation process. One of the key questions in my investigation concerns the ways and limitations of how parents negotiate their cultural differences—between one another and also between themselves and the host society.

Once the child leaves the home environment and begins social interactions with others in the outside world, external factors such as social, economic, and political structures need to be considered as influencers of socialisation (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Bornstein & Cheah, 2006; Augoustinos & Walker, 2006). In as much as individuals learn and do things in the social world, the influence of the environment in which they live is important to consider (Augoustinos & Walker, 2006).

While acknowledging the importance of the socialisation process in all family interactions, cultural transmission among immigrant families is more complex than it is for families in a monocultural environment (Knafo, Assor, Schwartz, & David, 2009). Knafo et al. described the difference between monocultural environment (as in the host society) and bicultural environment for immigrant families in the field of cultural transmission studies as follows:

In monocultural studies, in addition to parental values to guide their value choices, children are exposed to one broad culture that they partly share with their parents. Immigrant youth face a more complex task. In addition to their parents’ value-modeling, they are exposed to two distinct and sometimes contradictory value environments. (2009, pp. 280–281)

Furthermore, research shows that immigrants in general tend to adapt their values to the values of the host society, and that children are even more prone to adopt the values of the host society rather than the values of their parents (Knafo et al., 2009).
This adjustment process of cultural values to a new society is particularly relevant to the parents in my research. As an extension of primary and secondary socialisation, “tertiary socialisation” takes place when one is placed in a new environment. Tertiary socialisation refers to “the process of induction into another society” (Alred & Byram, 2002, p. 341). It is not, however, a mere addition to or replacement of the primary and secondary socialisation, but it is incorporated within them in an intricate manner.

Where tertiary socialisation takes place, however, it is not that one set of beliefs and schemata are replaced by others but that new beliefs and schemata are held side by side with existing ones, the individual being ready to operate with whichever is relevant in a given context. The same applies to the values of moral socialisation, leading to an ability to recognise and accept other values and where possible, merge them in a universal system of human values. (Alred & Byram, 2002, pp. 342–343)

While the socialisation process is the foundation of cultural transmission, it is equally important to consider the process as part of “family practice” (Morgan, 1996). Morgan (1996) called family interactions and activities “family practices.” By the term “family practice,” the author refers to the mundane, daily, and regular activities among family members, which are often taken for granted. These activities are of a fluid nature in that “while practices have a degree of fixity and solidity rooted in their everyday character and the fact that they are repeated with some degree of regularity, they also have an open-ended character” (Morgan, 1996, p. 190). Family practices can be described from different points of view such as gender, consumption, or ethnicity, and one aspect does not preclude the other.

Morgan argued that family practices are strongly linked to history. In his words, “practices are historically constituted and the linkages and tensions or contradictions between practices are historically shaped. At the same time practices are woven into and constituted from elements of individual biographies” (1996, p. 190). Throughout this thesis, the accounts told by the participant families will reveal these deep-seated but (often) invisible connections between biography and history.

In the next section I consider how cultural transmission occurs among immigrants and their families, highlighting some differences when compared with the socialisation process in the mainstream population of a host society.
Migrant family studies

Cultural transmission among immigrant families

Much research has been conducted on immigrant families and their integration into a new society, in particular on those who settled in a Western immigrant country such as the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, or New Zealand. As discussed in the introductory chapter, the increasing mobility of the world population through globalisation (Urry, 2007) has changed the demographic distribution of the world and, consequently, research in the field has diversified (Castles & Miller, 2009).

Some research into migrant parents focuses on parenting practice or acculturation in the new society (Chiu, Feldman, & Rosenthal, 1992; Ying & Han, 2008; Roche et al., 2014; Jain & Belsky 1997; Barn, Ladino, & Rogers, 2006; Sakamoto, 2006; Li, 2001; Foner, 1997). Other research concerns children’s cultural/ethnic identity, particularly in their adolescent years (Suaréz-Orozco & Suaréz-Orozco, 2002; Li, 2009; Bacallao & Smokovski, 2011; Kwak, 2003; Baldassar, 1992; Leung & Karnilovicz, 2009). Yet some others are concerned with identity issues from the perspectives of both parents and children (Dion, 2006; Roche et al., 2014). While these studies are helpful in understanding family life as new migrants, they are limited in that most of the research concerning immigration pertains to immigrants from single ethnic groups/nations/ethnicities.

One of the key components in my research concerns how and to what extent cultural transmission takes place intergenerationally. Family is where this transmission takes place. Cultural transmission is defined as “a transfer process carrying cultural information from one generation to the next, and from one group to the next” and it entails transmission of values, skills, knowledge, and behaviours (Schönflug, 2009, p. 1, p. 9). While process of cultural transmission is universal (Schönflug, 2009), Schönflug pointed out that the homogeneity of cultural content ensures the most effective transmission of culture. This suggests that the heterogeneity of cultural content within the family will be less effective in the transmission of culture(s) of origin of the parents. Inevitably, the culture maintained by the parents and the culture transmitted to the children will differ in content among migrant families. In the study of cultural transmission among Russian immigrants in Israel (Knafo et al., 2009), the
authors found that “most immigrants adapt their own values to be closer to the values that prevail in the new environment. Children tend to adopt those values more than their parents” (Knafo et al., 2009, p. 281). Various factors influence the extent to which the children adopt the values of the new society or of the parents. An unavoidable consequence of limited cultural transmission of the culture of parents’ origin is that there will be a gap between the values the parents hold important and the values the children learn in the new environment. These factors that affect the children in the socialisation processes are multifaceted and complex. According to Knafo et al. (2009), there are at least five contexts that need to be considered: the parents (including elements such as parenting style, education, gender, personality and so on), the child (including the child’s age, gender, personality and so on), parent–child dyad, family circumstances, and social environment (See Knafo et al., 2009, p. 271).

Becher’s book (2008) Family Practices in South Asian Muslim Families is one of the few works on immigrant family life that has studied both parents and children. Becher (2008) conducted a study in the North East of London in the United Kingdom on lived experiences of South Asian Muslim families, concerning the integration process into the British way of life. The author adopts Morgan’s (1996) concept of “family practices,” in which the family is seen as a place of action in everyday life, to understand migrant family life both at a personal and a sociohistorical level. Morgan’s emphasis on the significance of studying both sociohistorical factors and personal experiences is illustrated in his words: “practices are historically constituted and the linkages and tensions or contradictions between practices are historically shaped. At the same time practices are woven into and constituted from elements of individual biographies” (Morgan, 1996, p. 190).

The findings in Becher’s study reveal complex and intertwined relationships between several factors such as religion, culture, ethnicity, gender, and generation in the negotiation processes among family members, between parents and children, between father and mother, between siblings, and among extended family members (Becher, 2008, p. 183). While Becher’s study concerned the family life of a single-ethnic minority group with the emphasis on religious affiliation, its focus on the construction of beliefs and values through family interactions in everyday life (2008, p. 193) resonates with my research. However, although Becher’s research was about “family
life” with the data of all family members included, the main focus was placed on the transmission of values from the parents’ culture of origin.

Much of the research on the immigrant parents’ experiences concerns challenges in cultural transmission of their culture of origin and conflicts arising from some fundamental differences between cultural values, especially between those of modern Western societies and traditional collective societies (Renzaho, McCabe, & Sainsbury, 2011; Schwartz, Montgomery, & Briones, 2006). Hofstede (2001, p. 225) differentiates families in “collectivist societies” and “individualist societies.” According to Hofstede, at a broad level, in collectivist societies, the continuity and interests of family override the interests of individuals, and there is a strong sense of “in-group” as part of a family. The family includes not only parents and children, but also extended family members such as grandparents, uncles and aunts, cousins, and so on. On the other hand, in individualist societies the interests of individuals are more important than those of groups such as families. On the whole, however, Hofstede (2001, p. 225) made the point that “culture learning starts in the family; families are minimodels of society to which children learn to adapt. The society is thus a product of its families, but families are also the product of their society.” While Hofstede’s work generally focuses on cross-cultural encounters in organisational environments at a macro level, despite some criticisms, the comparisons of large volumes of data from over 50 countries with 60,000 individuals (Jones, 2007) is worth noting for my study of cultural values, customs and practices. In addition, Chang (2008, p. 25) pointed out that “collectivism … is not always a non-Western ethos. Valuing a community over individuals was apparent in the first-century Mediterranean culture that permeates the New Testament writings.”

Mak and Chan (1995) noted the influence of Chinese collectivist society in cultural transmission among immigrant families in Australia. They argued that the practice of Chinese family traditions has changed over the course of history. Chinese settlement in Australia has a long history since the 1800s. Success of a family is measured by financial achievement, and a frugal lifestyle. This was once cherished, but seems to be no longer of importance (1995, p. 89). However, they pointed out that certain values such as the emphasis on collective interest over individual interest still remain among Chinese-Australian communities. Confucian principles that emphasise hierarchical order of family structure, respect for the elders, harmony and interdependence are still
cherished among the community members. While the collectivist orientation may not be the sole factor influencing cultural retention and transmission, it is useful as a background when considering fundamental differences in people’s worldviews. At the same time, it is equally important not to generalise traits and behaviours of people onto individual cases. Spencer-Oatey (2012, p. 17) warned against the danger of mixing up the “culture-level measures” provided by Hofstede as above, with “individual level measures.” This also poses a challenge to avoid generalisation in the study of individual parents from different cultural backgrounds in my research.

Interestingly, a study on Italian immigrant families over two generations in Australia since the Second World War indicates shifting attitudes and practices in family relations (Vasta, 1995). While first-generation families (30 to 40 years post-war) had a strong sense of ethnic/cultural identity, the second generation (those who were born or grew up in Australia) seems to be more relaxed in parenting practice. The second-generation parents are more permissive, more individualistic, less authoritarian, and less influenced by Catholicism than the first-generation parents. As in average Australian family households, Italian-Australian women share more equal household tasks with their partners, which in turn raises women’s position within the family (1995, p. 159). In addition, Vasta argued that acceptance of cultural diversity in Australia has normalised their cultural practice more, and enabled them to combine various cultural aspects. She states:

The second generation have combined traditional Italian culture with current-day Australian and Italian cultures and those of other ethnic groups they have experienced in multicultural Australia. … Because of their Australian experience the second generation are more likely to have a multicultural cuisine than were their mothers, who adhered mostly to Italian-style cooking and recipes. (Vasta 1995, p. 159)

So far, I have noted that one of the key issues addressed concerns the generational gap in the maintenance of cultural values and beliefs between parents and children. While there are limitations in the applications of macro-level cultural differences, it is worth noting that fundamental differences in the belief system between collectivist societies and individualist societies are also considered when examining the extent of maintenance of cultures of origin of migrants and adaptation to the new society. This is an important point to take into account in my research, as many of the participant
parents are of two culturally contrasting backgrounds. Studies on generational differences among immigrant families indicate that second-generation migrants have adopted the values and norms of the host society and have integrated both the culture of the parents and of the host society. While intergenerational difference may be part of one’s life at a broader level regardless of migrant or non-migrant status, it is of particular significance to migrants. The next section discusses this aspect in more detail in relation to migrant youth.

**Studies on immigrant youth**

One of the major issues arising from intergenerational difference relates to adolescent children’s freedom and independence—particularly in regards to teenage daughters’ dating and sexuality. A study on Italian migrant families in Switzerland reveals the intergenerational gap between parents and adolescent children in the attitudes towards social life among teenage children (Wessendorf, 2008). The author reported that many of the conflicts arose between parents and daughters due to stringent parental control on gender relations and moral codes within Italian families (the “honour and shame complex”) enforced on daughters (2008, p. 213). Such conflicts among immigrant families have been well researched (Baldassar & Skrbis, 1998; Borcia-Mulè, 1999; Wessendorf, 2008; Renzaho et al., 2011), and resonate with issues among immigrants other than Italians, such as Muslim, Asian, or Latino families, in which traditional cultural values from their culture of origin were noticeably different to those from host societies (Becher, 2008; Roche et al., 2014; Ying & Han, 2008).

While some argue that parental control of adolescent children among immigrant families is a significant issue, it does not necessarily lead to negative family relationships as a whole, or affect the wellbeing of the children (Chiu et al, 1992; Kwak, 2003). One view has been that this positive result may stem from a community’s willingness to accommodate migrant families’ culture of origin (Kwak, 2003; Roche et al., 2014). Of the research concerning parental control, frequently negotiations around friendships, dating, and marriage, especially for girls, appeared as common areas of discrepancy (Mak & Chan, 1995; Tsolidis, 1995; Vasta, 1995; Foner and Dreby, 2011; Dion & Dion, 2001; Dion, 2006). According to Dion (2006), for example, many Asian immigrant adolescent girls experienced stringent parental control over their social life. The author also reported that Indian and Pakistani
parents wanted to protect their daughters from too-relaxed attitudes to dating and marriage, and other studies found the same attitudes in parents from Mediterranean and Middle Eastern countries (Foner & Dreby, 2011; Dion & Dion, 2001). In her study on Italian migrant youth in Australia, Baldassar (1992) reported the ways in which young Italian migrants became acculturated into Australian society. On the one hand, they ceased to be “pure” Italians, and yet on the other hand did not completely abandon their Italian identity or completely become “Australians.” In her investigation of the cultural maintenance of their Italian identity and adaptation of “Italo-Australian identity” among Italian migrant youths, Baldassar (1992, p. 210) argued that home environment is influential in instilling the Italian identity in children. Cultural artefacts from the homeland such as pictures of ancestors, weddings, or “the Sacred Heart of Mary,” family gatherings such as Sunday lunch, regular church attendance by the whole family, and dress code for particular occasions are some of the major contributors to cultural transmission to the next generation. The author also pointed out that a strong social network helped maintain their Italian identity, as well as the formation of an “Italo-Australian youth” identity. Values instilled at home were negotiated and transformed within the youth networks, and their reconstituted values were taken back home to their parents. The author states:

The youth network gives youth freedom to construct their own life-world. It enables both affirmation and transformation of the values of the family domain in a two way process. Not only are values taken from the home and change, but changes are brought into the home by youth. (Baldassar, 1992, p. 221)

Dion (2006) argued that in the study of identity development among immigrant children, it is of vital importance to investigate multiple interaction processes—between parents and children, interactions within the family, and in the context of wider society. Although the interactions among siblings are also important, this research restricts the scope to the above areas, since the key interest lies in the interactions and negotiations between parents and children. Dion also made the point that the period from adolescence into adulthood is a crucial time in constructing a sense of cultural identity. This process is a complex one because children need to negotiate between the core values of the culture of origin of the parents at home, and those of the host society. Furthermore, while many immigrant parents wish their
children to learn their cultural heritage and values, the degree of social support—which could be determined by multicultural policy—plays a key role in the retention of cultural heritage. From a comparative study on Greek migrants’ family values retention level in Canada, the Netherlands, and Germany, the researchers found that Greek immigrants in Canada have a higher retention level of their heritage among both first and second generations (Georgas, Berry, Shaw, Christakopoulous, & Mylonas, 1996, cited in Dion, 2006, p. 303). The study's findings implied that social policy encouraging respect for cultural diversity helps in the cultural transmission and maintenance of heritage culture for immigrants and their families. While the literature discussed above so far provides some insights into negotiations between parents and children among immigrant families, little is studied on the cross-cultural negotiations in families where multiple cultures intermingle.

More recently, from a slightly different angle, research was conducted to examine the life experience of racially/ethnically mixed children in transnational families (Fresnoza-Flot, 2016a). This study concerned the transnationalism experience of the children of Filipino-Belgian and Thai-Belgian couples in Belgium. Fathers were Belgian nationals and Filipino and Thai mothers were migrants to Belgium. The study was based on participant observations at the participant families’ homes and the families’ cultural activities, and interviews with the couples and their children. The author reported various experiences of children of mixed parentage, and how especially transnationalism (through their mothers) influenced their life. Each story of the respondents was unique in its own way. Their experiences varied from having learned both the Belgian way of life and their mothers’ culture to having grown up only with the Belgian way of life until the parents divorced. While the family setting was different from my sample, in that these families were transnational families (in which mothers returned frequently to their homeland with their children, so that the children grew up partly in Belgium, and partly in the Philippines or in Thailand; or fathers needed to live in two countries because of their work), what was similar to my research was that the process of acquisition (or absence) of culture of origin of the parents was emphasised.

This is one of the few examples among migration research that involve the experiences of daily activities that are relational between the children and the parents, in this case mainly the migrant mothers. Multiple factors such as language(s), food
consumption, power dynamics between the parents, mobile lifestyle, ethnic community life and religion were found to be important in the mixed children’s lives. Many of these factors were similar to the findings of my study. Positive influence at the societal level included a supportive cultural program funded by the Philippines government offered to Filipino youths living overseas to learn about their culture. Mothers made use of such services during their stay in the Philippines to help the cultural transmission of their heritage. In Belgium, ethnic religious groups often offered opportunities for the migrant children to learn about their parents’ culture and traditions. These examples suggest the importance of the external support in the cultural transmission to the next generation.

In examining the transmission of culture among immigrant children and adolescents, some researchers addressed the need to question whether the monocultural and monolingual socialisation approach based solely on western scholarship is appropriate. In the study of Hispanic and Asian Americans in the United States, Padilla (2009) argued that traditional socialisation theory does not encompass the bicultural feature of an immigrant family’s environment. According to Padilla (2009, p. 185), traditional socialisation research assumes that “children are enculturated into a single culture.” When one grows up in a monocultural society, this traditional research has shown, “culture” does not emerge as something important to study. If all children learn the same cultural values and beliefs, then “differences that occur between children and socialising agents are not due to culture per se” (Padilla, 2009, p. 185). In other words, culture was seen as a taken-for-granted social framework. Furthermore, Padilla made the point that contemporary socialisation and parenting models were suitable only for “unicultural contexts,” as they did not accommodate the complex cultural transmission process of bicultural socialisation (2009, p. 192).

The author also noted the importance of the age of children on arrival in the host country when considering their adaptation into the host society. The research showed that children who arrived before the age of twelve experienced “fewer acculturative stressors” than those who arrived after twelve. In addition, the level of ease or difficulty of adjustment depended on the support and assistance they received from the parents or other primary caretakers, as well as from the peer group and community support (Padilla, 2009, p. 193).
As discussed above, the literature concerning immigrant youth studies shows that much of the intergenerational conflict between immigrant youth and their parents is related to issues around the children’s autonomy and independence. In examining these issues, the inadequacy of applying the monoculture-based socialisation theory is also addressed.

**Immigration policy and its impact on the life of immigrant families**

The focus now turns to the history of immigration in Australia, to provide the social context in which my research is positioned. Stories of migration cannot be fully understood without the historical background of immigration and its policies in a given society. As will be discussed in the later section of this chapter, sociopolitical factors play an important role in the experiences of migrants. People migrate from their country of birth to another for various reasons: as an economic labour force, as a result of economic crisis, as students or researchers, as refugees or asylum seekers due to political upheaval, as tourists, for a better lifestyle, or for retirement (Castles & Miller, 2009). With the increasingly easy access to travel abroad, the mobility of the global population has grown and diversified (Castles & Miller, 2009; Urry, 2007).

Immigration policy is an important component of a society that may reflect the acceptance level of international migrants. For example, immigrant nations such as the United States, Canada, New Zealand and Australia all passed through changes—from the exclusionary policy of “white” immigration only for 200 years until the 1960s, to the more inclusive policies of multiculturalism (Jupp, 2007, 2001; Castles & Miller, 2009). As will be discussed in more detail later in the acculturation studies section of this chapter, immigration policies have a large impact on immigrants’ lives. Therefore, it is crucial to have a background knowledge of Australia’s immigration history. I provide a brief historical background to immigration policy below, dating back to nineteenth-century colonial Australia, to show that Australia was not always a monocultural society.

Prior to federation in 1901 people of diverse cultural backgrounds coexisted in the Australian colonies of the British Empire (Jupp, 2007, 2001; Fozdar, Wilding, & Hawkins, 2009). People of various cultural/ethnic backgrounds mingled in different parts of Australia, including labourers from China in New South Wales and Victoria, German Lutherans in South Australia, and Afghan Muslims as camel drivers in
Northern Australia (Fozdar et al., 2009). There were fishing trade contacts between South Asian islands and the Aboriginal people in the north even before the colonists arrived in Australia (Fox, 1998; Ganter, 2003). Asians such as Japanese, Chinese, Malays, and Filipinos worked as divers in the pearling industry, such as in Broome, in the 1880s (Choo, 2009).

In the 1850s, however, researchers have argued that the influx of a large number of Chinese workers during the gold rush era led to xenophobia among colonists and Anglo-Celtic workers; the Chinese were perceived as a serious economic threat (Connoly, 1978; Walker, 1999; Jupp, 2001; Fozdar et al., 2009). Among the colonists there was also a perceived external threat from Japan with its strong military force and keen interest in expanding its territory (Walker, 1999; Tavan, 2005). These perceived threats both internally and externally resulted in the implementation of a law that was to change the course of Australian history significantly. The Immigration Restriction Act (IRA), the so-called White Australia Policy, came into force in Australia in 1901, shortly after Federation. This prohibited entry of all “coloured,” non-European people into Australia. Until the end of the Second World War (WWII), Australia remained a largely homogenous society with non-Europeans at 0.25 per cent of the total population, apart from Aborigines (Jupp, 2007, p. 10). It is during this period that the “Australian identity” was nurtured and fostered: a monocultural and monolingual “white” society with a British heritage (Castles, Kalantzis, Cope, & Norrissey, 1988; Jupp, 2007; Fozdar et al., 2009; Hage, 1998).

However, after WWII, as part of the recovery from recession and the rebuilding of the economy, Australia opened its door to immigrants from European countries other than the United Kingdom, such as Germany and the Netherlands. They were considered racially “invisible” and easily assimilable (Castle et al., 1988, pp. 23–24, 47). Later those who looked “only just white” from southern European countries such as Italy and Greece were allowed entry (Jupp, 2007, p. 13). Among the post-war immigrants were European war refugees, such as “Jews, Poles, Czechs, Lithuanians, Estonians and Latvians, Croatians, Slovenians and Serbs” (Fozdar et al., 2009, p. 153). This “invisibility” as a discrete condition of entry into Australia has an important implication for life experience of “visible” minority migrants, including families of mixed-heritage backgrounds in my research.
In the face of this demographic change, specifically the intake of large numbers of non-British immigrants, the government enforced an assimilation policy in order to maintain a homogeneous nation culturally. “Assimilation” is a “doctrine that immigrants could be culturally and socially absorbed and rapidly become indistinguishable from the existing Anglo-Australian population” (Castles, 1992, p. 184). As London (1970, p. 22) pointed out, underneath the policy lay a fear of difference—of colour and culture—and the assumption that to fit in immigrants should adapt to the Australian way of life.

As part of the assimilation policy, migrants were officially expected to speak only English both in public and in private. The Commonwealth Immigration Advisory Council (CIAC) report titled The Progress and Assimilation of Migrant Children in Australia states that “parents who do not speak English at home are doing harm to their children” (Commonwealth Immigration Advisory Council, 1960, p. 8) and in the recommendation to deal with this issue, it continues as follows: “The Committee recommends: (1) a national campaign, particularly through foreign-language newspapers, to encourage parents to speak English in the home for their children’s sake” (CIAC, 1960, p. 8, italics in original). However, things began to change, slowly, with permission for entry of overseas students, particularly from Asian countries; of non-European wives of Australian soldiers, most of them being Japanese “war brides;” and of Eurasians with 50 per cent European blood (later changed to 75 per cent) (Tavan, 2005, pp. 72–75).

In 1973 the Whitlam government ended the White Australia Policy, and subsequently adopted a policy of multiculturalism (Castles, 1992; Castles et al., 1988; Jupp, 2007). Multiculturalism as the official policy refers to “the recognition … that a society is composed of varied elements, especially those based on language, nationality or religion,” and equally important is that multiculturalism recognises the equal value of different cultures and accepts the maintenance of minority groups’ own languages and their sense of pride (Jupp, 1996, p. vi, 6). The government began to recognise the need to respect the culture and language of the countries of origin of the migrants.

The launch of Special Broadcast Service (SBS) with the service of multiple languages (Jupp, 2005), and English language classes for all migrants of NEB (Non-English Backgrounds) (Castle, 1992) illustrate the change in attitudes towards immigrants. There was also recognition of the need for change in public policy, such as the need to
retain the language of origin at home, as reported in the Galbally Report (Claydon, 1981).

The big turning point for Australia was the arrival in Darwin, in 1976, of Vietnamese “boat people” and an influx of Lebanese refugees, all escaping political upheaval in their home countries (Jupp, 1998). The succeeding Fraser government emphasised “cultural pluralism” and “the value of multiculturalism as a way of achieving national identity … in an ethnically diverse society” (Castles, 1992, p. 187). Since then, the composition of the immigrant population began to shift from mainly Europeans to more Asians, with the Asian focus under the Keating government (Jupp, 2007). However, subsequent governments took different directions. The Howard government stressed “Judeo-Christian ethics, a British political heritage and the spirit of the European Enlightenment” (Department of Immigration and Citizenship [DIAC], 2007; Fozdar & Spittles, 2009; Tate, 2009).

The implementation of the Australian Citizenship test in 2007 was seen by some as a sign of retreat from multiculturalism, and return to the ideal of assimilation (Tate, 2009). Multiculturalism has been controversial, has undergone some major changes over time, and some say today it is in retreat (Jupp & Clyne 2011, p. xvi). The last two decades have seen a significant retreat from multiculturalism in government policies and as a core aspect of Australian identity (Jupp and Clyne 2011, p. xvi; Joppke 2004).

Jakubowicz (2003) pointed out that at the core of Australian multiculturalism lie the power relations between mainstream Australian values and those of others. In his words,

There is a hierarchy of cultural values that are emphasised through national leadership, social institutions and expectations of behaviour in social interaction. This remains the essence of Australian multiculturalism. … Other cultures are acceptable so long as they do not challenge this hierarchy, and accept the determining role of the core values of the dominant order—minority cultural retention is permitted but not mandated. (Jakubowicz, 2003, p. 8)

This suggests that there is a clear line drawn in relation to the power hierarchy between mainstream Australians and “other” members of society.
On the whole, however, while multiculturalism policy has undergone changes since the 1970s under successive governments, it has been regarded as successful in maintaining the social cohesion of Australian society (Ozdowski, 2012; Jupp and Clyne, 2011). Some argue that Australian multiculturalism played a key role in the success of the integration of immigrants (Kymlica, 2012; Collins, 2013). Indeed, despite changing and often contentious attitudes over the course of the years, the general public maintains a positive view of multiculturalism, cultural diversity, and immigration (Markus, 2014).

What are seemingly “private matters” of family life are subject to government control and intervention for many migrants and their families—by the regulations of entry into the country and of employment conditions, provision and access to English language lessons and other services to assist migrants in their settlement. As Hartley (1995, p. 7) argued, “the impact of government policies has been particularly strong and very direct” for many migrant families.

One such direct influence is illustrated in the work of Bottomley (1992), From Another Place, the analysis of Greek-Australian migrants’ lives. Her research illuminated the large impact on migrants’ family life of working conditions, and the regulations governing migrants’ employment opportunities. At the same time, however, she emphasised the strengths and persistence of the core values embedded in individuals from their childhood years, regardless of changes in living environment or location, throughout their life trajectories. Using Bourdieu’s concept of habitus, Bottomley (1992) illustrated how the transformation of such cultural values influenced the experiences of migrants’ lives as a whole. The notion of habitus will be discussed in more detail in a later section of this chapter.

**Immigrant acculturation and cultural identities**

**Acculturation process among immigrants and their families**

So far, the literature review has shown that in the cultural negotiation process, parents have often found it difficult to maintain their original culture and pass it on to the next generation. It was also identified that the wider the gap between the culture of origin and the host society, the harder that process could be. In examining the cultural negotiation in the process of socialisation of children, it is of vital importance to understand how the parents as migrants acculturate into the host society.
Resettlement in a new country requires adjustments—including to a new environment, a new job, meeting new people, different customs, norms, and values, a different language, a new school for children. This resettlement process can also be considered as one of “re-socialisation” (Taft, 1977, 1985; Sang & Ward, 2006). Re-socialisation involves “changes in attitudes, values and identification; the acquisition of new social skills and behaviour norms; changes in reference and membership-group affiliations; and emotional adjustment to a changed environment” (Sang & Ward, 2006, p. 257). One of the most extensively applied theories relating to re-socialisation is acculturation theory developed by John Berry (1990, 1992, 1997, 2001, 2003, 2005, 2007). Whilst this theory has some limitations, it is useful for the purposes of my research.

Developing a clear definition of acculturation theory has proved difficult (Sam & Berry, 2006; Berry, 2003). Acculturation refers to the process of change occurring when two cultures meet (Sam & Berry, 2006; Gibson, 2001). Although the acculturation process involves two parties, the impact of the cultural change is larger on immigrants than on members of the host society (Berry, 2001; McDonald, 1991). Many changes occur during the acculturation process. These include political, economic, and cultural changes, as well as the physical spaces immigrants occupy and the adoption of a new diet.

In essence, acculturation involves the adoption of new cultural forms, along with the retention of the immigrant’s culture of origin (Schwartz et al., 2006, p. 2; Sang & Ward, 2006, p. 258). Bornstein and Bohr (2011, p. 2) argued that “immigrants do not always readily adopt cognitions of the receiving culture, and culturally significant parenting beliefs and norms tend to resist change.” In other words, immigrants may adjust their actions to the new ways of doing things in the host society, but deep-seated values do not necessarily change at the same speed as the actions. The authors found that Japanese immigrant mothers in America adjusted their parenting practices quickly, but their fundamental beliefs on rearing a child did not change as easily. Acculturation theory recognises that practice (behaviour) is learned quickly, but culture-specific cognition remains deep-seated. However, the extent of acculturation differs greatly from individual to individual and from group to group (Bornstein & Bohr, 2011).
In the study of immigrant acculturation, Berry proposed four orientations of the acculturation process in relation to maintenance of culture of origin and development of new cultural identity: assimilation, separation, marginalisation, and integration (2001, p. 620; 1992, pp. 72–73). Berry argued that of the four orientations, “integration” is the ideal process of settlement in a new society, in which a migrant is willing to adopt the host society’s basic values while maintaining his/her own. When an immigrant adopts the basic values of the host society at the cost of their own, Berry describes the process as “assimilation.” In contrast, “separation” from the host society occurs when one has no interest in making adjustments to a new culture. “Marginalisation” occurs when a migrant finds it difficult to maintain their home culture, yet is unable or unwilling to adapt to that of the host society. (See Berry, 1997, p. 10, Fig. 1; 2005, p. 705, Fig. 3). Berry asserted that in order for integration to occur, “mutual accommodation” is required: immigrants adopt the basic values of the host society and the host society makes institutional changes to meet the needs of migrant groups (Berry 2001, p. 619). When the host society accepts cultural diversity, it creates a social environment that can accommodate the needs of migrant groups as well as those of the dominant group. From that perspective, Berry’s framework of acculturation is important as an analytical tool, given that successive Australian governments have for the last four decades supported multiculturalism to varying degrees.

It is also worth noting that research concerning immigrant acculturation often emerges from the experiences of non-Western collective societies. Schwartz et al. (2006, p. 12) pointed out that “nonwhite, non-Western, non-European immigrant people” may face additional challenges in acculturation due to “greater cultural and phenotypic difference.” The authors argued that researchers need to consider cultural distance between the receiving society and the immigrants’ cultures of origin in the study of acculturation. Where two cultures are similar, acculturation may not be so difficult, but when they are quite different (as in collectivist immigrant culture vs. individualist culture of the host society) challenges may be greater. Hofstede (2001) made a similar point, which was discussed in an earlier section of this chapter.

It must be noted that Berry’s acculturation theory assumes a homogenous background of both receiving countries and immigrants’ countries of origin—terms such as “bicultural identity” (Dion, 2006) or living in “two cultures” (Berry, 2005) are
commonly used in acculturation studies. Furthermore, the acculturation theory does not consider “race” or “mixed race” factors in the process of acculturation. In recent years, however, Berry began to acknowledge limitations of his acculturation theory based on research written predominantly in Western host societies such as Australia, the United States, New Zealand, Canada, or the United Kingdom, noting cultural diversities particularly in Asian countries. He states, “particularly in Asia, where half of the world’s population lives in culturally diverse societies, people experience daily intercultural encounters and have to meet the demands for cultural and psychological change” (Berry 2005, p. 700).

Another limitation pointed out by some researchers is the linear sequence and unidirectional process of acculturation, which is understood as having an end point (Tardiff-Williams & Fisher, 2009; Cabassa, 2003). As Tardiff-Williams and Fisher stated, “acculturation within the family is an ongoing, dynamic and complex process, rather than time-limited and discrete.”

In considering structural influences in integration into a new society as migrants, Bourdieu’s theory (1977, 1984, 1986) of habitus and cultural capital is also useful. It is particularly helpful in examining the external factors of influence in the life of mixed migrant families, as it acknowledges structuring forces that generate limitations or opportunities in a new environment.

Habitus in a broader sense, according to Waquant (2005), one of the key interpreters of Bourdieu’s theories, can be defined as

a mediating notion that revokes the common sense duality between the individual and the social by capturing the “internalization of externality and the externalization of internality,” [in the famous expression of Bourdieu], that is, the way society becomes deposited in persons in the form of lasting dispositions, or trained capacities and structured propensities to think, feel, and act in determinate ways, which then guide them in their creative responses to the constraints and solicitations of their extant milieu. (Waquant, 2011, p. 318)

Applied to the context of family studies, habitus can be defined as dispositions that are instilled in childhood through socialisation processes in the family. It can, however, change depending on life circumstances (the “field”) of individuals and their position (Maton, 2008; Webb, Schirato, & Danaher, 2002). For migrants, habitus
can be thought of as an internalised culture, which is moved and reshaped in a new life circumstance, and which can also simultaneously be resilient in the face of change. It is also important to remember that these reproductions and transformations take place in a specific “cultural field.” That is, they occur through social interactions in a specific social setting—within a family, a community, a broader society, and so forth.

It must be added, however, that Bourdieu emphasises one’s actions are not the outcome of deliberate and conscious decisions. Thompson (1991) argues that point as follows:

by virtue of the habitus, individuals are already predisposed to act in certain ways, pursue certain goals, avow certain tastes, and so on. Since individuals are the products of particular histories which endure in the habitus, their actions can never be analysed adequately as the outcome of conscious calculation. (Thompson, 1991, p. 17)

To Bottomley (1992, p. 123), habitus is a disposition that “manifests itself in practice, in action and movement, in the way one orients oneself in relation to specific social fields. The notion of habitus informs us of fluidity and complexity of construction of identity among migrant families. In other words, habitus is understood as acquired disposition in daily practice to think, behave, and interact in the social world. As Bourdieu (1984, p. 466) argued, habitus operates “below the level of consciousness and language, beyond the reach of introspective scrutiny or control by the will.” In the broadest sense, “habitus” informs us of the importance of the fundamental worldview, internalised in one’s childhood, but which can transform in new circumstances. According to Maton (2008):

It [habitus] is structured by one’s past and present circumstances, such as family upbringing and educational experiences. It is “structuring” in that one’s habitus helps to shape one’s present and future practices. It is a “structure” in that it is systematically ordered rather than random or unpatterned. (Maton, 2008, p. 51)

In my research, this transformation of cultural values and its influence on the lives of migrants are important factors when considering how acculturation processes among migrant parents affect the ways in which their children are socialised into mainstream society.
The second concept, cultural capital, relates to “all forms of valued resources … whether they are material, cultural, social or symbolic” (Navarro, 2006, p. 16). According to Bourdieu, cultural capital consists of three forms (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 84). First is embodied cultural capital; “long-lasting dispositions of the mind and body,” properties or characters of individuals (one’s self) that are acquired over time both at unconscious and conscious levels, usually through socialisation through one’s family. Second is institutionalised cultural capital, which refers to institutional recognition such as academic qualifications through education. Third is objectified cultural capital; “the form of cultural goods (pictures, books, dictionaries, instruments, machines, etc),” or artwork such as paintings, music and so on. Of those three forms, my research is primarily concerned with embodied cultural capital, which includes the concept of “habitus.”

As Webb et al. (2002, p. 23) argued, “agents adjust their expectations with regard to the capital they are likely to attain in terms of the ‘practical’ limitations imposed upon them by their place in the field, their educational background, social connections, class position and so forth.” Harker, Mahar, and Wilkes (1990) pointed out the depth and breadth of Bourdieu’s notion of cultural capital as follows:

The definition of capital is very wide for Bourdieu and includes material things (which can have symbolic value), as well as “untouchable” but culturally significant attributes such as prestige, status and authority (referred to as symbolic capital), along with cultural capital (defined as culturally-valued taste and consumption patterns) … For Bourdieu, capital acts as a social relation within a system of exchange, and the term is extended ‘to all the goods, material and symbolic, without distinction, that present themselves as rare and worthy of being sought after in a particular social formation. (Harker et al., 1990, p. 1)

Some researchers have argued that in increasingly ethnically/culturally diverse modern societies, abilities to overcome challenges that come with migration processes are seen as cultural capital (Trueba, 2002; Erel, 2010). Erel argued that migrants are not just adapting and adjusting to the new society, but they are creating “new forms of migration-specific cultural capital: migrants actively create dynamics of validating cultural resources as capital, resulting in new forms of intra-migrant distinction” (Erel, 2010, p. 656).
Drawing on Nauck’s (2009) argument of cultural capital as the existing condition of migrants, who bring with them their language, a set of values and beliefs, traditions and customs, educational backgrounds and so on, I apply the notion of cultural capital as the attributes that migrants pass on to the next generation. Bourdieu (1986, p. 85) asserted that cultural capital “must be invested personally by the investor.” In my research, the “investor” can be understood as immigrant parents from two different cultural origins, who “invest” their own cultural capital in their children and in each other. Furthermore, the children of “mixed” families (as the product of the intercultural marriage) “inherit” parts of cultural capital from their parents, and develop a new form of cultural capital. Chapter 6 will discuss how the children are adept at using their cultural capital, recognising that their appearance and insider knowledge of different cultures can help them interact with different groups of people and fit in easily with them.

**Changing cultural identity for migrants**

One of the inevitable consequences of acculturation processes is a change in cultural identity (Schwartz et al., 2006; Fong & Chuang, 2004). Schwartz et al. (2006) suggested that acculturation and cultural identity are inextricably intertwined at the junction of two cultures. Negotiations of cultural identities in the acculturation process can be an intense and stressful experience (Bradford, Burrell, & Mabry, 2004). For migrant families, cultural identity formation and transformation involve both acculturation and socialisation processes. Among many definitions of “cultural identity,” for the purposes of my research, I draw on Adler’s definition: cultural identity may be defined as one’s sense of self in relation to others, which “incorporates the world view, value system, attitudes, and beliefs of a group with which such elements are shared” (Adler, 1998, p. 230). Construction of identity begins at birth through the socialisation process. But for immigrants, as discussed earlier, acculturation is added to the process as the immigrants adjust their life to a new environment. In the study of immigrant families, then, socialisation, acculturation and cultural identity processes inevitably overlap and are interrelated in complicated manners (Schwartz et al., 2006). This complexity makes it impossible to isolate a single issue of either acculturation, socialisation, cultural transmission, or cultural identity/identities.
As mentioned briefly earlier, all immigrants face uncertainty when leaving their home country and beginning a new life elsewhere. Things that were taken for granted are not so any longer. Bauman (1996) argued that questioning of identity arises in circumstances of uncertainty. In his words:

One thinks of identity whenever one is not sure of where one belongs; that is, one is not sure how to place oneself among the evident variety of behavioural styles and patterns, and how to make sure that people around would accept this placement as right and proper, so that both sides would know how to go on in each other’s presence. ‘Identity’ is a name given to the escape sought from that uncertainty. (Bauman, 1996, p. 19)

As one brings in a set of cultural values to a new society and begins to make adjustments, this is the point at which cultures intersect with one another. This is also when one reflects on his/her own culture and where cultural negotiation and renewed identification process begins. As Rutherford (1990, p. 26) pointed out, “cultures and identities can never be wholly separate, homogenous entities; instead the interrelationships of differences are marked by translation and negotiation.” Stuart Hall (1990) suggested two ways to understand the notion of cultural identity. First is the way you identify yourself through common and shared ancestry, history and tradition. This is the reference point to assess and confirm your belongingness to that particular cultural group—culture of origin. This is the static and rigid cultural code that transcends time. The author states:

Within the terms of this definition, our cultural identities reflect the common historical experiences and shared cultural codes which provides us, as ‘one people’, with stable, unchanging and continuous frames of reference and meaning, beneath the shifting divisions and vicissitudes of our actual history. (Hall, 1990, p. 223)

Life circumstances such as personal and social interactions, political and historical events and so on, have an impact on your cultural identity. The second understanding refers to the identity that is constantly changing in the flow of historical change. This sense of cultural identity is “a matter of ‘becoming’ as well as of ‘being’. It belongs to the future as much as to the past. It is not something which already exists, transcending place, time, history and culture” (Hall, 1990, p. 225). Hall emphasised the fluid nature of cultural identity, as it changes depending on one's voluntary and involuntary positioning in a given social context. Similarly, Schwartz et al. (2006)
asserted identity as the process of self-understanding that gives meaning to one’s “place in the world” (2006, p. 5). In other words, cultural identity is about having a “sense of attachment of belonging and of rootedness; that which links present with the past and creates a unique heritage” (Malik, 1996, p. 186).

Chuang (2004, p. 53) emphasised the importance of the “fluid nature of identity,” as did Hall (1996). Chuang (2004), however, referred especially to the experiences of immigrants in their negotiation between their culture of origin and the host culture, and of bicultural people who move between two cultural and social worlds. Similarly, Bottomley (1992, p. 3) pointed out the notion of culture as central to “the process of migration, whereby people leave one set of social and historical circumstances and move, or are moved, to another.” On the other hand, Sarup (1994, p. 95) argued “identities are not free-floating, they are limited by borders and boundaries.” He asserted the importance of a physical place and one’s sense of bonding, one’s “home.”

He states:

Many of the connotations of home are condensed in the expression: *Home is where the heart is.* Home is (often) associated with pleasant memories, intimate situations, a place of warmth and protective security amongst parents, brothers and sisters, loved people. (Sarup, 1994, p. 94)

Thus, although sense of identity may be considered fluid, it is also important to note that some sort of “rootedness” may be required in the construction of a sense of identity within physical boundaries.

At a broader level of the identity development process, Erikson (1968) argued that identity development is intricately intertwined with interactions with others and interplay between individuals and the social and cultural context in which they live, with a particular emphasis on the development during adolescent years (Erikson 1968). Similarly, Arnett (2000) pointed out the adolescent and “emerging adulthood” (ages 18–25) years as a significant phase in the formation of identity. Through exploration in education, travels, career opportunities and interpersonal relationships, it is a period of identity development into adulthood that emphasises “the importance of personal reflection and choice, considering alternatives, and constructing a sense of identity based on one’s preferences and experiences” (Dion, 2013, p. 300).
Development of cultural identity begins early in childhood, although children are not conscious of it, as discussed in the earlier section on socialisation. Phinney (1993) proposed three phases of identity development: unexamined cultural identity, cultural identity search, and cultural identity achievement. Particularly during adolescent years, children become aware of cultural/ethnic differences between themselves and others and begin exploring their identities (Fong, 2004). Drawing from Phinney’s proposition, Fong suggested that in examining identity crises/conflicts, it is useful to apply two layers of identity: subjective identity (perception of self) and objective identity (perception of a person by others).

For example, people may experience identity crisis when the gap between subjective identity and objective identity is big: one believes that s/he belongs to a particular cultural/ethnic/racial group, but others view him/her differently due to dissimilar physical appearance or cultural behaviours (Fong, 2004, p. 20). This is to say that cultural/racial heritage adds another dimension to the investigation because of multiculturality in intercultural families. The complicated interplay between the sense of self from within and from others resonates with Cooley’s theory of “looking-glass self,” in which he argued that one’s awareness of self and identity develops through complicated interactions and interrelations with others (1964).

Dervin (2012) argued that researchers need to come away from the assumption of having or being of one cultural identity in increasingly complicated and pluralistic societies. Calling the concept of cultural identity a “floating signifier,” Dervin identified different interpretations of identity by researchers as a set of shared values and norms, as a synonym to ethnic identity, or as a mixture of various identities encompassed in one—personal, sexual, social, ethnic and national identity. Thus, he proposed the interculturality and pluralisation of cultural identity (2012).

In relation to immigrant adolescents and young adults, apart from cultural identity issues, other culture-related facets such as ethnicity, race, religious affiliations and so on are added to this exploration process, contributing to development of a sense of bicultural competence (Dion, 2013, p. 301). That means, for immigrant youths cultural identity formation and acculturation process are inseparable. As Schwartz et al. (2006) state:
Immigrant adolescents and young adults are faced with the challenge of creating a cultural identity that incorporates elements of both the heritage and receiving cultures, in addition to confronting the normative personal identity issues that characterize this developmental period … As a result, the “side effects” of acculturation and associated identity distress may be most severe for adolescents and young adults. However, successfully developing identity may buffer against these negative effects, particularly in this age group. (Schwartz et al., 2006, p. 3)

One recent study shows the importance of research on identity formation of 1.5 generation Filipino migrants in France (Fresnoza-Flot, 2016b), differentiating it from the second generation migrant youths. By “1.5 generation migrants,” in this study, the author refers to young people who migrated from the Philippines to France when they were between five and eighteen years of age. The informants’ backgrounds varied, but one common feature was that these 1.5 generation Filipinos “experienced growing up successively in two different societies” (p. 47). Fresnoza-Flot argued that their identity formation process differed fundamentally from that of second-generation individuals, who were born and raised in the country of settlement of their parents. This point is worth noting—as three of the offspring among my participants arrived in Australia as children (at the ages of eleven, nine and six). Fresnoza-Flot points out that her respondents developed either a Filipino identity or “a chimeric French-Filipino identity” (p. 61). While her study related to transnational families, one feature common to other research is that identity formation is complex, involving “internal and external mechanisms influenced by individual agency, as well as the general attitudes towards Filipino immigrants by the majority French population and other immigrant groups” (p. 61).

While much research has been done concerning cultural identity issues for migrants, little has been studied about negotiations of cultural identities among intercultural/interracial families. Reynolds’s study (2005) shows different layers of cultural negotiations and reconstruction of her cultural identity in the host society as a migrant mother in the United Kingdom. Although this study is not about intercultural/interracial family relations, the focus on mothering provides a lens to gain insight into minority immigrant mothers’ experiences in their negotiations of cultural identity transformation.
In *Caribbean Mothers: Identity and Experience in the U.K.*, Reynolds (2005) explored the ways in which the experience of mothering shapes and re-shapes cultural identity for Caribbean mothers. Based on the interviews with 40 African-Caribbean mothers living in the United Kingdom, the author argued that the reconstruction of cultural identities is contextual, is in constant flux, and that different levels of individuals’ experiences are intertwined in complex ways. Identity is influenced by both the upbringing in the original culture and by the society in which people live. The sense of belonging as African-Caribbean mothers is enhanced through sharing common parenting practices among the minority community. Shared values include teaching children to pay respect to elders, and acceptance of corporal punishment. For many mothers, bringing up “well disciplined children” was the ultimate goal in parenting (2005, p. 60). When their beliefs were not shared by the majority of U.K. parents, this difference in outlook was challenging for the mothers.

Different parental cultural heritages and values have been found to influence identity development among youth of different heritage groups in New Zealand. Ward (2006) conducted a comparative study of the development of ethnic-cultural identity among dual-heritage adolescents in New Zealand. The participants were 447 New Zealand native-born youth of three different groups—Pakeha (“whites”), Maori, and dual-heritage youth with ages ranging from 12 to 18 years. While this study involved native-born New Zealanders and not immigrant children, issues of the development of bicultural identity and cultural negotiation are of significance to my thesis.

Unlike the assumption that mixed-heritage adolescents are negatively influenced by having more anxiety, stress or conflict in the process of development of ethnic identity than other groups, the findings indicated that Maori-Pakeha dual-heritage adolescents prove to be no more or less positive than the other two groups. Ward found that “this group of dual heritage adolescents can lay claim to an integrated, balanced and truly bicultural identity … this identity is associated with positive psychological outcomes, in particular increased life satisfaction” (2006, p. 255). This is in part due to the fact that European settlers in New Zealand pay respect to the Maori and their culture. There is also strong awareness of Maori culture among the population and this political background allows Maori-Pakeha dual-heritage youth to develop a positive “bicultural identity” (2006, p. 255). An implication of this research is that there is an influence of socio-political structures on identity formation of mixed
people. Study of such structural influences on identities is an important element in my research.

The research also showed different perceptions of ethnic/national identity between the three groups: Maori youth showed a stronger sense of identity than Pakeha, while dual-heritage youth occupied an intermediate position. In terms of parental obligations and children’s rights, Maori showed stronger parental obligations (a sense of obligation and gratitude towards the parents for their dedication in raising their children) and weaker belief in children’s rights than Pakeha youth who showed less sense of obligation to parents and a stronger sense of their own rights. In both aspects of parental obligation and independence, Maori-pakeha youth showed less feeling of obligation towards parents than did Maori youth, and believed independence from the parents was less important than did Pakeha youth.

The above research by Reynolds (2005) and Ward (2006) addressed cultural identity issues in different groups with different emphases: Reynolds on motherhood and child socialisation in relation to cultural maintenance in the United Kingdom, and Ward on the development of cultural identities among dual-heritage vs. single-heritage adolescents in New Zealand. What is missing here, however, is the link between parents and children. My research addresses this missing link by studying negotiations between parents and children within the family.

**Race and mixed-race studies**

**The influence of race and mixed-race concepts on intermarriage and mixed families**

The understanding of the notion of “race” plays an important role in research on intercultural/interracial immigrant families in considering the possible influence of ideological views based on race, in which “colour” played a key role in determining people’s socio-political positions. Does physical appearance, such as colour of the skin and eyes, or facial features, affect the sense of identity among migrant mixed families? To explore this question, it is necessary to understand how the concepts of race and mixed race have been considered in this field of study.

The term *race* refers to a classification of different groups of people primarily based on biological/genetic characteristics such as colour of skin, hair, eyes, or shape of face
or eyes, (Banton, 1998; Malik, 1996; Song, 2003; Fozdar et al., 2009). Race is a contentious term, and it has been considered difficult to define, but it has always been associated with assumptions about the hierarchical order of humankind (Banton, 1998; Malik, 1996). For example, Tizard and Phoenix argued that “racial classification, with its assertion of the innate superiority of the white ‘race’, conveniently justified slavery and, later, imperial conquest.” This provided the basis for the idea that it was important to keep race pure in order to maintain “white” superiority (2002, p. 2).

As Williams (1996, p. 195) pointed out, “the prevailing belief that blacks and whites are different sociologically and biologically is nowhere more prevalent than in the notion of miscegenation or ‘race-mixing’.” Drawing on the American history of the slavery era and its impacts, Williams argued that interracial relations between black and white people have “fundamentally shaped the American psyche” (p. 195). In essence, mixed-race studies in the United States have placed the focus primarily on racial differences (Root, 1992; Spickard, 1991).

Woven into the core of American national consciousness is the insistence that “the races” are monoracially constructed, distinctly pure, and fundamentally different … No other social reality than that of racially mixed people questions the one-dimensional racial structure upon which America has founded and built its national identity. (Williams, 1996, p. 193)

Williams (1996, p. 193) pointed out that in the “highly racialized U.S. society,” it is almost a necessity to be assigned to a single racial group to be a “functional member of the society.” It is in this socio-political context that much of the research on mixed-race issues emerged. Although the United Kingdom has done much study on “mixed race” issues as well, the research was largely influenced by scholarship in the United States. Aspinall and Song (2013) pointed out the impact of the United States-based research, with its distinctive historical and socio-political context, for mixed-race scholarship globally, and in particular on mixed-race research in the United Kingdom. They advocated the need to pay more attention to the British historical and socio-political context.

One consequence of this racial classification was that interracial/intercultural unions and their offspring have been perceived to be a “problem,” becoming a target of
racism for being different, not belonging in any particular group, identity mismatch, and so on (Luke & Luke, 1998, 1999; Parker & Song, 2001; Tizard & Phoenix, 2002; Gilbert, 2005; Fozdar & Perkins, 2014; Song, 2003; Ganter, 2003). Although the notion of race is accepted largely as a social construct today, (Banton, 1998; Brace, 2005; Root, 1992; Tizard & Phoenix, 2002; Fozdar et al., 2009), Root argued that the irrational conceptualisation of race affects how we think about social identity, and pointed out that our racial classification system is deemed to marginalise people of racially/ethnically mixed people (1992). Similarly, Perkins (2007) noted that most people make assumptions about others, such as their cultural background, based on their appearance. As Triandis (1977) argued, initial responses to differences is a cognitive process that occurs in differentiating self from the other. Furthermore, Song (2003) emphasised the pervasiveness of racial categories in our ordinary lives both at an individual and societal level. She asserted that “however arbitrary or non-sensical racial categories may be, our perceptions and understandings of race continue to fundamentally shape people’s lives and interactions in contemporary multiethnic societies” (2003, p. 12).

At this point, it is important to note that the term “race” (including “interracial” and “mixed race”) is generally applied throughout the thesis, rather than “ethnicity,” in order to foreground the issue of biological features, which are often concealed or ignored under the concept of ethnicity. Definitions of ethnicity often include a biological aspect, however, groups may see themselves as distinct ethnically but not racially. Weber (1968) defined ethnic groups as “those human groups that entertain a subjective belief in their common descent because of physical type or of customs or both, or because of memories of colonization and migration” (1968, p. 389). To Weber, both race and customs (culture) were equally important in considering common ethnicity (Jackson, 1982/1983). Further, Yinger’s (1981) definition of ethnicity emphasises that racial difference does not necessarily imply ethnic difference:

An ethnic group perceives itself and is perceived by others to be different in some combination of the following traits: language, religion, race and ancestral homeland, with its related culture. A group that is different only by race is not an ethnic group. (1981, p. 250)
Therefore, the term “ethnicity” emphasises cultural difference, not necessarily racial difference.

In the context of Australia, where the notion of race has been erased from the official vocabulary (which will be discussed further in the next section) (Katz, 2012), and where naming race is taboo, it has been argued that race needs to be acknowledged (Perkins, 2004). Consequently, as well as the various influences of culture, my research investigates the impact of physicality and its implications in the day-to-day lives of those whose appearances differ from others. The Australian Bureau of Statistics (2016a, np) defines ethnicity as “the shared identity or similarity of a group of people on the basis of one or more factors.” These factors include shared history and memories passed on intergenerationally, shared cultural traditions and customs, common location of origin, language, and religion, minority status, and “being racially conspicuous.” My attempt is to shed light on the latter factor, “being racially conspicuous,” in this thesis.

A brief overview of mixed-race studies

Many scholars have discussed mixed race but there is little consensus on the definition of the term, in large part because of the complexities and ambiguity of the word race (Gilbert, 2005; Root, 1992; Parker & Song, 2001; Song, 2003). In the most general sense, mixed race refers to people whose biological parents are from two or more different races. However, as the meaning of race has changed over time, so has the notion of mixed race. The term mixed race has been interchangeably used with other terms such as biracial, dual heritage, mixed heritage, and multiracial (Gilbert, 2005). According to Crawford and Alaggia (2008, p. 82), while the term mixed race is used as a synonym for biracial or multiracial in the United States, in the United Kingdom, the preferred term is mixed parentage. Furthermore, racial mixing particularly in Britain and the United States was treated as “the putative contamination” of the “pure” white race throughout the nineteenth century and until the mid-twentieth century (Song, 2003, p. 10). Disapproval of racial mixing is reflected in various derogatory terms such as half-breed, half-caste or mulatto (Tizard & Phoenix, 2002, p. 3).

In the 1920s, however, the emergence of the “marginality theory” was to affect the lives of many mixed-race people, and others' perception of racial mixing (Reginald,
Kina, Dariotis, & Fojas, 2014; LaFromboise, Coleman, & Gerton, 1993). The theory was initially developed by Robert Park (1928), in which he argued that while acknowledging the marginal position of being in-between as a multiracial individual, he viewed marginality as more positive, also known as “positive” marginality (Reginald et al., 2014, p. 16). Referring to not only multiracial individuals, but also migrants who experience life in two cultures, he argued that “cultural hybrid” people are cosmopolitans (as Park called “cosmopolite”) in some ways (Park, 1928, p. 888). Reginald et al. summarised Park’s argument as follows:

Marginality and the accompanying ability to identify with more than one racial or cultural group, could imbue individuals with a broader vision and wider range of sympathies. Park did envision the marginal individual as a person who stood on the margin of two racial/cultural and often mutually exclusive and hostile worlds, and thus not fully a member of either world. He nevertheless believed that whatever alienation marginal individuals may experience could be counterbalanced by the role such individuals might play in facilitating mutual understanding between groups and between individuals from different groups. (Reginald et al., 2014, p. 16)

However, according to Reginald et al. (2014), Park's theory was overshadowed by the book *The Marginal Man*, by Stonequist (1937/1961), in which the author stated that marginal man

has distinctive physical traits which mark him [sic] off from both parent races. He [sic] also frequently possesses some characteristics of manner, thought and speech which are derived from both lines of his ancestry. Because of these peculiarities the mixed blood presents a special problem for the community: what is to be his place in the social organization? As he matures he too will become aware of his problematic and anomalous social position. He will become the target of whatever hostile sentiments exist between the parent races. (Stonequist, 1937/1961, p. 10)

To Stonequist, marginal man was characterised as an outcast, isolated, and not belonging to either race of the parents. Furedi (2001, p. 30) pointed out that the marginal man was viewed as the one who “suffered” from “personal maladjustment and possessed a victim mentality.”

The “problems” of mixed-race people were perceived as problems of a personal nature that lie within individuals themselves. The concept of mixed race was criticised
as psychological rather than sociological (McFadden, 2001; Oriti et al., 1996). This view, however, ignored the social force at the time, which attempted to maintain white supremacy and dominance (Reginald, 2014). This theory of marginal man became one of the most influential works during the 1930s and 1940s (Furedi, 2001, p. 34; Gilbert, 2005, p. 60). It must be added, however, that other researchers have challenged the marginality theory, arguing that marginal people do not necessarily suffer psychological problems, living in or between two cultures (LaFromboise et al., 1993, p. 395). More details on this matter are beyond the scope of my research, but it is worth keeping in mind that at that time in history, opposing perspectives did exist.

In the United States, intermarriage between whites and blacks was illegal until the 1967 Supreme Court case Loving vs. Virginia overturned the rule in Virginia (Root, 1992; Moran, 2001). “Mixed race” tended to be pathologised and the stigmatisation of mixedness affected the psychological wellbeing of those who were of mixed heritage (Fanon, 1970; Root, 1992). The notion of the “one drop rule” in relation to mixed race represents the thinking of the time. In line with the development of racial classification, the one drop rule policy in the United States was developed as a measure to suppress the increasing black–white multiracial population (Williams, 1996, pp. 196–197). It was also to prevent the offspring of slave masters from claiming the inheritance of their father’s property (Perkins, 2004, p. 179; Gilbert, 2005, p. 62). As a result of the “one drop rule,” many people of mixed heritage denied their identity as mixed race and, still today, self-classify as “black” (Small, 2001, 121; Tizard and Phoenix, 2002, p. 8).

In addition, Root (1992, p. 6) argued that mixing between the “non-whites” had been given little attention because it had not threatened the so-called purity of whites or their racial hierarchy. Similarly, an Australian study on interracial relationships between Asians and Aboriginal people in Northern Australia during the 1800s revealed that they had been largely ignored, as they had not posed a threat to whites (Ganter, 2003).

In the 1990s, the study of identities of mixed people became less problem-oriented as more complex insider perspectives began to surface. It was revealed that being biracial or multiracial could have a more positive side. (Tizard & Phoenix, 2002, p. 49). There has been more recognition of mixed-race people in public, and interracial people have become more assertive about their own mixedness (Tizard & Phoenix,
This is in part due to demographic change, because of an influx of a large number of immigrants to the United States from Asia and Latin America (Lee and Beans, 2010; Suárez-Orzco & Suárez-Orzco, 2002). Some scholars have even “celebrated the growth of mixed relationships and individuals as a hopeful sign of a more tolerant future, in which racial difference and boundaries will be of decreasing importance” (Song, 2003, p. 82). This is illustrated in articles such as: “Every mixed race marriage is building a better Britain,” which appeared in *The Independent* (Alibhai-Brown, 1999) in the United Kingdom, and “Mixed blessings: Hybrid nation: Mixed marriages once drew controversy but now are increasingly the norm” (Kyriakopoulos, 1996) in *The Bulletin* in Australia, which covered four pages of stories, introducing the lives of five mixed-race couples with photographs of each.

It is worth noting the meaning of *intermarriage* and its understanding by intermarried couples, which is different from the public perception of it. Very broadly, *intermarriage, inter/cultural marriage, mixed or cross-cultural marriage* (some refer to it as *international marriage*) refer to “marriages between two people from different linguistic, religious, or ethnic groups or nations” (Breger & Hill, 1998, p. 7). In such situations, it is assumed that cultural differences can affect marriage and family practice. As Breger and Hill (1998, p. 19) argued, “culturally mixed marriages present those involved with a wider palette of cultural practices than culturally homogenous marriages, including such issues as gender roles, child-rearing, mores, language and general lifestyle by which to shape their lives.” Perhaps unsurprisingly, psychology research that focuses on therapy, especially from the United States, views intercultural marriage and its family life as a “problem” (Oriti, Bibb, Mahboubi, 1996; McFadden, 2001; Crawford & Alaggia, 2008).

On the other hand, Johnson and Warren (1994) found that in intermarriage, “mixed” cultures did not seem to be the most important cause of problems or disharmony. They found that:

> couples stressed that the important aspects of their marriage had to do with elements other than its “mixed” character. The externally imposed categories of “ethnicity” or “culture,” in the end, had very little to do with the nature of their relationship. (Johnson and Warren, 1994, p. 11)
Quoting personal narratives from their research, Johnson and Warren noted: “cultural differences may be less important than differences between individuals,” and “I do not think that our mixed marriage differs very much from those which are not mixed.” Similarly, Hardach-Pincke (1988) argued in her research on German-Japanese marriages that when the partners have had similar upbringing, such as education and social class (i.e., professional level), or sharing similar values, cultural difference between the partners is less important (cited in Breger & Hill, 1998, pp. 10–11).

When looking at attitudes towards interracial marriage and family from the point of view of “whites,” however, a different perspective emerges. While much of intermarriage family studies come from the insiders’ point of view, Herman and Campbell (2012) reported attitudes from the perspectives of whites in the United States about mixed-race relationships, intermarriage, and raising a family. According to their findings, while the total number of interracial marriages was increasing, when whites’ attitudes towards interracial relationships, marrying, and having children are the focus, the results show that whites are more likely to reject such unions than African Americans and Asian Americans (2012, p. 343). While white people indicate positive attitudes towards interracial unions, the positive attitude does not necessarily translate into actual experiences. This report resonates with the argument Ifekwunigwe (2001) made concerning the persistence of racialised experiences:

> Independent of rapidly changing demographics indicating a rise in both the number of “mixed race” marriages and the birth of “mixed race” children, there is still a deep-seated and now unspoken White English anxiety concerning “racial” infiltration by Black and Asian “alien-settlers.” (Ifekwunigwe, 2001, p. 58)

The author argued that there was a need to “assess the extent to which public discriminatory social structures and practices affect the formation and maintenance of private ‘mixed race’ family units” (2001, p. 58).

This statement by Ifekwunigwe above reminds us of the intricate and inseparable relationship between mixed-race marriages and mixed-race children, and yet much of the scholarship has been separate—between the intermarriage field and mixed-race field.

*Passing* refers to the process of going beyond the set boundaries of racial classification. According to Gilbert (2005, p. 68), the concept of passing is based on
the fixed notion of the supremacy of the white race, with all others following below and ending with black at the bottom. This means that those who look white enough try to pass as white and are viewed and accepted as such. In doing so, they are able to avoid oppression, discrimination or racism in certain circumstances. Another term, colour-blindness, is based on the principle that universal human rights override affirmative action on the basis of race or minority status (Perkins, 2004, p. 183). Skin colour is no longer an issue and instead, all people, regardless of colour, must be treated equally. However, the corollary is that there is no special treatment for people disadvantaged because of colour. Frankenberg (1993) criticised the very notion of colour blindness as skirting the real issue of colour and power: by overemphasising sameness, differences and their effects are neglected. Frankenberg argued that colour is ignored on the basis that “we are all the same under the skin; ... culturally, we are converging ... materially, we have the same chances in U.S. society” and thus, the argument goes, low achievement “is therefore the fault of people of colour themselves” (1993, p. 14).

While these terms are used commonly in the mixed-race studies in general, each society has its own unique understanding of mixedness. In the United Kingdom, for example, researchers point out that there is a longstanding traditional stereotypical assumption about so-called mixed relationships: they are abnormal and problematic, and are a phenomenon of the underclass arising from working-class white women having sexual relationships with black men (Caballero, 2007; Caballero, Edwards & Smith, 2008). In fact, the labelling of mixed relationships with negative perspectives is still widespread both in the United Kingdom and the United States (Caballero et al., 2008). In Australia, however, mixed-race has historically been strongly associated with half-caste and the issues of the “Stolen Generations,” arising from mixing between Aboriginal and white people (Katz, 2012). In addition, Perkins (2004) noted that Aboriginal cultures shy away from the term mixed race since blood quantum is not the relevant measure. This means, if one has half, one-quarter, or one-eighth Aboriginal ancestry, one is considered Aboriginal, and not mixed race. Paradies (2006), however, challenged Perkins’s dichotomy of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal choice, and argued that racial mixing among the Indigenous population is far more complex and diverse. The term race or mixed race has been deliberately removed from the official vocabulary (Katz, 2012). According to Stratton (1998, p. 41), since
the beginning of the process into multiculturalism policy in the government, the term race and culture have been conflated in Australian politics. The rhetoric has been used and interpreted in various ways since then. Instead of white, Anglo-Australian or Anglo-Celtic is applied to denote whiteness and minorities or ethnic groups are termed NESB (Non English Speaking Background), or described using terms such as LOTE (Language Other Than English) or CALD (Culturally and Linguistically Diverse) (Katz, 2012, pp. 27, 30). These different contexts in the perception of mixed-race relations are significant factors to consider in my research, because societal forces play an important role in the life experiences of mixed migrant families.

**The study of mixed-race**

Changes in attitudes to mixed-race people at a societal level can be seen in the inclusion of a mixed race category in the census in the United States, the United Kingdom (Gilbert, 2005; Aspinall, 2000; Aspinall, 2003), and New Zealand (Kukutai & Callister, 2009). Since 2000, the United States allowed people to self-identify as multiracial (Lee & Bean, 2010), and in the United Kingdom in 2001, in the ethnicity category, mixed race was included as an independent race (Owen, 2001, Katz, 2012). New Zealand introduced the choice of multiple ancestries in the census in 1991 (Kukutai & Callister, 2009). The inclusion of the category “mixed race” is significant as an indication of the acknowledgement of multiple racial identifications.

However, the Australian census uses country of origin and ancestry as categories. Although respondents are allowed to provide up to two ancestries, options are vague, with either country, ethnicity, or geographic location being possibilities (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2011a). In question 18 of the 2011 Australian census (“What is the person’s ancestry?”) the selection options included a nationality, an ethnic group, a cultural group, or a geographical location of a group. The options for the respondents were: English, Irish, Italian, German, Chinese, Scottish, Australian, or Other. The examples of “Other” included Greek, Vietnamese, Hmong, Dutch, Kurdish, Maori, Lebanese, Australian South Sea Islander (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2016b). The absence of officially recognised categories of race or mixed race in Australia (Katz, 2012; Khoo, 2010; Fozdar & Perkins, 2014; Paradies, 2006; Luke & Luke, 1998) may create obstacles for researchers and research processes. Luke and Luke (1998, p. 731) illustrated this point, saying that “the omission of race
as a key analytic category makes it much more difficult to investigate everyday racialising discourses and practices, and the very politics of a racialization that mark whites as unraced and all ‘others’ as visibly different.” One study on the patterns of intermarriage based on the 2011 census reveals the complexity and impossibility of straightforward categorisation of mixed marriages and partnerships (Walker & Heard, 2014). Walker and Heard (2014) reported the limitations of finding details of the number or types of intermarriage, solely relying on the census. However, some of the key findings of the analysis are significant and give insight into the current trend in Australia. The findings include: the number of Indigenous intermarriage partnerships has not increased significantly; the highest rate of intermarriages is between those with European and Anglo-Celtic ancestry; immigrants of Middle Eastern and Indian origin have lower rates of intermarriage; second-generation migrants intermarry more than their parents’ generation, with the third generation having an even higher proportion of intermarrying. In addition, the authors pointed out that the difficulty of measuring patterns of intermarriage was exacerbated by the lack of availability of birthplaces of the marriage partners, which was previously recorded in marriage registration data (Walker & Heard, 2014, p. 57).

It must be noted here that the notion of “mixed race” in Australia is historically tied in with the children of the “Stolen Generations” and their mixed heritage being part Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander and part white. As Perkins (2007, p. 13) noted, “Aboriginal cultures generally prefer not to think in terms of mixed race. The concept of ‘half-caste’ is an offence to Indigenous cultures, which have no interest in the measurement of identity according to blood quantum” (see also Paradies, 2006).

While I acknowledge the significance of its scholarship as part of Indigenous studies, this is beyond the scope of my research. For that reason, mixed race studies relating to Indigenous populations have not been part of my thesis.

Selected studies below illustrate different research outcomes in the ways mixed race scholarships portray the mixed race issues in different societies. In the United States of America, Williams (1996) conducted an ethnographic study with a combination of interviews and a short survey on 20 mixed-race, biracial young adults (10 African/European Americans and 10 Asian/European Americans). One of the questions the author addressed was the question of multiple identities through the participants’ racialised experience in their daily life. Many participants reported
racialised experiences because of their “ambivalent colour.” While there were different responses on the question “what are you?” one commonality was that many felt race was imposed on them by society. The author concluded that biracial people are breaking through the existing traditional black/white racial boundaries of categorising people into “single-race definitions” of black or white. She argued that the “old racial paradigms are being challenged as the discourse on race evolves and incorporates multiple racial agencies” (Williams, 1996, p. 209).

In contrast to the study by Williams above, the study by Tizard and Phoenix (2002) in the United Kingdom showed a more positive picture of young mixed-race people’s experiences. Interviews were conducted in 1990–1991 with 58 young people aged 15–16 of mixed black and white parentage in various schools in London. The interviews included the following issues: whether the young people regarded themselves as black; how they referred to themselves (mixed race, mixed parentage, or half-caste); whether they felt positive about their mixed parentage, and how important their racialised identity was to their lives. Some regarded their difference and mixture as an asset, and most were “proud of their mixed parentage” (2002, p. 114). Unlike marginality theory, which assumes the problematic and negative identity of people of mixed parentage, only a minority of the sample confirmed this position. The authors pointed out that perception of self has changed over time. While some people wished to be another colour as a child, as they grew older they became more accepting of their own colour. The implications of this are that sense of self and identity change over time and are in constant flux, as Hall (1996) noted. Unlike perceptions by others who see mixed children as either black or white, Tizard and Phoenix (2002) asserted that the young mixed-race people felt that they had familial ties to both heritages.

**Intercultural/interracial migrant families**

This is an under-researched area of investigation—the study of whole-family dynamics of intercultural/interracial migrant families, in which multiple layers of cultural negotiations occur through family interactions. Various terms have been used by scholars in the study of families of mixed heritage, such as *interracial family*, *intercultural family*, *mixed-race family*, *mixed family*, *mixed-ethnicity family*, or *mixed couples with children* (Katz, 1996; Luke & Luke, 1998, 1999; Luke & Carrington,
For the purpose of my research, which investigates both cultural and racial “mixedness,” I will adopt the term *mixed family*. In some literature, the notion of *mixed family* incorporates mixed race, biculturality, interfaith, and different national origin (Barn & Harman, 2014; Murad, 2005). Where my investigation has singled out culture or race, however, I have also found the terms “intercultural” or “interracial” useful.

**Multiple identities within the mixed family**

Of the few studies on interracial couples in Australia, Luke and Luke (1999) conducted interviews with 42 interracial couples with Anglo-Australian and Indo-Asian parents in Townsville, Brisbane, Darwin, Perth, and Melbourne. The findings indicated the complexity of the cultural/racial identification of these families. Not only did their phenotypical appearance influence their sense of identity, but location and class had an impact as well. The authors suggested that interracial families are in an innovative and challenging position with regards to identity issues. While interracial families were perceived as sites of ambivalence by others, the authors argued that they were at the same time an emerging group that had yet to find a niche in mainstream Australian society (1999, p. 249). They argue more research is needed into how these families mutually negotiate this process.

Furthermore, Luke and Luke (1999, 1998) demonstrated the importance of the social and political context of the wider society in the ways new mixed-heritage migrants integrate into Australian society. Their comparative study showed that there is a difference between the self-perception and perception by others of mixed relationships and families within Australia. Their study in different major cities indicates such differences. For instance, in Darwin, some interviewees reported the acceptance of mixed-race people was due to the fact that Darwin had a long history of racial/ethnic mixing since the 1800s between South Asian people, such as Macassan traders, and Aboriginal people. Thus, looking different is not uncommon, and some are proud to be “coloured.” In Brisbane, on the other hand, there is no such expression as *coloured*. The authors argued that such difference is in part due to political orientation: Brisbane is traditionally considered one of the most conservative places in Australia. This suggests the impact of sociopolitical environment in the life
experience of mixed families. However, what is equally important to consider is time in history.

At this point, it must be noted that some literature (see Luke & Luke, 1998, 1999; Luke & Carrington, 2000) refers to the research mainly on interracial parents or couples as studies on “interracial families,” when the children are not included. The use of the term “family” can be misleading, as these studies are mainly of couples and their interactions. Owen (2002) highlighted the effects of historical backgrounds on the life experiences of mixed families in Australia, through the literature study and interviews with over 100 mixed race couples (of White Australian and non-Australian backgrounds) and 20 adults/adolescent offspring. This study shed light on the historical backgrounds in which mixed-race families have lived in Australia. The author argued that attitudes towards mixed marriages have changed over the course of history, showing the socio-political changes Australia has gone through from the late 1700s to the 1990s. While there are reports of racism, discrimination, and ambivalence, the author pointed out that within marriage, despite differences in their physical appearance, if the couple shared a common British colonial history, for example, there is not likely to be a problem. The author stated, “Within a marriage race is not a problem. Interracial marriages within a shared culture are just marriages” (Owen, 2002, p. 168).

Differences may not always be of a cultural nature, but could be in other features such as religion or personal upbringing. This resonates with the points made earlier by Johnson and Warren (1994) and Hardach-Pincke (1988) on the insignificance of cultural difference in the intermarried couples’ relationship, suggesting that differences may arise from personal preference or personality. This was also found to be the case in the study of parenting of mixed-race children (Edwards et al., 2010; Caballero et al., 2008), which will be discussed shortly.

**Understanding parenting approaches among parents of mixed backgrounds**

Using the data from an in-depth study of 35 mixed parent couples, Edwards, Caballero and colleagues (Caballero, Edwards, & Puthussery, 2008; Edwards, Caballero, & Puthussery, 2010) studied how parent couples from different racial/ethnic/faith backgrounds negotiated ways of bringing up their children to develop a sense of belonging and an understanding of differences. The authors
developed a typology of three key categories in relation to the parents’ negotiation strategies: the open individualised approach, the mix approach, and the single approach (Caballero et al., 2008, pp. 22–27). The triangle-diagram of three typifications of positioning in parenting strategies allows us to see varying degrees of self-perception of cultural/ethnic/religious distance between a mother and a father (See Edwards et al., 2010, p. 960, Figure 1). It also shows the complexity of parents’ perspectives and parental negotiations.

Below is a brief description of each approach (Edwards et al., 2010, p. 960). First is the individual approach. Parents using this approach perceive the children's identity as not developing solely based on their race, ethnicity or religion but that the identity goes beyond these to include various other facets of life. The parents perceive their children’s mixedness as an asset or advantage enabling children to identify diversity as part of their life and connect with other people and cultures. They are at ease as “cosmopolitans” or “citizens of the world” (Caballero et al., 2008, p. 23). *Colour transcendence* is the term used to describe one feature of this approach, “where race or ethnicity is considered incidental to how children should be seen or how they should view others” (Caballero et al., 2008, p. 24). The key feature of the second approach, the mix approach, is that “children’s racial, ethnic and faith background is understood as a rooted and factual part of their identity” (2008, p. 25). The duality of the parents’ heritages is important, and parents encourage their children to become familiar with both of the parents’ heritages and build affiliation with them. By being engaged with differences, mixedness becomes part of the child's identity. The third approach, the single approach, emphasises that “only one aspect of children's background is stressed and a sense of belonging is promoted for them through that” (2008, p. 26). By choosing one religious faith, one culture, or one racial affiliation, parents emphasise its values and traditions for their children.

The authors emphasised that parents may have various parenting approaches between them, and that one parent may have multiple approaches. They concluded that the results are extremely diverse, so that it was impossible to put them into simplistic patterns of how parents negotiated differences and belonging for their children. Furthermore, it was pointed out that differences between the parents would not necessarily arise from cultural difference, but could originate in differences of personality or personal views. In the case of a Chinese mother (single collective) and
a white British father (open individualised) with one son, initially, the parents perceived their conflicts over cultural transmission of Chinese culture and tradition was due to cultural difference between them. However, through counselling services over time, they began to negotiate conflicts from the angle of personality differences, rather than from the viewpoint of a cultural clash. The authors suggested that shifting the emphasis from the cultural aspect to personality might help in conflict solutions between the couples.

The question remains, however, to what extent conflicts can be of cultural difference, and to what extent they could be arising from personality difference. While the authors suggest a possible explanation in conflict resolution as personality rather than culture, even personalities are shaped by a set of societal values, which may differ at a broad level between collective and individualistic societies. Bratawidjaja’s (2007) study on intercultural parenting illustrates a far more complex picture than culture versus personality. The author identified multiple layers of “domains” that influence the parenting practice in the intercultural family. Personality is only one of many factors to consider in the personal backgrounds, such as family of origin, ethnic/racial/national background, or inherent characteristics (Bratawidjaja, 2007, See Figure 5.1., p. 187).

Another factor in mixed-parenting issues relates to the “ordinariness” of the life of mixed couples and their families (Caballero, 2007, 2012). The findings of a project on parenting strategies of mixed-parent children showed that unlike the imagined cultural clash, most of these parents lead a normal life; being mixed is only one part of ordinary family life. Caballero affirms that “racial, ethnic or faith difference may pale into insignificance when compared with issues such as juggling a work-life balance, making sure they present a united front in relation to discipline, concerns about their children’s health, and so on” (2007, p. 23). Furthermore, unlike the U.S. based approach to guidebook-like parenting, each couple has their own unique approach and there is no particular pattern or right way to raise children. Thus, Caballero et al. (2008) and Edwards et al. (2010) disputed literature that gives instructions for the “correct” way to raise mixed children.

**Conclusion**

This chapter began with an overview of existing bodies of knowledge in four different
fields: family studies, migrant family studies, acculturation studies, and mixed-race studies. Within the discussion of each field, I introduced theories and concepts that are crucial to my research. The existing bodies of knowledge provide the foundations for considering the issues surrounding migrant parents’ cultural transmission, acculturation issues, child socialisation and the development of cultural identity among the children. Background knowledge of the history of social policy in relation to immigration and of racial/ethnic relations in the Australian context are also important to provide a deeper understanding of the life experiences of mixed migrant families.

Of the theories and concepts discussed, the immigrant acculturation theory and the concepts of cultural capital and habitus are of particular importance in my thesis. Despite some shortcomings of the acculturation theory as a widely applied theoretical framework in migrants’ adaptation into a new life (as discussed), it helps to identify issues surrounding the maintenance of culture of origin and adoption of the new culture. Acculturation is also an inevitable process all migrants go through. In my thesis, the acculturation theory approach has assisted in understanding the integration process, particularly of migrant parents of the mixed families.

The concepts of habitus and cultural capital are strongly associated with the social structure and its force on an individual’s life experience. Habitus helps to examine how the social constraints affect personal lives—in my research, the lives of mixed migrant family members. In relation to socialisation, Bourdieu argued that “between the child and the world the whole group intervenes … with a whole universe of ritual practices and also of discourses, sayings, proverbs, all structured in concordance with the principles of the corresponding habitus” (1977, p. 167). Borrowing words from Mahar, Harker, & Wilkes (1990, p. 12), “so far as the creation of the habitus through socialisation is concerned, … we have a set of objective conditions in the material world which tend to have a structuring effect on family socialisation practices.”

Cultural capital is understood as a type of asset, which arises from habitus—qualities and personal attributes that are endowed through socialisation processes, and positions gained from social and personal circumstances. This is useful in understanding how a multicultural environment in and outside home can shape and reshape a sense of cultural identity, particularly for the children of mixed cultural/racial heritage.
While acknowledging the value and importance of previous research, I also identified a number of limitations and gaps. One of the limitations of existing bodies of knowledge lies in assumptions about homogeneity. Socialisation is an essential component of parenting practice, child development, and the building of parent-child relationships for families. However, the literature is based on the assumption that we live in a monocultural and monolingual Western society. When studying immigrants’ family life, added features of maintenance of cultures of origin and adoption of a new culture make the process more complex. A different dimension is added to the complexity when the families consist of parents from two different cultural/racial/national backgrounds. The existing literature on immigrant families informs us that for immigrant children, socialisation is a “dual process of enculturation and acculturation” (Li, 2009, p. 495). As it is assumed that immigrants are culturally/ethnically homogeneous, cultural adjustment would occur between two cultures: the culture of the immigrants and the culture of the host society. As some researchers noted, there is a need for more research on socialisation among children of “dual culture” (Padilla, 2009, p. 206) as well as for more empirical research on mixed parenting (Caballero, 2007; Edwards et al., 2010). Studies of triple-culture or multi-culture socialisation are rare (Okita, 2002).

Additionally, there has been very little study of family dynamics using the whole-family approach with immigrant families (including negotiations between parents and children). The existing literature places emphasis on parents’ or children’s experiences separately and negotiations and interactions between parents and children are not considered. A novel area for study is that of cultural negotiation between parents and children, in which both parents and children are active agents in cultural transmission. Processes of integration into a new society are multifaceted, involving acculturation into the society for parents, negotiations between parents of two different cultures, socialisation of their children, and re-socialisation of the parents by their children. This is a gap, which my research endeavours to engage with, in order to understand the processes involved in the way cultural identities are constructed within mixed migrant families.

The review of the literature on race and mixed-race studies revealed that there is an overemphasis on race in U.S. research. This approach may not always be applicable to the study of other societies. It has become clear that socio-political and historical
contexts are important in examining the life of mixed migrant families. The current bodies of knowledge in this field focus mainly on the influence of race and racial mixedness in relation to self-identification and identification by others. As I demonstrate, race/mixed race is only one of many layers that make up one’s identity. It is nevertheless an important layer, especially in terms of its immediate visible effect, since the visible difference triggers presumptions about culture and race.

Research with intercultural/interracial families revealed the ambivalence and complexities of the notions of *intercultural* and *interracial*. Existing literature concerning mixed families has tended to use the term *interracial*, and the issues addressed concern race/racism/racialisation and not so much negotiation of cultures and interculturality (i.e., the presence of multiple cultures) within a family. As physical appearance plays an important role in the understanding of the construction or transformation of cultural identity in my research, the literature with an emphasis on race provides insight into one aspect of the study. However, studies of both immigrant families and of intercultural/interracial families are limited in explaining the families of mixed backgrounds living in a third culture. This review has provided the background for my research. My research is designed to build on this by addressing the need to deepen understandings of the life of mixed migrant families in Australia.
Chapter 3: Methodology

Introduction

This chapter outlines the procedure of the research project. It discusses the research design and underpinning theoretical frameworks, the data collection method and process undertaken and its problems, ethical considerations, and some dilemmas encountered. In this research, I apply a qualitative approach to gain a deeper understanding of negotiation processes in shaping and reshaping the cultural identities of both parents and children of intercultural/interracial migrant families. Thematic analysis, as the most appropriate method of data analysis, is also discussed.

Conceptual design and research planning

Theoretical frameworks

Philosophical assumptions of qualitative research

My research was designed according to the underpinnings of qualitative research philosophical assumptions. The research inquiries are of an exploratory nature. The aim is to gain a deeper understanding of lived experiences of intercultural/interracial migrant families in Australia, in constructing cultural identities through negotiations of multiple cultures within a family. According to Creswell (2013, p. 44), the principles of qualitative research involve data collection that is sensitive to those studied and their environment, development of themes/patterns for the analysis, and reporting of the complex mixture of the description of the voices of the participants and interpretation of reflexive study by the researcher on the subject. Denzin and Lincoln (2003, p. 5) provide an analogy of the qualitative researcher as “bricoleur” or “quilt maker.” In their words, “the interpretive bricoleur produces a bricolage—that is, a pieced-together set of representations that are fitted to the specifics of a complex situation.”

Creswell emphasised the importance of the process of the research, which flows “from philosophical assumptions, to interpretive lens, and on to the procedures involved in studying social or human problems” (2013, p. 44). He also pointed out the reasons for conducting qualitative research—to hear the voices of individuals who are often invisible or disempowered, to develop theories further to extend the
understanding of the complexity of the research materials, and to fill the gap where intricate human relationships and issues cannot be reached by quantitative measures (2013, p. 48).

Qualitative research assumes that ontologically, there are multiple truths according to individuals or groups holding certain beliefs and perspectives (Lincoln & Guba, 2003). These are created through meaning-making processes in social interactions. Epistemologically, research is based on the knowledge created through the interlinked relationship between the researcher and the researched. In addition, creation of meaning occurs through not only the researcher and the subject, but also through the interpretation of the reality of the subject in interaction with their social world. This is the constructivist perspective.

It is useful to see the principles of constructivism in light of the positivism paradigm in order to clarify benefits of the qualitative inquiry. According to Guba and Lincoln (2004), in positivism, understanding of the world is based on measurable evidence, consisting of verified hypotheses, which are accepted as facts or laws. The knowledge is generalisable and “replicable,” based on quantitative methodology. In contrast, a constructivist perspective emphasises the interpretation of the problem. This perspective refuses the permanency and universality of truth, and underscores the importance of “the social construction of social reality, fluid as opposed to fixed identities of the self, and the partiality of all truths” (Lincoln, Lynham & Guba, 2011, p. 120). In other words, taking a constructivist approach means that social inquiries are interpretive (hermeneutic) and interactive (dialectic), based on the discursive engagement of the researcher, the researched, and the social world in which they live. Furthermore, according to Denzin and Lincoln (2000, p. 8), while quantitative studies tend to focus on analysing causal relationships of social phenomena and their variables, qualitative studies emphasise the process of how meanings are constructed from social experiences. They compare the two methods’ contrasting approaches as follows:

Both qualitative and quantitative researchers are concerned with the individual’s point of view. However, qualitative investigators think they can get closer to the actor’s perspective through detailed interviewing and observation. They argue that quantitative researchers are seldom able to capture their subjects’ perspectives because they have to
rely on more remote, inferential empirical methods and materials. (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 10)

Of the variety of qualitative research traditions (Patton, 2002, pp. 132–133), I apply phenomenology as the philosophical underpinning of the research and symbolic interactionism as the theoretical framework, which are discussed in more detail next.

**Phenomenology**

The concept of phenomenology stems from philosophy with its main focus on the understanding of social phenomena through the exploration of lived experience as is, interpreted from the perspectives of the subjects (Smith & Riley, 2009; Moran, 2000; Patton, 2012; Gubrium & Holstein, 1993; Creswell, 2013; Kvale & Brinkman, 2009). The developer of phenomenology, Husserl (1931, p. 51, italics in original) argued that “natural knowledge begins with experience (Erfahrung) and remains within experience.” That is, “we can only know what we experience by attending to perceptions and meanings that awaken our conscious awareness” (Patton, 2002, pp. 105–106). Phenomenological researchers inquire into mundane daily life which people take for granted. In doing so, phenomenologists are required to “suspend their everyday way of thinking and develop new methods for interrogating conscious experiences” (Smith & Riley, 2009, p. 62).

In the broad philosophical sense, phenomenology is:

> Best understood as a radical, anti-traditional style of philosophising, which emphasises the attempt to get to the truth of matters, to describe phenomena, in the broadest sense as whatever appears in the manner in which it appears, that is as it manifests itself to consciousness, to the experiencer. As such, phenomenology’s first step is to seek to avoid all misconstructions and impositions placed on experience in advance, whether these are drawn from religious or cultural traditions, from everyday common sense, or, indeed, from science itself. Explanations are not to be imposed before the phenomena have been understood from within. (Moran, 2000, p. 4)

It is the inquiry into the “life world,” the world people experience in everyday life, which they take for granted through pre-organised sets of assumptions (Gubrium & Holstein, 1993; Smith & Riley, 2009; Moran, 2000). While phenomenology as philosophy is interested in understanding social phenomena through the subjective experiences within the self, sociology’s focus lies in the understanding of the social
world in interaction with others. In fact, sociological inquiry into the life world was developed by Alfred Schutz (1997 [1932]; known as social phenomenology or phenomenological sociology), who made an attempt to synthesize Husserl’s phenomenology (1931) and Weber’s theory of social action (Weber, 1968; Kalberg, 2011). Schutz argued that the understanding of the life world arises from the subjective meaning people give in their consciousness to a given “objective” social world (1997 [1932], 1970). Schutz postulated that there are two aspects that need to be addressed in studies of the life world: that people are first creators of social reality, and, second, they are simultaneously constrained by the social and cultural structures created by the preceding generations (Rizter, 2000, p. 212). In other words, social phenomenologists seek to understand society through the interactions between an individual’s actions and the social reality that is constructed by individuals in given social environments. Gubrium and Holstein state:

The life world—sometimes called the world of everyday life—refers to the experiential world every person takes for granted. It is a world we all assume has a past, is now in the present, and will pass into the future. It is a world, too, we take to have obvious spatial organization and borders … In other words, the life world—what we take to be actual objects and overall reality—is fundamentally an attitude, an orientation to experience or form of subjectivity. As far as family is concerned, in the world of everyday life we take it for granted that some interpersonal linkages are familial and others not. (Gubrium & Holstein, 1993, p. 656)

They also argue that by focusing on the inner life world and understanding the life of domestic households, researchers are discovering “the social order of the home” (Gubrium & Holstein, 1993, p. 656). This “taken-for-grantedness” which one takes as “common sense” and is understood as “natural” should be questioned and uncovered (Shütz & Luckmann, 1973, pp. 3–4).

As a qualitative research methodology, phenomenological research seeks to identify and understand common experiences of a social phenomenon. Another key element in phenomenology is that it seeks to understand social phenomena from the actor’s own perspective through his/her interpretation of the world (Patton, 2002, p. 68). Drawing on Schutz’s work, Dreher (2011, p. 495) argued that the “the interpretation of this world is based on a stock of previous experiences about it which are transmitted to us during our socialization; a familiarity is established for us on the basis of this specific
knowledge transferred to us.” Both aspects—interpretation of reality and the transmission of experience from one to another—are key elements in my research. According to Creswell (2013, p. 76), the task of the phenomenological inquirer is to collect data from selected participants concerning a particular phenomenon, compile various components to describe the phenomenon, and to develop “a composite description of the essence of the experience for all of the individuals.” In family studies, phenomenology focuses on the “subjective” experiences of family members, rather than on the “objective” and quantified aspects of family life (Gubrium & Holstein, 1993). Thus, it is the study of “a practice rather than a system” (Moran, 2000, p. 4). Berger and Kellner’s (1964) discussion of the ways marriage changes the dynamics of each partner’s cultural values that they bring to their marriage through everyday negotiations in partnerships and family life is a good example of the application of phenomenology to family studies. Their analysis illustrates how marriage works as a space of negotiations between two different life worlds through private daily conversations between the spouses, and between them and the wider community, all of which, in turn, creates a new social reality.

While a phenomenological sociology approach offers the study of subjective experiences, highlighting the importance of studying the interpretations of reality as individuals’ experience, it views the social structures and its influence on individuals as the static force. Symbolic interactionism, however, whilst agreeing on the importance of individual experiences as the primary source of valuable information, postulates social structures as the essential element that is fluid in nature, changing under the influence of individuals and in turn influencing individuals. Individuals are viewed as active agents that can change society (Verhoeven, 1991). Verhoeven (1991) argued that, in understanding the social reality, a phenomenological approach focuses on the study of the actions of individuals in social world, and social structure is a taken-for-granted element. In comparison, symbolic interactionism (to be discussed more below) emphasises the importance of the social context (the outside world) in which actors are situated. In other words, while both theories share the same goal in understanding social phenomena, the emphasis in each differs; for Schutz, the focus lies in the act, while for Blumer, “it is the self-indicating individual” (Verhoeven, 1991, p. 109).
Symbolic interactionism is extensively applied in family studies research (Larossa & Reitzes, 1993) and, given that my research involves the examination of the family life and cultural negotiations by individual family members in interaction with a given social context, I have adopted symbolic interactionism as a suitable theoretical framework. I turn to this in the next section.

Before continuing, however, it is important to comment briefly here that Bourdieu’s approach to the study of social actions shares the view that treating the social environment as a given is not sufficient to explain social actions. According to Throop and Murphy (2002), while Bourdieu’s concept of “habitus” evolved from the philosophy of phenomenology, Bourdieu criticised the taken-for-grantedness of the social environment of the phenomenological approach, arguing that even personal worldviews are imprinted by society at a young age through socialisation, and that the personal and the social are in constant flux over space and time. Bourdieu broke away from phenomenology’s distinct binary of subjectivism and objectivism. Throop and Murphy explain the notions of subjectivism and objectivism perceived by Bourdieu as follows:

Subjectivism, according to Bourdieu, concentrates too heavily on the immediate experience of the individual and his own interpretations of the social world. Objectivism, on the other hand, refuses to take account of individual actors’ actions, and instead relegates them to the social framework within which they function as automatons, shackled to objective relations of social structure. (Throop & Murphy, 2002, p. 189)

Bourdieu argued for a dialectic approach to the study of human actions, that in order to explain social actions more fully, the gap between the two elements needed to be bridged by studying underlying factors that run (or are concealed) beneath the two polarising notions. Bourdieu’s concepts of habitus and cultural capital have been useful because of the limitations of traditional symbolic interactionism, which I turn to now.

3 See the discussion on “habitus” in Chapter 2.
Traditional symbolic interactionism

Before the discussion on contemporary symbolic interactionism and its application to my research, it is useful to return to the foundation of the theory. Symbolic interactionism is a micro-level theory that studies human actions and their understanding of reality through examining social interactions (Smith & Riley, 2009; LaRossa & Reitzes, 1993). LaRossa and Reitzes have a concise description of the approach:

Symbolic interactionism focuses on the connection between symbols (i.e., shared meanings) and interactions (i.e., verbal and nonverbal actions and communications). It is essentially a frame of reference for understanding how humans, in concert with one another, create symbolic worlds and how these worlds, in turn, shape human behavior. (LaRossa & Reitzes, 1993, p. 136)

The essence of symbolic interactionism lies in the meaning-making process of the world in which we live, through symbols such as language, gestures, rules, and roles (LaRossa & Reitzes, 1993; Smith & Reily, 2009; Creswell, 2013; Hughes & Sharrock, 1997; Robson, 2002). Smith (1995) stated that the essence of symbolic interactionism lies in examining “how social factors such as gender, race, ethnicity, social class and age operate through individuals’ interactions, as persons interpret symbols and shared social meanings communicated in their interactions” (p. 19).

Furthermore, she argued that symbolic interactionism is an appropriate analytical lens in the study of identity in a particular social and cultural context, while at the same time considering the influence of power relations in social interactions (p. 19).

In the next section, I will briefly discuss the foundation of symbolic interactionism—its three key founding scholars: George H. Mead, Herbert Blumer, and Charles H. Cooley. Cooley’s words below demonstrate the foundation of this approach: to understand what society is, one needs to study individuals. Cooley (1964) asserted that the individual and society are not phenomena that stand in opposition to each other, but rather that they are both parts of the whole human phenomenon. He stated:

‘Society’ and ‘individuals’ do not denote separable phenomena, but are simply collective and distributive aspects of the same thing, the relation between them being like that between other expressions one of which denotes a group as a whole and the other the members of the group, such as the army and the soldiers, the class and the
students, and so on. This holds true of any social aggregate, great or small; of a family, a city, a nation, a race; of mankind as a whole: no matter how extensive, complex, or enduring a group may be, no good reason can be given for regarding it as essentially different in this respect from the smallest, simplest, or most transient. (Cooley, 1964, p. 37)

Although Mead did not coin the term “symbolic interactionism,” his work has made a major contribution to the development of the theory. His work was summarised later by Blumer, who coined the term “symbolic interactionism” (Blumer, 1969, pp. 2–5).

Furthermore, Mead (1964) posited the concept of “the role of the generalized other” as a significant element of socialisation. According to Mead (1964), the “generalised other” are members of a group of a society through which one emulates behaviours and attitudes. Through this process, individuals are able to extend the interpersonal level of understanding of the world to the level of the entire group. In Mead’s words:

The self-conscious human individual, then, takes or assumes the organised social attitudes of the given social group or community (or of some one section thereof) to which he [sic] belongs, … and as an individual participant in these social projects or co-operative enterprises, he governs his own conduct accordingly. (Mead, 1964, p. 220)

Applied to child socialisation, a child learns the code of behaviour from his/her parents through the lens of the imagined role of the generalised other. For example, hitting a younger sister is bad because the child can see that it is a bad behaviour in wider society, extrapolating this from the negative reaction of the parents (LaRossa & Reitzes, 1993, p. 139).

Mead (1934, pp. 149–154) argued that in the development of the self, there are two stages: the “play stage” and the “game stage.” In the play stage, the child learns norms and values through the observation of routines and the responses of other members in daily life. In the game stage, the child learns their position in the context of the entire family as a group. If a father reads a newspaper at the breakfast table every morning, it becomes a routine event for the child. One family might use the dinner table as an occasion for family conversation. In another family, dinnertime might be accompanied by watching TV. Whatever the routine activity, the child comes to see this as the normal thing to do (LaRossa & Reitzes, 1993, p. 139). Likewise, a child in
an intercultural migrant family would learn first the “normal” things to do from their mother, father and then from the other family members. The child learns that being different from the norms of the host society at home is normal.

Symbolic interactionism rests on three central themes as described below (LaRossa & Reitzes, 1993, pp. 143–144). The first theme refers to the importance of meaning-making through social interactions. Meaning-making process occurs through one’s interactions with others (Blumer, 1969). People act based on the meaning they know. Meanings emerge through interactions and are bound to change depending on the perceptions of individuals, which means that the process of meaning-making is subjective and fluid. Drawing on Blumer (1969), LaRossa and Reitzes (1993, p. 143) argued that rather than simply responding to the environment, individuals “interpret reality through the symbols and the shared social meanings of their culture.” The second theme addresses the importance of the self-concept and its development. Sense of self is developed through social interactions, and it works as a basis for behaviour. The third theme concerns interrelations between society and individuals—society as a position generating social constraints, and individuals as an agency to practise one’s freedom. It was argued that while individuals are constrained by societal force, at the same time, they also act and can change society. Blumer (1969) emphasised the importance of the study of individuals’ actions as autonomous subjects:

The activities belong to the acting individuals and are carried on by them always with regard to the situations in which they have to act. The import of this simple and essentially redundant characterization is that fundamentally human groups or society exists in action and must be seen in terms of action. This picture of human society as action must be the starting point (and the point of return) for any scheme that purports to treat and analyse human society empirically. (p. 6)

To Blumer, every aspect of human life, be it culture or social structure, derives from actions, interactions and relationships among people (1969, pp. 6–7). In his words:

A cardinal principle of symbolic interactionism is that any empirically oriented scheme of human society, however derived, must respect the fact that in the first and last instances human society consists of people engaging in action. (p. 7)
Cooley (1964) developed a concept he called the “looking glass self” to explain the process of social interactions and its consequences. It refers to the steps in how one develops the sense of self. According to Cooley, the sense of self arises through three stages: interaction with others, imagining what others think of you, and making a judgement about yourself based on the imagined self through the eyes of others (Cooley 1964, p. 184). In the case of families, this “other” is the “significant other,” usually parents or other immediate family members, who are directly engaged in the socialisation of the child. This is the way a child learns the sense of “me,” “I,” and a sense of “us” and “we” (LaRossa & Reitzes, 1993, p. 144). What is important here is that in the process of the development of self and ultimately identity, symbolic interactionism argues that these interactions take place in a specific social context, which is an equally significant part of the study in understanding social phenomena.

As Berger and Luckmann (1991) argued:

Socialisation always takes place in the context of a specific social structure. Not only its contents but also its measure of “success” have social-structural conditions and social-structural consequences. In other words, the micro-sociological or social-psychological analysis of phenomena of internalization must always have as its background a macro-sociological understanding of their structural aspects. (p. 183)

Similarly, Berger (1963) emphasised the importance of both the “social force” and interactions among individuals in shaping worldviews. To Berger, society consists of social interactions and social events. Family is a fundamental social group, and a system in which the worldviews of individuals are shaped, and through which individuals find connections to society (1963, p. 76).

Internalisation in the socialisation process during childhood is the key to acquiring a sense of social being. A similar process occurs in adults when moving to a new social situation, context, or group. In Berger’s words, “society … is not only something ‘out there,’ in the Durkheimian sense, but it is also ‘in here,’ part of our innermost being” (p. 121). Drawing on Mead and Cooley, Berger (1963) emphasised the importance of social interactions and makes the point that a child develops a sense of self only when they understand the meaning of a society. In Berger’s words, “‘self’ and ‘society,’ in the child’s experience, are the two sides of the same coin” (1963, pp. 99).
Contemporary symbolic interactionism

Based on the aforementioned symbolic interactionism traditions, contemporary symbolic interactionism places the emphasis on four concepts: identities, roles, interactions, and contexts (LaRossa & Reitzes, 1993, p. 145). These concepts are useful in understanding the experiences of intercultural-interracial migrant families, since the research focuses on all four aspects emphasised above. They are discussed in more detail below. My research explores the negotiation processes in changing cultural identity for the parents and in the development of cultural identity for the offspring. In doing so, it examines social roles within the family (i.e., gendered division of labour) and how interactions between fathers and mothers from different cultural/racial backgrounds, between parents and children, and between siblings, play significant roles in cultural negotiations. It also investigates the influence of the social context and the degree to which the mixed migrant families under research integrate into Australian society, negotiating different norms and values of the host society and those of the countries of origin of the parents. At this point, it is useful to summarise key concepts in the contemporary symbolic interactionist approach in the context of family studies: identities, roles, interactions, and contexts, as mentioned above.

In Turner’s (1970) “role theory” the family is made up of a “system of roles” (p. 185), in which specific functions are assigned, which ensure a smooth operation of family processes, such as socialisation. A symbolic interactionist approach defines role theory as “a comprehensive pattern for behaviour and attitude that is linked to an identity, is socially identified more or less clearly as an entity, and is subject to being played recognisably by different individuals” (Turner, 2001, p. 234). The interactionist approach also views roles as not just assigned from somewhere outside and fixed, or simply responding to actions by others, but as an actively thought-out process in relation to others (Turner, 2001). In other words, roles are acted out in interaction with others, but overall behaviour patterns may be influenced by different social contexts. Drawing from Turner (1970), LaRossa and Reitzes refer to “roles” in the context of family studies as the “systems of meanings that enable role occupants and others with whom they interact to anticipate future behaviours and to maintain regularity in their social interactions” (p. 147). Identity formation is intricately intertwined with the social role one plays. The role of a mother, for example, is a social position, which is shared by other members of a given society. People construct
their identities as a particular role, such as a husband or wife. Identities are meanings individuals assign according to the role they play, and these identities are formed through interactions.

However, in the case of migrant families, these assumed and predictable roles can change through the migration itself, as role expectations in the new country can differ significantly, depending on the culture/country of origin of the migrant. When changes occur in the expected role as a mother, or as a parent due to a migration to another country, the role of a parent/mother/father and its expectations can also change. As Turner (2001, p. 235) argued, “abrupt or radical changes in roles undermine predictability and provoke anxiety.” In other words, change in the expectations of roles in a new cultural setting can provoke anxiety and discomfort. This is an important point to take into consideration in the study of migrant families, in which the migration can upset the established and taken-for-granted behaviours and attitudes.

Interactions are at the heart of meaning-making processes. It is “through social interactions that individuals apply broad shared symbols and actively create the specific meaning of self, others, and situations” (LaRossa & Reitzes, 1993, p. 149). Every interaction takes place in a specific context, and negotiations play a key role in the processes of interactions. According to LaRossa and Reitzes (1993, p. 152), negotiations are the ways in which things get done through various strategies such as compromising, colliding, arguing or engaging. They take place in the immediate personal situations (negotiation context), which are situated in a particular societal circumstance (structural context). Therefore, in the study of mixed migrant families, it is important to consider the context in which cultural negotiations in daily interactions take place.

Symbolic interactionism is one of the most important and widely used theories in family studies (Smith, 1995; LaRossa & Reitzes, 1993). It can describe family as a social unit in which interactions among social actors occur. LaRossa and Reitzes (1993) pointed out the significant contribution made by symbolic interactionism applied to family studies. They argued that symbolic interactionism stands on the premise that “families are social groups … and that individuals develop both a concept of self and their identities through social interaction” (p. 136). This premise allows symbolic interactionist researchers to ask questions such as: “What is the
process by which family members arrive at a more or less shared sense of the world (i.e., a symbolic reality—a shared set of goals, values, beliefs, and norms)? How do geography, race/ethnicity, class, gender, age and time relate to family groups?” (p. 136).

Other questions that are also useful to my research include:

- What are the roles or social expectations for husbands and wives, fathers and mothers, sons and daughters?
- How are these roles constructed, learned, and eventually played out?
- What is the connection between socialisation and self-concept?

Furthermore, symbolic interactionism is a suitable approach because it pays attention to both the micro and the macro level surrounding family life and is able to connect the two. As Larossa and Reitzes pointed out:

> Symbolic interactionism has had an impact and continues to have an impact on family studies precisely because of its attention to this domain … the family is the ideal “place” to not only observe, but also see the importance of the nexus between the “subjective” and “objective,” between the interpersonal and the institutional. (1993, p. 154)

In symbolic interactionism, development of the sense of self is important including its relationship to others through social interactions. That means that development of self-images comes through interaction with others. This is particularly important in examining how the sense of self changes through interacting with others of different cultural backgrounds for parents as migrants, and how children develop identity through interactions with others within and outside the family.

**Methods of inquiry applied**

Semi-structured, in-depth interviews

In conducting qualitative research underpinned by the symbolic integrationist theoretical approach, semi-structured in-depth interviews were used as the method of inquiry. As the main purpose of the research project was to gain insight into the negotiation processes of cultural identity within families, it was important to capture the perspectives of both parents and children within a family. To do so, it was decided that it would be best to hear stories in retrospect, from parents who have done the
parenting and from children who have experienced growing up in Australia. To gain access to life experiences of interrelations among family members, the most effective way is to speak to the family members directly through interviews (Becher, 2008, p. 193; Loza, 2002). Much of the research on migrant parents, intermarriage parents or mixed-race children applies the method of interviews, while some use combined methods incorporating interviews (Becher, 2008; Loza, 2002, Bacallao & Smokowski, 2011).

Semi-structured, in-depth interviews were used to investigate the life of intercultural families. The in-depth interview as a social inquiry method was developed in the 1920s by Chicago School sociologists, and is now one of the most common methods of social research (Travers, 2010, p. 288). Today, interviewing is one of the most common qualitative research methods of information gathering (Holstein & Gubrium, 2003; Kvale & Brinkmam, 2009; Travers, 2010; Garton & Copland, 2010). Interviews give opportunities for people to speak about their experiences of the social world, which in turn allows researchers to gain deeper insight into their complex meaning (Travers, 2010, p. 311; Holstein & Gubrium, 2003, p. 3). As Holstein and Gubrium state:

Treating interviewing as a social encounter in which knowledge is constructed means that the interview is more than a simple information-gathering operation; it's a site of, and occasion for, producing knowledge itself. (2003, p. 4)

One of the most important features in interview practice is achieving rapport with interviewees (Patton, 2002; Seidman, 2013). Oakley (1999) pointed out that the term “rapport” in relation to interviewing means not gaining sympathetic relationship, but “the acceptance by the interviewee of the interviewer’s research goals and the interviewee’s active search to help the interviewer in providing the relevant information” (1999, p. 47). This can be observed through willingness and openness to tell stories, and sometimes in how the interviewer is welcomed into the participants’ home.

Being an insider researcher could be said to help achieve rapport with participants in some ways. Oakley (1999) pointed out the impossibility of not becoming engaged in the personal lives of the 178 women she interviewed in her childbirth research over the course of a year. As a woman, she describes how interviewing pregnant women,
who became mothers, led to inevitable conflict with the traditional assumption of the legitimate way of interviewing—objectivity and detachment, versus subjectivity and attachment or emotional involvement.

Oakley was faced with two types of difficulties, according to the conventional protocol of interviewing. First, the interviewees asked many personal questions, and second, being involved in the interview process over prolonged periods during and after pregnancy, birth and the motherhood of the interviewees meant that it was unavoidable not to become involved in their personal experiences. She argued that contrary to the conventional interview method, personal engagement is beneficial. In her words, social scientists need to recognise "that personal involvement is more than dangerous bias—it is the condition under which people come to know each other and to admit others into their lives" (Oakley, 1999, p. 64).

According to Walter (2010, pp. 310–311), in-depth interviews allow for a deeper understanding of the experiences and perspectives of people and their complexity, and are time-efficient and less intrusive than ethnographic fieldwork. They are also focused on a set of interview guides, which makes them easily replicable (Patton, 2002). On the other hand, the results cannot be representative of a larger population due to small numbers, but neither do they have the degree of depth of ethnographic fieldwork over a longer period of time (Walter, 2010, p. 311).

In addition, Robson (2002, pp. 272–273) notes that face-to-face interviews allow deeper understanding of social phenomena through not only verbal communication, but also through non-verbal clues such as bodily gestures, pauses between lines, and so forth. The author argued that interviewing is an effective method, as it opens a window of opportunity to look into “what lies behind our actions.” It can provide a rich and illuminating source of information (Robson, 2002, p. 272). However, it is a time-consuming practice needing careful and rigorous preparation of the interview guide, careful planning of meeting schedules with participants, as well as the coding and analysis of the data.

Another type of interview that has benefitted my research is the joint couple interview, conducted with the parents of each participating family. Joint couple interviews are seldom discussed in major literature, but they offer some advantages, offering a rich source of data (Bjørnhold & Farstad, 2014; Edwards & Holland, 2013).
Bjørnhold and Farstad argued that interactions at both verbal and non-verbal level offer the researcher a deeper understanding of what families “do.” Family life, such as internal relationships within the family, can be revealed through observing the couples’ interactions in the interviews. In the authors’ words, a joint interview allows “a researcher to observe the core practices that can be seen to be constitutive of a family” (Bjørnhold & Farstad, 2014, p. 17). It is also practical to collect data and confidentiality and ethical issues are minimised. As Bjønholt and Farstad (2014, p. 6) stated, “the participants have more control over the common story of which they are a part, and the problems of anonymity and consent among interviewees are reduced, as both are present and what is being said is in a ‘public’ setting.” Furthermore, observing the interactions between the couples may also help reveal the core of family dynamics. The authors argue that “this is a great advantage over understanding separate interviews, which do not allow the same access to family practices” (Bjørnhold & Farstad, 2014, p. 16). Joint couple interviews also offer opportunities for the observation of the couple’s interactions, which may reveal power relations or relational issues between them. In the analysis chapter (Chapter 5), there will be further discussion concerning joint couple interviews and their effects on my research.

Establishing the interview method

The next section discusses the processes involved in establishing the “three-tiered” interview method. This method developed out of a number of slightly different approaches. One is the existing research method of in-depth interviews applied by migrant family researchers: some on single ethnic migrant families and others on intercultural/interracial migrant families. The other two interview approaches include: a “three-interviews-series” approach and a “family worlds” approach. I will discuss each approach in more detail below.

According to Holstein and Gubrium (2003, p. 3), “interviewing provides a way of generating empirical data about the social world by asking people to talk about their lives.” The choice of the in-depth interview method was informed by a number of sources of existing literature, in which a number of researchers used in-depth interview methods for their study, including research on motherhood and their relationships with their intercultural/interracial daughters in Australia (Loza, 2002),

The idea of conducting multiple interviews with each family was inspired by the combination of two methods: “the three-interview series approach” (Schuman, 1982, cited by Seidman, 2013, p. 20), and the “family worlds” approach (Hess & Handel, 1959). While they are dated, their rationales are both relevant for the purpose of my research in that they emphasise the significance of family as a unit of inquiry and of the meaning-making process. In the family worlds, the research was about “ordinary” families, not families with problems.

The three-interview series approach is the method that “allows both the interviewer and the participant to explore the participant’s experience, place it in context, and reflect on its meaning” (Seidman, 2013, p. 20). Seidman summarises the approach as follows:

The first interview establishes the context of the participants’ experience. The second allows participants to reconstruct the details of their experience within the context in which it occurs. And the third encourages the participants to reflect on the meaning their experience holds for them. (2013, p. 21)

While this method relates to the educational context and individuals (not families), there is a focus on the significance of the meaning-making process throughout the three interviews. Although most of the participants in the family interviews in my research were interviewed only twice, rather than three times (as was the case in the study where the method was developed), the rationale and the benefits identified in the original apply here.

4 Owen (2002, p. viiii, 7) conducted interviews with over 100 mixed-race couples and with some of their children (20 adult/near-adult children).

5 Lee and Bean’s (2010, pp. 199-200) interview samples, on the other hand, consisted of 36 interracial couples with children and 46 mixed-race adults.
The second method, “the family worlds” approach, on the other hand, treats family as a unit of investigation, which Hess and Handel call the “whole-family methodology” (Hess & Handel, 1959; Handel, 1997). Handel (1997, p. 342) argued that in order to understand a family, “one must take account of the perspective of every member of the family.” The author pointed out that most of the past family studies had primary interests in two separate areas—marriage/spouse relationships or parent-child relationships (1997, p. 339).

In the research on families, Handel (1997) considered the following questions: “How do parents exercise authority? How much room do they leave for negotiation with their children?” and, “How do children influence their parents?” (Handel, 1997, p. 338). These questions resonate with some of the research questions I have developed for my own project. While this approach focuses on family relationships and is Eurocentric, it is a useful one, as some of the key principles of the whole-family methodology (Handel, 1997, p. 339) are relevant to my research, such as:

- Inasmuch as families are groups of members, children’s experiences of family life can only be understood by studying the whole family as a group of members.
- Studying the family as a group means studying it as a symbolic order and as a socioemotional order.

The methodology emphasises the importance of enquiring about family interactions in order to understand how family members construct meaning jointly from their life experiences. It builds and extends on Mead’s (1934) argument that “every member of a group has a distinctive position in and perspective on the group,” treating family as a unit of research (Handel, 1997, p. 342). As Handel (1997, p. 344) argued, “we conceptualise families as complex active agents in constructing their own family life, and we conceptualise each family member, each child as well as each adult, as an agent whose actions contribute to shaping the family’s interdependent life together—and apart.”

Aspects of autoethnography

Since my personal experiences as a migrant woman, mother, and wife are, in part, incorporated into the thesis, it is important to draw on aspects of an autoethnographic approach at this point. Autoethnography uses the researcher’s own life experience as a primary source of information (Chang, 2008; Patton, 2002). In examining a social
phenomenon, autoethnography allows one to conceptualise personal experiences through self-reflexivity, bringing the personal into the social context. As Chang pointed out, autoethnography is “not about focusing on self alone, but about searching for understanding of others’ (culture / society) [sic] through self” (2008, pp. 48–49).

In my research, it is aspects of analytical autoethnography that are considered. In this approach, the researcher needs to be a part of the social world under study and be among other participants who are in a similar position (Anderson, 2006).

One of the challenges as an insider/outsider researcher lies in the difficulty of maintaining objectivity. Mahtani (2012), for example, noted the challenges of maintaining objectivity as an insider researcher in mixed-race studies, suggesting that there are benefits in being an insider/outsider researcher. The author pointed out that as an insider researcher, who shares experiences of being mixed, joining in conversations (two-way dialogues) with interviewees can be useful. Bringing in your own life experiences may affect the outcome in a positive way, and achieve more openness from the interviewees. Echoing Oakley (1999), Mahtani argued that it is impossible to be totally objective. She states:

> It is virtually impossible to carry out an objective interview. Any exchange is a loaded one as every communication establishes a relationship, or a cocoon, between individuals. By continuing to insist upon our own unbiased status, or assuming we can adopt this stance, we are in fact ignoring the very real baggage we bring to each interview and the potential impacts of the content of this baggage. (Mahtani, 2012, p. 165)

In a similar manner, Garton and Copland (2010, p. 535) pointed out the impossibility of being “neutral” or “non-biased” in conducting semi-structured interviews, which they call “acquaintance interviews.” In acquaintance interviews, researchers are insiders to the context, as well as the personal relationships they have with interviewees prior to the interviews. In these interviews, they can be friends, work colleagues or family. Based on their study (Garton & Copland, 2010), their findings demonstrated the complexity of such interviews, which could evoke uncomfortable feelings, or develop unequal relationships between the researcher and the researched, the researcher being the controller of the interaction. What marks the difference between the acquaintance interviews and others is that both the interviewer and interviewee share common knowledge and history (Garton & Copland, 2010, p. 547).
Furthermore, Fozdar (2013) noted the complexity of her position as a researcher in the study concerning race/ethnicity among mixed-race Maori and Pakeha. The author, herself of mixed heritage, reported that she was perceived to be both insider and outsider by different participants in different contexts, indicating fluidity of the positionality of the researcher.

At this point, it is useful to discuss the notion of reflexivity, since it is an integral part of the research process (Willis, 2010; Glesne, 2011; Schwandt, 2007; Lincoln & Guba, 2003). Reflexivity refers to “the process of critical self-reflection on one’s biases, theoretical predisposition, preferences, and so forth … the inquirer is part of the setting, context, and social phenomenon he or she seeks to understand. Hence, reflexivity can be a means for critically inspecting the entire research process” (Schwandt, 2007, p. 260). According to Willis (2010, pp. 409–410), the reflexive researcher is characterised by the acknowledgement of the unequal power relations between the researcher and the researched; the researcher being the key instrument for the data collection; self-monitoring of the processes of interviews.

However, reflexivity is not just reflections on interviews conducted. Willis states:

> It is a whole-of-research approach that commences with clear understanding of one’s self in the research process, and concludes with a clear explication of research method when writing up the research results. The reflexive researcher is one who acknowledges the ways in which power may be constituted and enacted during the research encounter and beyond into analysis of the data. (2010, p. 409)

Similarly, Glesne (2011, p. 151) demonstrated this “whole-of-research approach” by stating that “reflexivity generally involves critical reflection on how the researcher, research participants, setting, and research procedures interact and influence each other.” Glesne (2011, pp. 151–159), however, focused on the personal dimensions of reflexivity. These are subjectivity, emotion work, and positionality. Unlike positivism, in which subjectivity had a negative connotation in research fields, interpretivist-perspective researchers view subjectivity as an integral component of research process. For example, Glesne (2011, p. 152) illustrated the significant role subjectivity played for Peshkin (1988) who studied community in two Christian religious group settings. His fieldwork was heavily influenced by his Jewishness, and
being a Jew led him to feel annoyed at being ostracised as “the other” throughout the 18-month fieldwork period.

Emotions are a part of research process. Glesne pointed out the role of emotions for researchers as follows:

Part of being attuned to your personal views and perspectives is being attuned to your emotions. Instead of trying to suppress your feelings, you use them to inquire into your assumptions and to shape new questions through re-examining previous perspectives … It is when you feel angry, irritable, gleeful, excited or sad that you can be sure that your personal views are at work. (2011, p. 154)

Further, acknowledging one’s positionality as a researcher is important (Kleinwasser, 2000). Positionality includes fixed attributes such as skin colour, gender, age, nationality, ancestry and so on, as well as aspects of achieved characteristics such as education, economic circumstance, institutional or group membership, and so on (Glesne, 2011, p. 157). Positionality is at work when both fixed attributes and achieved characteristics are engaged in the process of research. As Glesne (2011, p. 157) argued, “each of us has fixed attributes that affect, in conjunction with the socio-cultural-historical context, how we act in the world and how others respond.”

Denzin and Lincoln (2003) argued that behind the qualitative research process stands the researcher in a specific position. The researcher speaks from:

[A] particular class, gender, racial, cultural, and ethnic community perspective. The gendered, multiculturally situated researcher approaches the world with a set of ideas, a framework (theory, ontology) that specifies a set of questions (epistemology) that he or she then examines in specific ways (methodology, analysis). That is, the researcher collects empirical materials bearing on the question and then analyses and writes about them. (2003, pp. 29–30)

This is an acknowledgement of the “positionality,” a specific place for the researcher (Kleinwasser, 2000, p. 155). To be reflexive means to be aware of being a part of the social world the researcher investigates, and to “have an ongoing conversation with yourself” (Berg, 2009, p. 198). Reflexivity is also an important tool to produce good data and it is a continual process of “writing-to-learn and unlearn” for researchers (Kleinwasser, 2000, p. 161).
So far, I have discussed semi-structured in-depth interviews as the key method of inquiry, with additional aspects supplied through an autoethnographic approach. I have also argued that reflexivity is a significant element in qualitative inquiry, in particular as an insider researcher. Reflexivity can be seen as a tool for continuous self-monitoring to ensure the researcher’s action and ideas reflect those of society. In the next section, the practical strategy used—semi-structured, in-depth interviews—will be discussed.

**Data collection**

In this section, I discuss the process of finding research participants, issues around a small sample, some of the dilemmas I experienced in the recruitment process, and how the data collection took place. As I was interested in exploring mixedness of both culture and “race” and their impact on the construction of identities within mixed families, it was important to find research participant families with parents of dissimilar cultural/racial backgrounds.

**Finding participants**

The assumption was that apparently contrasting cultures might cause conflicts in parental practice, affecting how parents would transmit culture, and in turn how children would develop their identity. As discussed in Chapter 2, Hofstede (2001) argued that at a broad macro level, there is a fundamental value difference between collective societies and individualist societies. According to Hofstede (2001, p. 211), this difference also affects not only the behaviours and attitudes of individuals, but also the norms, values and systems of society—in his words: “the relationship between the individual and the collectivity in human society is not only a matter of living together, it is intimately linked with societal norms (in the sense of value systems of major groups of the population).” It is these contrasting worldviews at a broader level—individualism vs. collectivism and independence vs. interdependence/harmony that had some effect on my criteria for choosing participants.

Initially I set out to search for mixed families similar to my own—Asian mothers and Western European fathers. Japan, China, Taiwan, Vietnam, and Thailand were selected because they share a common historical background: the influence of Confucianism in the cultural and social values of their populations. “Western Europe”
implied historically the Western power (“white” societies) which have had colonies in other parts of the world, and which played the dominant power in relation to other nations.

As described in the Introduction chapter, the anticipated participants were migrant families of intercultural/interracial heritage in Australia. The families would consist of mixed-marriage parents and their biological child or children. The parents had immigrated to Australia in the last 25 years (as at 2012), each parent from a different cultural background; one from East Asia (Japan, Korea, and China) and the other from an Anglo/West European background. The age of the children would set the parameters of the age of the parents: children would be 15 years of age or above. Children over 15 years are selected because that is the period of adolescence when children begin to develop ideas independent of their parents and are also mature enough to understand their social world, and are capable of articulating their experiences. Adolescence is marked by the child’s increasing ability to think beyond the here and now, to reason and to engage in abstract thinking, and to be reflective (Galotti 2011, Piaget, 1967).

The journey of finding participants proved to be extremely challenging. Participants were recruited in Perth, Western Australia, and the environs (See Appendix 2 for a summary of participant recruitment). Initially a snowball sampling approach via personal contacts was used: recruitment through personal contacts, such as family friends and colleagues, who might have been able to identify cases that were “information rich” (Creswell, 2013, p. 15).

After five months of recruitment effort I had found only a few participants, and they did not fit my criteria. This lack of recruiting success may in part have been due to the dispersed distribution of mixed ethnic partners. A study of residential choice among interethnic partners in Sydney reveals their geographic dispersal (Tindale et al., 2014). According to the study, rather than choosing to live among the ethnic group of either partner, or in mostly “white” neighbourhoods, “the greatest concentrations of ethnic majority–minority couples were found in moderately diverse, high socio-economic status neighbourhoods of Inner Sydney—areas with a reputation for progressive political and social attitudes” (Tindale et al., 2014, p. 412).
At the beginning of the searching process, unfortunately, four sets of parents with whom I had a relatively close personal association declined. The reasons varied from the husband being too busy or too shy (reported by the wife), the difficulty of having the whole family together with the adult children, to the family leading such a busy life that they did not have any spare time. Because the nature of the investigation was to treat the family as a social unit that is intact, it was necessary to interview all the members of the family. Therefore, families with the absence of a father or any other member of the family were not included. For the same reason, families with divorced parents or single-parent families were excluded. These restrictions added to the difficulty. There were a few volunteers, but they did not meet my criteria. For example, some people offered to participate, not realising both parents had to be migrants. Others mentioned that they knew mixed families personally, where one of the parents was Australian. These offers from mixed families with one Australian parent suggest that it would have been easier to find families or couples where one parent was Australian.

These difficulties required me to shift the direction slightly without changing the fundamental research aim. After about ten months of struggle, I came across a few migrant intermarriage couples who were currently raising young children. They fitted the criteria, except that the children were too young to participate in interviews. While the families for my initial sample told their accounts in retrospect, reflecting on their past experience, for these young parents, their life experiences were about the family life of this generation, in a more recent social, political, and economic context. This offered another dimension to the study—the possibility of different experiences among parents of different generations. This resulted in finding five younger intermarried parent couples\(^6\) with children ranging from infants to primary school age. Finding these participants was much easier than the older family participants search. The snowball approach worked well and smoothly with this group of participants.

Over time, however, each obstacle has led me to multiple reviews and modifications of the recruitment strategy, recruitment flyer (see Appendix 3), and information letter (see

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\(^6\) The fathers are of different national backgrounds—a German, a Polish, a Kenyan, an Indian, and an Egyptian father, each married to a Japanese wife.
Appendix 4A, 4B). Among the changes and additions included was the lowering of the age group of the children from 15 to 13. This was justified by the argument that 13-year-old children are at the early stage of adolescence, beginning to have their own ideas, and are capable of articulating their thoughts independent of their parents or other adults. Data acquired from families with early teenagers would be just as valuable as from families with 15-year-old children. Another change made was the broadening of the range of mixed couples to parents of two dissimilar cultural backgrounds, not restricting it to Asian/European parents. Soon after the participant search began, it became clear that the restriction to Asian and European origins was simplistic, and that the mixing of the parents was far more diverse and complex than I had anticipated. This is discussed further in the next section.

For exploratory research, the main aim is to gain deeper understanding of social phenomena, rather than identifying a particular pattern through quantitative evidence. As Creswell (2013, p. 157) pointed out, the “intent in qualitative research is not to generalize the information … but to elucidate the particular, the specific.” He referred to other researchers’ numbers of participants, varying from 1 to 325 (Creswell, 2013, p. 157). Dukes (1984, p. 200), for example, argued that for phenomenological research “[s]trictly theoretically, a sample size of one would suffice.” He continues, however, and explains why more than one is more beneficial:

This claim is startling but not unreasonable. The aim of a phenomenological study is … to uncover the necessary structural invariants of an experience, and those in variants are fully discoverable in any individual case … the process of phenomenological bracketing is a skill and not an easy one to learn. There is always the danger of either seeing what we want to see—rather than what is there to be seen—or falling prey to the contingent facts of a particular case. For those reasons, it is wise to expand the sample to include three, five, or perhaps even ten subjects. The upper limit on sample size is governed by the actual procedures involved in doing the research. (Dukes, 1984, p. 200)

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7 Other research of a similar nature with qualitative in-depth interviews has been conducted including children of eight years of age in recent years (Becher, 2008).
In phenomenological approaches to interviews, Creswell recommended 5 to 25 people (2013, p. 149). Other researchers argue that it depends on the purpose of the study and saturation point (Kvale, 2007, pp. 43–44; Seidman, 2013, pp. 58–59). The saturation point is where interviewing produces no new knowledge. That is when the collection of data stops. However, in my research, it is difficult to identify whether the saturation point has been reached or not. Due to the diverse cultural backgrounds of each family and the sheer complexity of their lived experiences, new knowledge and information continued to emerge with each family’s data collection. It is conceivable that interviewing could go on indefinitely and not reach saturation point, because every family was so different, with fascinating and unique stories to tell. On the other hand, there were clear thematic similarities emerging in the data, at which point I stopped.

Although I tried to be clear about the requirements for participation, apparent lack of clarity in the recruitment information led to a number of queries, deriving from the ambiguity of terms such as Asian, European, Western, and bi-cultural/mixed-race migrant families. Questions around these terms such as: “What about a Malay-Singaporean and Chinese-Singaporean? They are of different ‘race,’” or, “What about a Polish person who grew up in Germany? Is that person German?” or, “Is someone who migrated as a child an ‘Italian migrant?’” Through these questions, I began to realise the complexity of racial/ethnic diversities. This seems to reflect my worldview, the cultural baggage I have carried, which is based on my own limited experience of the world, accumulated throughout my life. The recruitment information was refined following these queries.

In the process of interviewing, two key conditions for successful interviewing helped me manage them well on the whole—probing and establishing rapport. Probing holds the key to successful interviewing, and involves the attempt to gain a fuller response through follow-up questioning (Bernard, 2011; Berg, 2009; Gilbert, 2008). According to Bernard (2011, p. 161), probing means “to stimulate a respondent to produce more information, without injecting yourself so much into the interaction that you only get a reflection of yourself in the data.” Using probing phrases such as, “Uh-huh,” “Yes, I see,” to encourage someone to continue, and phrases such as, “Could you tell me more about it?” to get more detailed information, were useful (Bernard, 2011, p. 161). Gilbert noted that “probes should be as neutral as possible” (2008, p. 250). The main
The purpose of probing is “to elicit more information about whatever the respondent has already said in response to a question” (Berg, 2009, p. 115).

The second important point in interviewing is to establish rapport with participants. Establishing rapport assists participants to speak as much on the subject matter as possible (Berg, 2009). Berg (2009, p. 130) defined rapport as “the positive feelings that develop between the interviewer and the subject, it should not be understood as meaning there are no boundaries between the interviewer and the subject.” In one sense, rapport enables one to shorten the distance between the interviewer and interviewee, while maintaining the hierarchical relationship. Berg asserted that establishing a common ground between the two parties opens up the avenue to rapport (2009, p. 130). At the beginning of each new interview with participants, I clarified my position by disclosing my personal life circumstance, being a mother and a wife in an intercultural/interracial family. That seemed to not only break the ice, but also lead into the zone of mutual acceptance in most cases (Wilkinson & Kitzinger, 1996; Fozdar, 2013).

That resonates with Oakley’s argument about the inevitability of disclosing your personal information (which was discussed briefly earlier in this chapter), through which personal relationships can develop that blur the boundary between the interviewer and interviewee (Oakley, 1999; Berg, 2009). Furthermore, Berg pointed out the importance of the interviewer’s appearance, characteristics, and manner in how the interviewee perceives the interviewer. These characteristics include “race, gender, ethnicity, style of dress, age, hairstyle, manner of speech, and general demeanor” (Berg, 2009, p. 131). This played a significant role in my research, as part of the study involves race and physical appearance and its possible impact on the development of cultural identity. Common cultural/racial/national background allows implicit affiliation (Berg, 2009).

My position as the mother of bicultural/biracial children seemed to have assisted in establishing rapport—for the husbands, having an Asian wife; for the wives, being the mother and having raised the mixed children; and (possibly) for the children, the researcher being a mother like their own. This view is supported by the argument made by two female feminist researchers—one as the “mother” and the other as the “non-mother” (Frost & Holt, 2014). Frost and Holt argued that researcher positionality—whether she is a mother or non-mother—affects the research process in
various ways, from the research direction and research topic to access to participants. While recognising that motherhood can either facilitate or hinder the research process, they point out that the disclosure of motherhood experience does help break down barriers between the researcher and the researched, and it “can function as a discursive resource within the interview setting” (Frost & Holt, 2014, p. 96).

In establishing rapport, language played an important role. Some Japanese participants felt more comfortable speaking in their mother tongue. Thus, at times the interview took place in Japanese with my simultaneous translation, so that all the participants understood what was said. It was also beneficial to gain data through the use of the native language. As noted (Mead, 1934), language plays an important role in the meaning-making process. Furthermore, most of the interviews took place at participants' homes, and every family welcomed me into their home with coffee, tea, cake, or a snack. This welcoming gesture was a good indication of the participants’ openness and willingness to help in the research.

**Collecting data**

A pilot study was conducted with two families to try out, test and ensure the designed interview methods were appropriate. A pilot study is an essential part of the research process in order to gain maximum benefit from data collection. It allows the researcher to check for the effectiveness, efficiency and refinement of the method applied (Turner III, 2010, p. 757). A pilot study also helps the researcher identify where possible improvements could be made—missing information added or adjustments made to the length of the interview. Identifying such issues at the beginning of the data collection process ensures better outcomes, rather than discovering flaws and shortcomings of the method along the way. As Glesne (2011, p. 57) stated, a “pilot study readies you for gathering data.”

The pilot study identified a number of issues requiring improvement. First, certain terms such as *cultural identity* or *mixed race* seemed difficult for the respondents to understand, and they needed to be explained more fully. Second, at times when the participant hesitated, or paused for a response, I was ill-prepared to help and encourage the participant to continue. This was another technique I needed to learn. In terms of time required for the interviews, the actual interviews exceeded the anticipated time of one to one and a half hours. This was in part due to some
questions being too similar to others and eliciting the same response, so the pilot interviewing provided an opportunity to reduce repetitive or similar questions. As a whole, the pilot study worked not only to check practical information such as time allocation and the interview schedule, but it was also useful in preparing myself as an interviewer.

The data derives from interviews with two different groups: eight families with teenage to young adult children (16 parents and 13 children), and five young parent couples (10 parents) with young children up to primary school age; in total 30 interviews (See Appendix 1). The age of the parents ranged from early 30s to mid 60s. And the children’s/adult children’s ages ranged from 13 to mid-30s. The wide gap in age groups is due to the great difficulty in finding families, which led to the broadening of the target group to include five younger mixed couples with children younger than 13 years of age. The total number of participants was 39. The interview period began in November 2012 and ended in April 2014. The interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed, and analysed using a thematic approach. Treating each family as a unit of investigation, a set of three interviews per family was conducted with all eight families: an interview with the parents together, an interview with the children together, and the family interview with all the members. For the five younger couples mostly one interview per couple was conducted with four couples. With one couple, however, two interviews were held, due to the large amount of information they were willing to discuss.

The majority of the interviews were held in the homes of the participants, with exceptions at a café, at a family residence of the interviewer, and at a park with a playground where the children played. In one family interview, one member of the family joined the interview via Skype from abroad. The length of interviews varied from 45 minutes to over three hours. Completion time of all three interviews with each family varied greatly between one day to four months, due to family members’ commitments such as work, school, or community activities; whether the children lived separately, holiday plans, and so forth. In one case where all three interviews took place in one day, it was a compromise between the possibility of lower quality data and no data. The family agreed to be interviewed on the condition that it could be done in one day. For many families, it was a challenge to find time for the family
interview, due to a busy life and, for some, adult children having left home or living an independent life.

To explore the process of socialisation, acculturation, and integration, and to gain insight into how parents and children within families with multiple cultures at home negotiate and develop cultural identities, it was important to hear stories from all family members—parents’ perspectives, children’s perspectives, and the family as a whole (See Appendices 5, 6, and 7) for the interview questions. For instance, In her study of mixed-race children and family formation, Ali (2003) argued that interviewing all family members helps gain a better picture of family life as a whole (Ali, 2003, p. 96). With the parents’ interviews, the aim was to explore motivations to migrate to Australia, adjustments to the new country, challenges of raising children in an unfamiliar cultural environment, and cultural identity and its transformation. On the other hand, in the children’s interviews, the focus was placed on growing up in a family of mixed cultural heritage, school life, friendships, and development of cultural identity/identities. The family interviews aimed at bringing a different dimension of family life experiences together in relation to integration into the Australian way of life, cultural negotiations at home, and so on.

The multiple interview method gave the participants an opportunity to reflect on and think about their life retrospectively. Indeed, some participants mentioned at the end of the last interview that participating in the research project encouraged the family to discuss their family life further. Below is an example:

Maki: Well thanks so much for, so much of your experience, sharing with me, and it’s been a great joy and a help for my research and personally as well, it was a great pleasure to have met you and learn about you.

Daughter: Certainly an interesting experience for us as well.

Father: Yeah it makes us actually have a discussion.

Mother: It was ... an opportunity to think about, and look back, and talk about it. It was good.

As Seidman (2013, p. 25) pointed out, one benefit of having three-tiered interviews is that gradually the researcher develops a positive relationship with the participants over time. Such was the case with my participants, in that meeting each member of
the family twice over the course of three interviews allowed the initial acquaintance to develop further. Some participants commented at the end of the interviews that participating in the research gave them an opportunity to reflect on and think about their life together, and that they felt that this occasion brought them closer, having had a chance to open up dialogues which might not have happened otherwise.

In addition, joint couple interviews were conducted with all the parents. While they were given a choice either to be interviewed separately or jointly, they all chose to be interviewed together. As discussed earlier in this chapter, research suggests some benefits of joint couple interviews (Bjørnholt & Farstad, 2014; Edwards & Holland, 2013). Their strengths include opportunities for the researcher to observe the couples' interactions and behaviours, or power relations through verbal and non-verbal exchange between them.

The benefits of the joint couple interviews were reflected in comments some couples made. For instance, one couple felt that they were given a “common reflective space” (Bjørnholt & Farstad, 2014, p. 9) after the interview, which without the interview opportunity, they would not have experienced. I received an email from the couple a few days after the interview with the text as follows:

... we hope the interview the other day will be useful for you.

The interview gave us a very good opportunity. We were able to learn about things which we don't always talk about through the interview—our thoughts and ideas. We realized that usually we don't really discuss things, and since then we had more conversations about various other things.

If there is anything we can be of help again, please let us know.

Please contact anytime.

**Analysis**

Prior to the data collection, I created some key themes I planned to investigate based on the research question, sub-questions, and topics addressed in the three interview schedules. The themes included acculturation, socialisation, culture (Australian culture and cultures of origin), cultural identity, cultural transmission, mixed heritage/mixed race, social structure, family events/memories, multiculturalism and a
cosmopolitan outlook. During the course of the initial analysis, in which coding was done, sub-themes of each category developed inductively (Seidman, 2013). In addition, new themes also emerged, such as gender, hopes, intercultural family, and racism. I also began to combine and compare commonalities and differences of the data. All the coding work was done manually without computer assisted analytical tools.

**Thematic analysis**

Of the various analytical methods, thematic analysis was applied. Thematic analysis refers to “a process for encoding qualitative information. The encoding requires an explicit 'code'. This may be a list of themes: a complex model with themes, indicators, and qualification that are usually related; or something in between these forms” (Boyatzis, 1998, p. 4). It involves using techniques to search and identify themes and patterns through coding (by some researchers called “indexing” or “categorising”), for the purpose of discerning themes, making comparisons, and building theoretical justifications (Glesne, 2011; Seidman, 2013; Liamputtong & Ezzy, 2005). It is like a jigsaw puzzle, slowly putting pieces together to get a whole picture. In Glesne’s words (2011, p. 194), “by putting pieces that exemplify the same theoretical or descriptive idea together into data clumps, you begin to create a thematic organizational framework.” One useful approach is to apply “constant case comparison,” adopted from grounded theory, into the analysis process:

> You take on the mindset of looking for how each of your cases vary in terms of such things as events, participants, settings, or word use. You might select and compare extreme cases, looking for aspects that stand out that you might not have noticed otherwise, or you might look for subtle differences in similar cases. (2011, p. 187)

In addition to the thematic analysis, using conversation analysis in part was helpful, particularly using interview data. While my analytical approach was not the focus on conversation analysis, being aware of how people spoke provided for the insights into hidden “backstage” information (Goffman, 1969). Conversation analysis uses talk to study human interactions in everyday life (Hutchby & Wooffitt, 2002; Sidnell, 2010). Conversation analysis refers to “the study of recorded, naturally occurring talk-in-action ... Principally it is to discover how participants understand and respond to one another in their turns at talk, with a central focus being on how sequences of actions
are generated” (Hutchby & Wooffitt, 2002, p. 14, italics in original). This approach emphasises the talk-in-action process as one of the key elements, since it is in the “talk-in-action” interactions that important meanings are inferred. This method of inference from the interviews was particularly useful in gaining insight into conversations between the couples. It is a useful tool, for example, in understanding power dynamics between husband and wife (DeFrancisco, 1991).

**Triangulation effects**

As I proceeded with the data collection, I began to notice an interesting effect of the three-tiered interviews with each family. The third interview with the whole family began to have a life of its own, and some interesting conversations between parents and children developed. Some parents seemed to take up the family interview as an opportunity to get a message across to their children, or others tried to clarify an uncertainty that had never been discussed. Sometimes, a gap in the interpretation of a particular event or idea in the past between the parents and the children emerged.

In social scientific research, triangulation is a widely used strategy of investigation to enrich and deepen the understanding of social phenomena by using more than two or three different methods, theories or data (Robson, 2002, p. 174). Instead of three different methods, it was three interviews with different members of the family that had triangulation effects, through which additional information and deeper insight emerged. For example, in the family interview below, new information concerning the teenage children’s social life emerged. In the separate interviews with the parents and with the children prior to the family interview, the fact that the children have two separate circles of friends—one in school, and the other in church—was not discussed. The topic of the conversation was related to how the children would negotiate their social life with the parents.

> Maki: Were there occasions when you need permission to ask your mum and dad to ... when you want to do something like with your friends or things you do?

> Son: Don't really ... for school friends and stuff we don't really ... we talk to them at school and then after school we just don't communicate.

> Maki: Oh okay yeah? So you play with friends or chat and so on at school, ... but at home you don't sort of carry on?
Father: He has ... they have other friends.

Maki: Yeah?

Father: Because like I said we have a kind of a religious lifestyle. We belong to a community of ... Catholic community. It's complicated, ...

But within their group there are people his age, he belongs to a group and we belong to a group. When my daughter this year will also be able ... at an age that she can also enter her own community.

Maki: Okay.

Father: In those communities he spends a lot of time when he's not at school with those people, with those, from that community.

Maki: Okay yeah. So do you ... when you get together what do you do? (facing the son)

Son: [mumbles]

Maki: Like are there sort of activities? Regular activities you do?

Son: So there's mass and then we read the Bible and analyse it and stuff like this and yeah, lots of ...

Maki: Every week?

Son: Yeah, weekly.

Maki: Okay. Oh so once a week you meet in ...

Son: Twice.

Maki: Twice a week.

Son: Sometimes more.

The father explains more in detail about the children’s participations in the youth group activities in their church community, such as playing music, having group discussions, and so on. This was valuable additional information about the children’s social life and the family’s active engagement with church, which would not have
emerged without the family interview. This is a clear indication of a triangulation effect through three separate interviews within each family. This triangulation effect has become a useful tool to synthesise different perspectives, and gain a fuller and deeper picture of participants’ family life.

Research ethics

Conducting ethical research

Prior to embarking on the research fieldwork, human research ethics approval was obtained from the Human Research Ethics Committee. Ethical conduct in undertaking human science research is of vital importance to ensure the safety, integrity and respect of those studied. According to the guidelines by the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (National Health and Medical Research Council, 2007), the key principles in research ethics include: confidentiality of the data, informed consent, respect for privacy and the safety of participants. During the process of participant recruitment, careful consideration was made to ensure the confidentiality of personal information of potential participants. For example, if potential participants were referred to me by people I knew or other participants of the study, great care was taken not to contact the referred party without obtaining explicit permission to do so. At the beginning of the initial interview with each family, each participant was informed of the full purpose of the research, confidentiality of the data, and respect for privacy, with the freedom to stop whenever they wished to do so without any consequences. All the participants signed a consent form (See Appendix 8) prior to the first interview, and the parents of underage children signed the form on their behalf in the presence of the children. In regards to the issue of confidentiality, the data is usually used in aggregate, but if any of the speech/conversations were to be used, a pseudonym would be used. Written information was sent via email prior to the interview date.

The age group of children was initially from 15 years up to their 20s. In line with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007), Section 4.2: Children and Young People, a consent form was signed by the parents. The researcher ensured that participation by a child/young person was not contrary to “the young person's best interest” (4.2.13, p. 57) and where the child/young person refused participation, it was respected (4.2.14, p. 57). What the child disclosed to the
researcher remained strictly confidential. As discussed in the earlier section, a need to lower the age group for children from age 15 to 13 arose, which subsequently the Ethics Committee at the University also approved. In addition, underage children received a separate simplified version of the information to ensure that they understood what it meant to be a part of a research project, and to alleviate any concern (See Appendix 9).

**Potential risks and dilemmas**

Possible risks and ethical dilemmas

It is also the researcher’s responsibility to ensure that risk of harm to the subject or the researcher is minimised (Babbie, 2002). “Risk” refers to “a potential for harm, discomfort or inconvenience” arising from participating in research projects (Australian Government, 2007, p. 15). In relation to my research, potential harms include psychological harm such as distress, discomfort or embarrassment from disclosure of sensitive information. As Johnson (2001, p. 114) pointed out, “in-depth interviewing commonly elicits highly personal information about specific individuals … This information may include participants’ personal feelings and reflections as well as their perceptions of others.”

In so far as possible risks or harms were concerned, as a whole, there was a minimum number of negative psychological effects experienced, and attempts were made to make the participants feel comfortable by assuring them at the beginning of each interview of their right to refuse disclosure or to stop the interview altogether. From the perspectives of the participants, although there was no immediate benefit to them, for the majority, the interviews gave them an opportunity to be reflective about their lives and to express thoughts about their life experiences as migrant families of mixed heritage and as new members of Australia. This is evidenced in the examples in the data collection section above. In fact, some parents seemed to have taken advantage of the interviews to clarify matters from the past, using the interview occasion as a platform to convey the hopes they had for their children, or disclosing their own past experiences for the first time in the presence of their children—which might not have happened had it not been for the interview environment.

Having a discussion in front of one another may have evoked some embarrassing moments or hurtful memories, and it may have been confronting, causing feelings of
unease. However, although I cannot be certain that such discomfort or adverse effects were minimal, the fact that participants did not withdraw from the interview or complain about it, and that some families reported their positive experience as a whole, may be an indication that the benefits are likely to outweigh such harms.

In relation to the use of terms such as race, racism, or mixed race, contrary to my anticipation, the participants responded with relative ease. In some cases, in response to the question “have you ever experienced racism because you looked different?” there was silence before the response, or the tone of voice changed to murmuring. It is difficult to tell whether these responses meant discomfort or hurtful feelings arising in the process of remembering the past experience. In part, it may be due to the fact that I felt awkward and uncomfortable using the term race and racism. However, that unease has subsided over time as I became more accustomed to conducting interviews and interviewees’ responses did not indicate a major problem.

In addition, I began to feel a dilemma some time after the interviews with my family friends. Although the official interviews are the data for my research, ongoing regular contact with the friends meant that our dialogue in relation to the research topic would continue outside the realm of research. As I prepared for a presentation of my fieldwork, one source of data derived from the interviews with them. I felt ambivalent about making their story public, despite the fact that the use of pseudonyms allows the researcher to disclose the data in public. It was difficult to distance my close relationship with the friend and her family and to be analytical about their personal life. Glesne (2011, p. 171) described the unavoidable ethical dilemma arising from such relationships, drawing on two cases. In one of the examples, Hansen (1976) wrote on the double role she played as an anthropologist and as a friend:

> Later that day I would record this conversation, alone, without her knowledge, in my role as an anthropologist. In my role as an investigator the conversation became “data”. Would she have spoken so frankly about this and other more intimate subjects had she understood that I listened in both roles, not only as friend? (1976, p. 129)

While interview situations may be different in that the participants are aware of my role as an interviewer and a friend, it is difficult to know how the friends as participants might have understood the positioning of the interviewer and themselves. Similarly, it is also difficult to find out how my position as a researcher and friend
may have affected their openness in terms of disclosure of information. Ethical
dilemma is also related to limitations of the study. The next section will briefly
discuss this issue.

Limitations and importance of the study

While there are benefits in being an insider researcher, it is not clear to what extent
my position might have influenced the outcome of the research process as a whole.
On the one hand, it is obvious that total objectivity in qualitative research is not
possible, but on the other hand, it is important to recognise the potential for bias in the
design of the research, creation of the interview schedule, and in the interpretation of
data and analytical processes. In the study of the young people of mixed parentage,
for example, Tizard and Phoenix (2002) acknowledged the difficulty of obtaining a
representative sample, and that the study was biased towards young people of middle-
class background. They also recognised the under-representation of boys due to their
reluctance to participate in the study.

As discussed earlier, the purpose of the qualitative methodology is not to have a
particular conclusive answer. With the qualitative in-depth interviewing approach, it
is impossible to obtain consistent results. The position of an insider researcher makes
the process complex, influencing the outcome of the research as a whole. For
instance, my position as a mother might have emphasised the aspects related to
motherhood, more than fatherhood. Similarly, gender issues pertaining to females
rather than males may have been amplified. By the same token, however, my position
afforded me a chance to enter into the intimate and private spheres of family life,
exactly because of the rapport I was able to establish with the participants through
sharing common experiences as a parent in a mixed migrant family.

During the course of the research process, I began to notice the possible effects of
class in the experiences of mixed migrant families, such as the father’s occupation
and the family background of the parents. However, the difficulty in recruiting
participants, random distribution in the residential areas of the participants and
absence of any particular community of mixed families, made a focus on possible
class differences and its effects difficult to pursue. With more time for finding
participants, and a possible extension in locations, this could be an appropriate area
for future research.
Religion is another theme that emerged as a potentially important external influence on the lives of mixed migrant families. Religion is an important social influence shaping people’s lives. However, this research focused on the influence of social policies such as multiculturalism, rather than other structural agents such as class and religion. However, these have been taken into account where appropriate. Religion is certainly a subject worth investigating in future research.

In a time of rapid globalisation, the mixing of people from diverse cultural/ethnic/racial backgrounds is becoming increasingly common. Given the backdrop of such changes in population demographics, especially in migrant countries such as Australia (Khoo, 2011; Tindale et al., 2014), this research will contribute to a deeper understanding of cultural negotiations among family members of intercultural background. The study on a growing segment of the population contributes to a better understanding of migrant intercultural/interracial families of diverse backgrounds at a wider societal level. This thesis provides insight into the under-researched area of families of mixed backgrounds—about the interactions between migration and mixed race, and about the mixed migrant family situation, which act as a crucible within which socialisation and acculturation processes are negotiated. This is a significant contribution to build on the existing research.

**Conclusion**

This chapter has outlined the process of the research. It discussed the key underpinning theoretical: phenomenology and symbolic interactionism. The key principle of symbolic interactionism is that in understanding social phenomena, study of meaning-making process through social interactions is of crucial importance. The symbolic interactionist approach sees family as a social unit, in which different roles interact in daily life as negotiations take place. The chapter then outlined the rationale for using semi-structured in-depth interviews as the primary research method. It also discussed some dilemmas and issues that arose during the process of data collection. While stepping outside the sphere of an insider and continuous reflexivity were challenging, insider knowledge of the phenomena provided a firm basis to build on for better understanding of the mixed migrant family life at a broader level. Furthermore, the semi-structured in-depth interviews provided deeper understandings of family practice through the study of interpersonal interactions among family
members. The study of the daily interactions also enabled me to understand the complex and intertwined relationships between a family’s personal life and the social structure, and how these two intricately influence each other—on the one hand, the social force may constrain an individual’s actions, but on the other hand, an individual's actions can also change people’s views and attitudes in society at large. Finally, thematic analysis was discussed as the main analytical tool used in the research.

I acknowledge the ambiguous and complex position that I held as an insider/outsider researcher. However, this position has enhanced the process of self-reflexivity, which guided the process of the research—from the designing of the research and collection of data to the analysis. This chapter demonstrated how the selected theoretical frameworks and the methods of investigation have allowed me to answer the research questions on the cultural negotiations within the mixed migrant families.
Chapter 4: Case Studies of Four Families

Introduction

This chapter presents different pictures of the life experiences of migrant families with parents from two different cultural/racial backgrounds, particularly in relation to the ways in which family members negotiate multiple cultures. In order to demonstrate this, I begin with “thick descriptions” (Denzin, 2001) of the stories of four selected families. These stories demonstrate the vast diversity and multiplicity of life as mixed migrant families in Australia, and the uniqueness of each family’s experiences. While some parents spoke of their parenting experiences as challenging and difficult, most did not. Among those who found difficulties, for some the difficulties lay in language issues, for others in cultural differences between the spouses, and for others, in personalities. For the children, the cultural difference of their parents was mostly not a concern; growing up in that environment was seen as normal and most children did not consider the differences to be anything out of the ordinary or negative, and some indicated pride in being different. However, the experience of being of mixed heritage was different for each child. As discussed in Chapter 3, routine activities and interactions within the family, regardless of their contents, are integrative parts of the meaning-making process of the life world (Blumer, 1969; LaRossa & Reitzes, 1993). Life with differences was a normal state of affairs for the children.

In Chapter 2, I noted that Caballero (2007, p. 23) emphasised the “ordinariness” of family life among “mixed” families. She argued that unlike the image of cultural clash between two cultures, which some scholars claim creates an extra hurdle for couples to overcome, for most parents it is simply seen as the normal life they lead. Being mixed is only one part of family life. Each couple has their own unique approach and there is no particular pattern or “right” way to raise children. Caballero disputes literature that “instructs” a “right” way to raise biracial/bicultural children.

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8 See Chapter 1 for discussion of “thick descriptions.”
9 See Appendix 1 for more detailed descriptions of each family—the Nicolas family, the Müller family, the Boccacci family, and the Tinubu family.
While her research was based on a study of parents of mixed heritage and their parenting experiences, my research focused mostly on family dynamics involving both parents and children. While the negotiation processes are unique in each family’s case, maintenance of cultures of origin for the parents appears to be part of the normality in their family life. This supports the argument by Berry (1992, 1997, 2003, 2005) that state level policies that adopt the integrational approach to immigration policies have the highest success rate in the adaptation of immigrants to a new society. The integration approach supports the maintenance of the culture of origin for immigrants while accepting the laws and regulations, and respecting the principal values of the host society.

The stories in this chapter are based on semi-structured interviews (details of the interview processes are discussed in the methodology chapter), fieldwork notes, and thematic analysis of the data. The four families and a parent-couple were selected as case studies since they provided rich data, portraying ordinariness and normality as a family, as well as uniqueness and differences in daily family practice. Portrayal of each of these families touches on the key themes of the thesis (discussed in Chapter 1), but with a different emphasis in each family. The Nicolas family demonstrates family life as ‘normal’: as the same as other families regardless of cultural/racial mixedness. The family had lived in the same location since the marriage, and the child grew up and went to schools with the same group of friends. To them, the fundamental values they share through their Catholicism override all other differences. Cultural difference did not seem to be a key concern in their partnership or in raising their child. On the other hand, unlike the Nicolas family who raised their family in one location, the Müller family moved around the globe before settling in Australia. This family’s account shows a family life in which cultural differences have played an active role in their day-to-day life. Often the parents perceived the cause of family conflict to be caused by the cultural difference between them. The Boccacci family was selected because, in this family, the parenting was in an active phase and the children were attending school. Their life experience provided insight into the current phenomenon, rather than retrospective accounts. The fourth (Tinubus) family was the only parent couple of all the participant parents which reported actively engaging with their children about the issue of their mixed race; they were selected because of this atypicality.
The analysis for this section began with a key theme—cultural identity—as a unit of analysis. However, as I proceeded with the analysis, what emerged clearly from the data was togetherness as a family—a strong sense of “family identity.” That sense was expressed in phrases such as “family culture,” “family tradition,” “we are like a team,” or “our own little culture.” According to Bennett, Wolin, and McAvity (1988, p. 211–212), family identity refers to “a composite construct of what the family represents in the minds of its members … Family identity is the family’s subjective sense of its own continuity over time, its present situation, and its character.”

These case studies demonstrate the ways in which day-to-day family life provides a space of negotiation, which results in having a sense of themselves as one-unit family members. As Johnson & Warren (1994) argued (see Chapter 2), in that space, differences in culture or “race” seem to play a secondary role or are less important than one might expect. At the same time, daily family life is filled with cultural negotiations, including food, languages spoken, education strategies, and school life. More detailed analysis will be conducted in the following two chapters, but the purpose of this chapter is to offer a portrayal of the overall daily life of mixed migrant families, of which these selected families are examples.

**Story of the Nicolas family**

**Raising a mixed family**

Walter from Belgium and Jade from the Philippines have been married for over thirty years, and have a daughter, Oriana, in her late twenties. Oriana lives next door to her parents in a house that she bought recently. The family runs a small business (an electronic design and consultancy company), which Walter opened after his remarriage, and currently all the family members are engaged in its operation. The family lives in a culturally diverse Perth suburb. Since their marriage, the family has lived in the same place. The lounge (where the interviews took place) is full of items from both Walter's and Jade’s homelands, such as the carved dining table, the chandelier, and a grandfather clock from Belgium. Out in the back garden stands an outdoor wooden bench from Jade’s home in the Philippines. Jade said that all the things were belongings of her family; her mother told her at the time of her marriage that with these family items she would not get homesick.
The family is devout Catholic and they attend church every Sunday. Everyone in the family agrees that the religion holds them together as they all share its moral values. Jade admits they occasionally have disagreements, although these are not because of cultural or ethnic differences, but personal opinions. They say they always try to solve problems through talking with each other. In general, the family enjoys open discussions. While cultural diversity and differences are very much part of their life, they are not necessarily the cause of conflicts within the family. For Walter, it was important to pass on the deep history of Europe and languages (he grew up bilingual, speaking French and Flemish, and is fluent in Dutch, German, and English). When Oriana was in primary school, Walter enrolled her in a French language course. For Jade, it was important to pass on to her daughter the Chinese and Spanish heritage from her family in the Philippines. For instance, Jade was pleased to see her daughter’s interest in learning Spanish Flamenco dance, rather than classical ballet.

Walter initially moved to Australia in the early 1970s with his young family, seeking a healthier climate for his children and more spacious lifestyle to escape the cold climate and small space of Europe. Since his remarriage, he left his work as an employee of large companies and started his own business. Jade’s life has changed significantly since her arrival in Perth upon marriage—from busy city life in Manila to a small city, Perth, where life was much quieter and slower at the time of her arrival than it is now. Jade was unimpressed by the vastness and emptiness of the country, but she said that she did not experience any culture shock. She pointed out that in the Philippines, with its history of having been colonised by Spain and the United States, and its cultural diversity, ethnic and cultural differences were normal. In fact, her great-grandfather was Spanish and she remembers growing up with Spanish influence in her family. Perhaps, the fact that Jade has grown up with cultural diversity back in the Philippines meant that she perceived raising a family with cultural differences as normal. Additionally, her familiarity with cultural diversity since childhood may have provided understanding and interactional skills that proved useful within the marriage.

While Walter valued family time together as very important, daily household tasks and child-rearing were left up to Jade, who seemed quite content with her position as a mother, housewife, and the business co-manager. She said that when she married, her husband told her to decorate their new home as she liked, and she enjoyed
arranging the house, being able to use her creativity. In addition to that, the engagement in the business, where she was able to make use of her clerical skills, also gave her a sense of independence and autonomy. While Jade was firm with rules set for their daughter, Walter admitted that he was “soft” on their daughter when it came to “disciplining.”

As I arrived at their home for the first interview, Jade opened the door for me and welcomed me in. I noticed a small stool standing next to the main entrance door and there were a few pairs of shoes in the foyer area. Imagining that this stool might be used to sit on for putting on or taking off shoes (or putting feet on to untie or tie shoelaces for bigger people), I asked if I could sit on that small stool to take off my boots, as I needed to undo the zippers of the boots. Later Jade commented that I fitted straight into their house rule, as I understood that visitors are expected to take off their shoes on entry into their home. (We laughed.)

**Growing up in a mixed family**

Jade and Walter's daughter, Oriana, grew up in this Perth family environment in which her father ran a business near their home. She saw her parents work together every day. She went to a local primary school and a Catholic high school, where she had the same friends and classmates throughout her primary and high school years. The schools she attended were culturally diverse, with students from many cultural and ethnic backgrounds. Oriana grew up feeling “Eurasian,” always identifying with “Asians.” The turning point for her was a one-year experience in Europe as a university student when she lived in Belgium and France. Particularly living in a small village in France, where everyone was “white” and she was the only different looking person, made her aware of how multicultural Australia was and how “Australian” she was. Now she feels more “Australian” than before—she described as follows:

Yeah, so now, looking back on it, I think I'm less ... yeah, instead of being 50 per cent ... instead of being 40 per cent European, 40 per cent Asian and maybe 20 per cent Australian, now I'd say a little bit more Australian than before.

Unlike her parents, however, Oriana was born in Australia. As she said, “I am born and raised here, so I don’t really have anything I’ve really … had to adapt. It’s just who I am and I’m used to it.”
The aspect of physical appearance was absent from the narratives of the parents. Neither of the parents talked of experiences of racial discrimination, nor did they show any concern over their daughter’s different physical appearance. The significance of their religion was mentioned repeatedly over the course of the interviews. Walter and Jade emphasised that their family life was multicultural, and valued transcending their own nationalities and cultures. However, there was little talk of race or mixed race in their narratives and none of the family members had experienced racism (or at least it was not raised as an issue).

For Oriana, growing up in an intercultural family was normal. She accepted the differences as part of her life and thought nothing of it. The family made trips to relatives in Belgium and the Philippines to maintain family bonds with both families. One thing Oriana remembered vividly was the project she did when she was in Year 5. Students were given a task to talk about the country of their family’s heritage. So she chose Belgium. All she knew was that it was the country where her grandparents were from, because when she visited Belgium she was only small, and had very faint memories of the place. But her talk was unique and interesting, as she was the only child from a Belgian background.

In hindsight, however, she explained that growing up in the family home full of reminders from her parents’ countries of origin and eating the food her mother prepared, much of which was from her own childhood in the Philippines, did have an impact on her identity. Living with what she called “nostalgic, romanticised aspects” of her parents’ past lives influenced her in the shaping of a certain idealised picture of Europe in her mind. When she carried this picture with her to Europe as a university student, believing that she would find the same, she discovered it was not accurate. This came as a shock to her.

In terms of physical appearance, Oriana accepted the difference between her mother looking Philippine (“more Chinese,” she added), and her father looking Belgian as part of normal life. She said, “we’ve got so many different cultures it didn’t make a difference” to look different and come from a mixed family. However, when she was younger, she did feel frustrated at times when asked, “Where are you from?” As an adult, sometimes people take her for different nationalities—Mexican, Mauritian, Spanish, and so forth. But this does not bother her. As a whole, growing up in an intercultural environment and being mixed was not a problem for her. If anything, she
believed it is more positive having grown up surrounded by the different cultures of her parents.

“Doing” family

Jade cooked a variety of Philippine dishes, as well as Belgian and other European dishes, and Indian and other Asian foods. A barbecue, which Jade considers “Australian” food, is something they enjoy outside home at their friends’ or at community events. Jade never buys Vegemite for family consumption. Oriana recalls taking sandwiches with Belgian apple syrup, which looks brown and similar to Vegemite, and her classmates asking what it was. To Oriana, it was her version of Vegemite.

When Oriana was a teenager, Jade often organised big dinners for her daughter to cook with her cousins on weekends. The children were left to cook by themselves and the mothers would set the table. The family spoke of these dinner times fondly, recalling a Moroccan night, a Russian night, a German night, Chinese, French, and so on. Oriana remembered that they made three-course meals each time. While it was a way of learning to cook for Oriana, the family remembered those cooking sessions as enjoyable family occasions that went late into the night. Oriana remembered growing up eating potatoes and rice on alternate days, but admitted that she preferred rice. Her favourite food is a Filipino soup dish called sinigang with a distinct sour flavour with tamarind. She said that this was her comfort food. Another she likes is Chicken Fricassee, a Belgian dish, which her mother learned to cook.

The family’s common language is English, but Oriana grew up passively absorbing her father speaking multiple languages (as mentioned earlier) and her mother speaking Tagalog with her family. She did not learn any other language in school but went to a French language course when she was in primary school for a year or two. At university, she majored in European studies and French. Walter said that they might have spoken Tagalog at home and English outside home but that was not an option, as he did not speak the language. Although he likes learning languages, it would have been difficult to find the time to learn Tagalog. Jade felt that her daughter should focus on learning one language, which was French, and thus did not pursue teaching her Tagalog. Oriana would have liked to learn Tagalog, but notes that at least the family in the Philippines speaks English. She said that she “naturally picked up
some things,” such as set phrases and words from her mother. One of the reasons she studied French at university was because she wanted to be able to communicate with her family in Belgium, since her grandparents were not English speakers.

While her daughter was of school age, Jade was actively involved in school activities, helping as a volunteer mother to assist in her daughter’s class. She said that way she got to know children in her daughter’s school as well as the parents of the children. She “chose friends” for her daughter who she thought would be suitable for her. She became friends with the mothers of those children and Oriana became friends with the children. Oriana accepted that arrangement. In fact, it appeared that, until the matter was brought up in the family interview, Oriana was not aware of her mother’s strategy of selecting her friends. She just thought all her friends’ mothers were also her mother’s friends. Jade quietly responded that she believed that it was the best way to meet people for her daughter. Oriana seemed content with that.

Oriana was an obedient and studious child, and liked to study. She said that her best friends were “Asians,” and that they all liked to study. Sleepovers or partying were not part of her life. In fact, she went to a party for the first time as a university student. Oriana recalled that during her teenage years she did not have any conflicts with her parents, due in part, she believed, to having a shy personality and in part to her Catholic background; she felt no need to rebel. If anything, her parents were very protective because she was their only daughter, but, according to Oriana, it had nothing to do with culture. One rule the family talked about was the strict “curfew” Jade set for Oriana on computer hobby time. Jade was firm on this rule, and said that if not obeyed, she would have cut the electric cord (with the hand gesture of movements with scissors). Oriana agreed that she would have, and Walter commented humorously that he wouldn’t cut the cord because that would be dangerous, but he would unplug it.

The family are long-standing members of their community, their church group, and their neighbourhood. Over the course of the years, the family business expanded, and Oriana has joined recently as a secretary. She recalls that the family business helped with the bonding of the family—her parents agreed. One of the most memorable times for the family was spending time together regularly after church on Sundays. They would go to Perth city or to Fremantle and have lunch such as fish and chips, go to bookstores or department stores and have afternoon tea or coffee. Church and an
outing afterwards was their family tradition. On these outings, Jade learned how to eat a meat pie “properly” the Australian way from her daughter, although she said that she still couldn’t eat it properly, saying that it is a messy food.

After the interview, Walter and Jade showed me a room filled with artworks and craftworks they have created—Oriana’s intricate, hand-crafted clay figurines in a glass case, an oil painting by Oriana on the wall, Walter’s collection of miniature automobiles in another glass case, and a hand-made sailing ship by Walter, which, Jade said, was not a kit to assemble but one Walter created on his own. I felt this room was like a little folk art museum with a display of this family’s life trajectory—an ordinary family enjoying a quiet, indoor lifestyle.

Jade and Oriana agreed that they are just an ordinary family:

Mother: We fight ... we debate.

Daughter: Look ... it’s not to say ... we’re perfect. I mean, we aren’t. We are just like any other family.

Mother: Yeah, oh yes, we are the same like other families.

As Jade put it, the family is “like a team.”

**Story of the Müller family**

**Raising a mixed family**

Hans from Germany and Mina from Japan moved to Australia from the United Kingdom in the late 1990s with their two sons, Jano (nine years old) and Kai (six years old). The children were both born in Germany, but life opportunities have led to the family’s relocation first to the United Kingdom, then to Australia. Apart from job opportunities, another motivation to move to Australia was Hans’s belief that, being a family of mixed heritage, Australia would provide them a place where “not one of us would be a stranger and the other would feel at home, but where all had some sort of common ground.” Since their arrival in Australia, they moved house a few times. The family lived in a small rural farming community for nearly five years, where Hans was the sole GP (general practitioner) in the town. The population of the town was predominantly “white” with a small number of Aboriginal people. They then moved to a metropolitan area south of Perth, where they finally settled to stay. The suburb
where the family lives consists of a predominantly “white” European and Anglo-Australian population, with a small number of ethnic minorities. The sons attended local schools until they began their university studies in Perth. They now live in Perth together in an apartment, both as university students.

Having relocated from Germany to the United Kingdom and then to Australia, and moving from town to town within each country, Mina recalls that at the time of moving to Australia the only thing she was concerned for was the children’s wellbeing. She wanted to make sure that her children were happy, would settle well, and would find friends. It turned out that the sons became a “social antenna” for their parents: as the children made friends in the family’s new neighbourhood, Mina and her husband met the parents of the new friends. She does admit, however, that there were some teary moments for the sons, missing their friends and even the rainy weather of Wales. In between being a mother, Mina has been a manager/medical receptionist of the GP practice and a schoolteacher since arrival in Australia.

Since Australia has many similar customs and values to the United Kingdom and is an English-speaking country, the transition into a new environment went smoothly. If anything, a big difference was the sunny weather and hot summer in Australia. Mina recalled reading the primary-school guide booklet, which included the “no hat, no play” rule at recess time. She also remembered one of the first tips she learned in Australia was to put a frozen carton of juice in the school lunchbox, to keep the sandwich and other food cool. The frozen juice would melt and cool to drink by lunchtime.

Hans tried to encourage his children to learn to think for themselves and have their own independent thoughts and ideas, but by demonstration rather than talking about it. For example, he is a passionate cook and likes to eat good food. His sons grew up seeing him in the kitchen, often experimenting with new, different or unusual tastes. Influenced by the anti-authoritarianism movement of the 1960s, and rebelling against his authoritarian father, he said that he allowed his children much freedom to think for themselves.

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Meanwhile, Mina wanted to instil in her children the value of respect for others, especially towards parents and the older generation. She grew up in a conventional family in Japan, in which her father had a traditional role as the head of the family. He, as the eldest son of eight siblings, also had a duty of care for his younger siblings and whoever was in need of help. Diligence was another equally important aspect in life that she learned as a child. Having lived many years overseas, however, she learned that there are different worldviews and that it is important to acknowledge those differences.

One of the conflicts in parenting between Hans and Mina was, as Hans put it, the difference between “formalism” and “informalism”. Hans preferred to do things in an informal and non-structural manner. On the other hand, Mina liked to organise regular family meetings and discuss things. She tried to give their children regular household chores just as she had done as a child. Whereas Hans enjoyed spontaneity, Mina liked their life to be organised. One of the biggest conflicts the couple has had concerned holding parties at home. In Japan there is no party culture as such, nor are sleepovers common. Mina had difficulty getting used to such social activities among teenage children in Australia. Eventually she reluctantly agreed to allow a party but said that she had made “lots of conditions and rules that the kids had to abide by.”

In relation to differences in physical appearance, Hans had no problem since he would “blend in to the white background.” At a checkout counter in a supermarket, when the couple were together, sometimes Hans noticed “odd looks” from people, looking at the couple to check if they belonged together. But that was nothing negative, he added. Concerning his sons, he believed that they did not experience any overt form of racism, because they are “good looking boys”. Mina had experienced no racism in Australia either, and she took no notice of such issues most of the time, until one bullying incident when the family lived in the small farming community. One of their sons was bullied by a group of Aboriginal children outside the local swimming pool one day. It is not clear whether the motivation of the bullying was due to the fact that the son was new to the community, or because he looked different, or if it was simply a random attack because he happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time, or perhaps whether it was a combination of those factors. Hans and Mina rarely saw their children in terms of physical appearance and its difference, except in an incident like this.
Growing up in a mixed family

Jano remembered the first days in Australia, feeling sad missing his friends in Wales. He also remembered that the children in his new school asked why he spoke “funny”; coming from Wales, he had a Welsh accent. He did not think he was conscious of changing his accent but he must have adjusted it at an early stage after arrival in Australia. Kai, on the other hand, could not remember much except that he missed his toy Lego and could not wait to receive the parcel with the Lego posted from their home in Wales. He also remembered the warm and sunny weather being a contrast, coming from a cold country.

Life at home was full of “cultural snippets” as both Jano and Kai recall. Taking off shoes at the entrance to the house was just one of many different lifestyle habits in comparison to their friends’ homes. Saying *Itadakimasu* and *Haai* (“I receive food” and “yes, go ahead” in response to “I receive food”) at mealtimes was another custom in the family. The family sat down at the table together for dinner every day and the television was turned off at mealtimes. Mealtimes were family time, Jano and Kai remember. They would watch videos and DVDs in Japanese and German, and play computer games in Japanese when available. When they were smaller, their mother would put on children’s songs in German and Japanese for them. Every night, there was a good-night story alternately in Japanese or German, by their mother or father respectively. That habit lasted until the children were about ten or eleven. As they grew older, books in English replaced German and Japanese books. While the family celebrated Christmas like other Australian families, Jano and Kai enjoyed the German tradition of opening gifts on Christmas Eve. Every year was the same Christmas Eve meal: Wiener sausage with potato salad. On New Year’s Eve, the family would have Japanese *soba* noodles (buckwheat noodles) to wish that the coming new year would be a healthy and a happy one. On New Year’s Day, they would receive New Year’s money gifts, following the Japanese tradition.

Kai observed that his parents were “already a lot more open and accepting” to differences than other couples who were not from different cultures, since he perceived that his parents accepted each other’s differences. He did not feel that either of his parents was trying to force their cultural values upon their children. Neither of the sons felt that they were disadvantaged in any way because they looked different, nor did they report any experience of racism. Kai was occasionally stereotyped as an
“Asian” kid, because he looked more “Asian” than his brother, he believes. But he never took deep offence and it never bothered him; he said that name-calling is “all part of growing up, everyone gets called a name at some point.” In relation to the “mixed” background, he thought that people were envious of it. For example, he mentioned comments like “oh cool!” or “that’s really awesome!” from his classmates. Both Jano and Kai agreed that people were genuinely interested in their different upbringing. Jano felt that because people were interested and wanted to know more about him, it made socialising easy. Now, as an adult, Jano feels that being mixed defines him as “being more of a free and adaptable person as opposed to grounded.” While Kai agrees that he also does not feel like he is “fixed,” he says, “I feel like more attached to Australia. I do feel like I could make this my home.”

Reflecting on the early years since arrival in Australia, Kai pointed out the valuable experience of living in the outback as a child. Being introduced to Australian country life with the vast flat landscape of a huge wheat farm and the harsh sun was, he said in hindsight, like experiencing a “true blue Aussie” life—an "authentic" experience of what Australia is best known for. He said life there helped him integrate more into another face of Australia which he would not have experienced otherwise. Jano describes their multicultural family environment as a “mishmash of cultures”: “We created a family culture, as opposed to any specific identity of certain origin … our own traditions within our family which aren’t necessarily identical to that of its origin.”

“Doing” family

In the new primary school the children attended, Mina became a volunteer helper in the school library doing odd jobs. She thought helping in school would be a good way to get to know the school and familiarise herself with the new environment. She learned that birthday parties were a popular event among children, so her children would have theirs every year. Popular party food she prepared included mini party-pies, sausage rolls, pizza, and so on. Often, at the children’s request, she made sushi or Japanese style chicken nuggets called chicken karaage.

At the time the family moved to Western Australia, the supply of Japanese or German food was limited, especially in small regional and rural locations where they lived. Over the course of years, Mina adopted various local tastes as they lived in different
places. These tastes included German dishes, which she learned from her sister-in-law, and dishes from Britain such as English breakfast, Sunday roast, Welsh cakes, and Indian curry.

On the family’s breakfast table there were sometimes mixtures of two or three different kinds of breakfast—rice and miso soup, bacon and eggs, toasted bread with Nutella, an omelette with bread rolls, and ham and cheese slices. Kai remembered dishes from Japan, Germany, and other Asian and European cuisines coming to the table. He felt lucky to have two parents who knew how to cook. He also had fond memories of taking a different lunch to school. He said that his friends were jealous of his packed lunch containing different kinds of food. He would sometimes swap his food with a friend’s sandwich.\footnote{The exchange of lunches at school is discussed further in Chapter 5.} Friends often came over for a play after school or over the weekend and had meals with the family. Jano remembered encouraging his friends, “You’ll be interested. This is something different,” to taste something that was new to them. For many of his friends, trying out new food became part of their visit to his home.

English has been the family’s common language for the most part, as they lived in English-speaking countries after leaving Germany when the children were very young. Hans tried to maintain speaking German to the children, but long working hours gave him limited time with them. Over time, it became too difficult to keep up with the language. Mina persevered with speaking Japanese to the children. The schools the children attended offered Japanese language, which helped with language transmission. Nevertheless, Mina said it was a challenge to maintain the language at home, especially without others to share the language with. Having no social network of similar families, she felt it was also difficult to find any information or guide to language maintenance. Interestingly, Jano and Kai mentioned that sometimes they now communicate in Japanese in public, for instance when they go food shopping for their weekly supply. Although they studied Japanese as a school subject, they still would have liked to learn more of the languages of their parents. However, Jano commented that, considering some people have difficulty mastering their own English language, it is “not so bad” not to have mastered all the languages.
Reflecting on their life in Australia, Hans mentioned that Australia offered the life that he had wanted for his family, with the best possible opportunities and outcomes: in his words, “the outdoor culture, and the affluence that I was actually able to achieve and the comfortable lifestyle we are having now, I think we owe to this country.” He is pleased with what his children have achieved too. Mina agreed; but if anything was missing, she said, that would be a lack of emotional connection to the local community with the limited personal networks they have. One thing the family has maintained throughout the years is regular visits to relatives in Germany and Japan to keep up the family bonds. Hans added that migrants will always remain outsiders to some extent, and that their “observer status” will never change. On the other hand, the children were able to establish friendships and social networks at a young age, much stronger than those of their parents. In that respect, they are as integrated as they can be as “locals” in the Australian community.

**Story of the Boccacci family**

*Raising a mixed family*

Antonio from Italy and Yasuko from Japan met when Yasuko was studying English in Perth, Australia. Antonio immigrated to Australia with his parents when he was five years old. They have a son Ric (14) and a daughter Rena (13). The children are quiet, soft-spoken, and a little shy. The family lives in a small house in a northern suburb of Perth with a high level of ethnic and cultural diversity, and a high ratio of the population being of low socioeconomic background.

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12 While one of the criteria for research participants was that parents have arrived in Australia as adults, in this family, the arrival age of the father was only revealed at the first interview. As the interviews progressed, it became clear that while he migrated young, he had a strong cultural identity and upbringing as Italian. His experience as a migrant child over thirty years ago enabled him to compare different life circumstances today as a father of two children. This is a valuable account as an evidence of an impact of political ideology on the shaping of cultural identity. Therefore, this family was included as part of the data of the research.

Antonio works for the government and Yasuko is a full-time housewife and mother. It was difficult to find out what kind of job Antonio was engaged in. He seemed reluctant to disclose his occupational profile further, other than that he had studied electrical engineering at a tertiary level and it seems that he worked in an office because he spoke about his colleague “sitting next to him.” The children had attended a local primary school, and then both attended the same Catholic high school, which had opened recently in their district. As devout Catholics, the family are active members of the church. In the lounge room where the interviews took place hung a framed picture of Jesus. The older son was a member of the youth group in the church and the younger daughter was about to become a member. Not only did the family live in a culturally diverse area and the children attend a school that comprises of students from diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds, but the church community they belonged to was also culturally and ethnically diverse. Antonio said his Church group with 32 people consists of people from various backgrounds including Anglo-Celtic Australian, Italian, Japanese, Vietnamese, Spanish, Philippine, Mexican, and Chinese.

Some of the most important values these parents held for their family were “togetherness” and communication. The family is a self-described “traditional” family. As Antonio put it; “we are traditional,” with the father working full-time as the breadwinner, and the mother as a full-time mother and housewife, being the primary carer of the children. Antonio and Yasuko believed that Italians and Japanese share similar fundamental values, which emphasise a family-oriented lifestyle such as respect for the elderly and parents, and collective interest as a family. Antonio likes gardening and craftwork, and wants the children to learn practical skills, such as growing vegetables, looking after the chickens, and making and repairing things. Yasuko encourages the children to help in the kitchen, but the children recounted that while Rena helps her mother make lasagne or miso soup (Japanese soup), Ric does not cook.

For this family living in a multicultural environment surrounded by people from diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds, being different was normal. For Yasuko, for example, as a Japanese person, looking different and behaving differently was not unusual, as she is only one of the many diverse people around her. She said that being different was nothing to be ashamed of. Because of the circumstances she lives in, she
said that it was difficult for her to answer the question of whether their family did things differently from others in any way.

At the parents’ interview, Antonio and Yasuko reported one uncomfortable incident when the children were in pre-school. A group of school children hurled abusive racist remarks at Yasuko and the children when they were playing at a playground in a park. Yasuko was in shock and called Antonio at work. Antonio recalls that his colleagues were unsympathetic to the incident. One Anglo-Australian colleague said, “That’s just kids.” To Antonio, it was beyond just “kids” at play: it was racism. To Antonio, the Australia he knew forty years ago was “a racist country,” and he has many memories of bitter experiences as a child. He grew up in a diverse community in the north of Perth as a member of the minority Italian immigrant group. People in the local community were from various countries, such as Greece, Macedonia, Italy, and so forth. He remembers people were very kind to him. At that time, however, he recalled, racism was everywhere, and being different or doing different things was frowned upon. He said that “Australians” ridiculed other cultures. For instance, drinking coffee was not a done thing, one should drink tea instead, or eating spaghetti and garlic was laughed at.

As a father of teenage children now, Antonio sees that things have changed since his childhood years. Australia has become more multicultural, embracing differences. He witnesses the change through his children’s experiences. For instance, his daughter Rena reports a story from school that one of her friends, a Muslim girl, shared some sweets from home with her. During Ramadan, the girl was not allowed to eat normal food during the day, but instead brought some special sweets to school to share with Rena. To Antonio, this was a heart-warming story to hear as a father, that the friend wanted to share a little of what she could eat, and that his daughter was able to experience sharing a special treat with her friend and learning about different foods and customs. Rena talked about another school friend, whose mother is from the Philippines. Her friend told Rena once that instead of sitting on a chair, her mother sits on the floor, and places her food on the chair to eat.

As for Yasuko, her life-world is confined to the local area where the family lives. All her daily activities outside home, such as shopping and church activities, take place within the local community. She seemed to be happy to meet me as a fellow countryperson, as she did not know any Japanese people around her. However, she
did not mention whether she misses contact with other Japanese people. She seems to be content and feels well integrated in the community.

**Growing up in a mixed family**

The children, Ric and Rena, have two sets of friends—one at school and the other at the church community. To my question concerning visiting or having friends over at home, Ric said that he did not socialise with his schoolmates after school; he socialised with friends at the youth church group after school and at weekends. Antonio then explained the family’s strong affiliation with the church community, and that while the children would have a choice later in their life, he hoped to instil Christian values in his children.

Unlike some of the other participating families, sleepovers or parties (even children’s birthday parties) were not an important topic for discussion for the family. When asked about having friends over or sleepovers, the children did not seem interested, indicating that among their circle of friends such activities were not common. As a house rule the children were allowed to play a computer game or go on a computer only at weekends; they seemed to accept that rule without any problem. Comparing himself with some of his schoolmates who have arguments with their parents regarding playing computer games at home, Ric thought his family had it better because there were no arguments between him and his parents.

Neither Ric nor Rena thought of themselves as different from others in terms of their physical appearance as “mixed.” Their parents had talked to them about differences between Japan, Italy, and Australia, but never about being of mixed heritage. Thus the question concerning “mixed race” appeared foreign to them. Their school is multicultural with students from various different countries and it never occurred to them that they were different in their appearance. People would frequently ask where they were from, but neither Ric nor Rena seemed bothered by it. Rena would let others guess first, and their guesses would vary from Chinese, Vietnamese, and Asian to German. Ric on the other hand said that he would give the answer straight: “Japan. And Italian.”

Friends they have are based on their interests and have nothing to do with their culture or “racial” origin. As Ric said, “It’s [friendship group] all mixed. We share the general outlook on things. How we look at things … it’s like how we respond to tests,
or … just basics. Schoolwork, and that stuff.” The majority of his group are Asians, he added. Rena recognised that some people group together depending on the nationalities of their parents. Similar to her brother, her friends are from different backgrounds. Ric felt that looking different or having parents from different countries is “not really an issue. We don’t think about it that much.” Rena agrees. While she is aware that some “Australian groups” do not allow others into their group, she feels a part of the Australian community. If anything, having parents from different cultural backgrounds is a positive thing for Ric and Rena.

“Doing” family

Yasuko could not cook when she married so she learned cooking from books. She also learned “real” Italian food cooking that is not always in the cookbook from her mother-in-law, and now is proud of her homemade Italian cuisine. The children’s favourite homemade dishes are lasagne and other pasta dishes. Usually the family eats Japanese and Italian foods, with occasional variations consisting of dishes Yasuko learned from other mothers, such as Vietnamese food.

Antonio emphasised the importance of mealtimes together for the family. They have breakfast and dinner together everyday. He also stressed the value of sharing meals. In fact, sharing meals with others such as family, relatives, and friends is one of his “fondest memories.” He gave an example of his time in Japan sharing meals and eating and drinking for hours with his parents-in-law, uncles, and others. Another important aspect in their family life that Yasuko mentioned is communication. Instead of watching television during mealtimes, they talk. After school, they talk about school. For Yasuko, it does not matter if it is fighting over something; what is important is to talk. Talking is part of the process that helps the bonding of the family. Antonio adds that “communication teaches us … negotiation skills … even arguing is important.”

English is the main language of communication at home. Antonio grew up bilingual and speaks with his mother in Italian. Yasuko’s English is limited and basic, but is sufficient for daily conversations. When the children were small the parents spoke their languages of origin. Ric remembers he had difficulty responding in English as he started primary school because he was speaking mainly Italian at home, although he does not remember speaking Japanese with his mother. Rena recalled that her mother
tried to teach them Japanese with some books for the children to learn but that stopped when she was in about year three.

Ric and Rena spoke of their trip to Japan with many fond memories. The family visited Japan once during summer holidays when Ric was ten and Rena was eight years old. During their stay in Japan, they attended a local primary school in the hometown of their mother for a few weeks. Everything they experienced there was different and exciting. For example, Rick explained, “the school would provide the food for the students, and the students would serve it to each other.” He found it fascinating that they served each other food. Rena enjoyed not having to wear a uniform to school, except for sports classes when they had to wear sports uniform. The oval and the play area were not “grassy,” but looked like it was made of “sand and rock” and “solid ground.” Even though they did not understand Japanese very well, they felt that students were kind, and that they were warmly welcomed and accepted. Many tried to speak English to them too.

As a family, life with cultural diversity is an intrinsic part of their family life, and everyone takes their differences as part of their ordinary day-to-day experiences. Family life for them may develop and change as the children grow up, reaching the middle adolescent period and beyond into adulthood.

**Story of the Tinubu family**

(Note: In this family, only the parents were the participants. Therefore, there is no separate section for the children.)

**Raising a mixed family**

Sudi from Kenya and Eriko from Japan met when they were international students at university in Perth. More than ten years later they are parents of three young

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14 It was unfortunate that the interviews with Eriko and Sudi did not take place in their home. Their preferred option was to meet outside home after work, since their house is small and noisy when the children play. In addition, Eriko’s mother from Japan was staying with them at the time of the interviews. In other cases I have often found that the home environment helps convey the “feel” of the family: one picks up much from the atmosphere and the objects people are surrounded by from being in a home. It also gives the researcher a chance to glimpse family life through observing the children, the family interactions, and so on, adding a dimension beyond the interview (Miller, 2008).
children—two daughters (aged six and two) and one son (aged five). The family lives in a suburb of Perth. Sudi works as a performance analyst in the public service and Eriko is a nurse, working part-time in a hospital. She is also studying midwifery. Eriko’s mother, who was recently widowed, visits the family on a regular basis from Japan, and lives with them for five to six months every year. The couple appreciates the presence of Eriko’s mother in their busy family life. They believe that having a grandmother for their children is good because it exposes them to Japanese culture and language. Sudi said that living with his mother-in-law is a great pleasure. She blends in with their life well, and helps care for the children and shares household chores.

Sudi values his kin and the importance of passing family and culture on to the next generation. He maintains close contacts with his brother, who also lives in Perth. He said that his parents were immigrants themselves. They immigrated to Kenya from Guinea as a young couple looking for a better life. Although all the children were born in Kenya, his father wanted to ensure that his children grew up with a strong sense of Guinean heritage. He was constantly reminded of being different from others. While Sudi learned much from his father about the importance of kinship and family, he says he does not want to force his cultural background onto his children.

Eriko grew up in Tokyo in a nuclear family—with her parents and one sister. Her grandfather was a pastor of a Christian church, and her family life was influenced by the Christian faith, which is a minority in Japan. She was not allowed to attend any Buddhist festivals in the community, which many children enjoyed. She says that she always felt at odds with mainstream society in many ways, not fitting in completely, despite the fact that she is Japanese.

In the early stages of their married life, there were some conflicts arising from different customs and beliefs. For example, Eriko had difficulty accepting unexpected visitors at dinnertime. Often Sudi’s brother or his friends would appear unannounced around dinnertime. Eriko found it rude to come and expect to be fed when she had prepared a meal for two people. In Kenya, on the other hand, it is a common practice to welcome anyone who comes to your house, regardless of time. The issue concerning negotiations between two customs regarding visitors will be discussed further in more detail in Chapter 5. Another custom that has become normal in their family life is to take off one’s shoes at the entrance to the house. Eriko insisted on
maintaining this Japanese custom. Despite these differences between them, however, the couple felt that most of the time they do not notice differences. Instead, as Sudi said, “I see Eriko, not a Japanese.” Cultural differences seem to fade into the background of their daily life.

In raising their children, Sudi emphasised the importance of teaching them that being different is a positive thing. Both Sudi and Eriko believe that one day their children will be confronted with identity issues, but they want them to learn that difference is a good thing and that, if anything, being different will enrich their lives. Sudi has a close and open relationship with his oldest daughter and often has conversations with her. Sometimes he takes her to McDonald's after school to talk about many things over a babycino. It must be noted that Sudi and Eriko were the only parents who spoke of raising mixed children as a concern. Unlike other participant parents, raising “mixed-race” children was a topic they were generally conscious of, and they said that they spoke frequently about it. It is possible that this is in part due to the fact that the father is African, and that at the same time, he and his wife are well educated and informed about racial issues. In particular, Sudi has studied race/difference/multiculturalism as part of his university degree.

Eriko is also aware of their children’s differences in physical appearance. She said that when she is out with her children, people often ask questions, noticing the difference in appearance between her and her darker-skinned children. They look at her, and they look at the children, and some ask whether they are her children. She does not mind people’s curiosity, as that opens up a conversation with others. But she reported one hurtful experience when she took her children to a Japanese weekend school, which the children attend weekly. Some children there also have mixed backgrounds, but their parents are mostly white Australian/Japanese intermarried couples. One day, a child said to Eriko’s daughter, “You can’t go on the swing because you are black.” Recalling the incident, she said it probably hurt her more

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15 This account resonates with Klocker’s (2015, p. 421) description of an experience on a beach in the Sydney suburb of Cronulla as an example of the instant response of a public eye (in Klocker’s case, it is a young child and a young male surfer’s reaction towards her mixed race daughter—Tanzanian father and white-Australian mother). Both examples show the significance of the skin colour, which evokes instant curiosity, interest, and/or discriminatory reaction from others.
than her daughter; it was an unpleasant experience and a bitter reminder of the reality that skin colour matters in people’s perception. The six-year-old daughter is also well aware of the difference and says things like, “Why do you think Michael Jackson changed his colour?” In comparison, however, their son seems not as troubled or aware of the difference. Eriko described him as “colour-blind.” Sudi described their son this way: “He is almost like, water off a duck’s back … He is just a boy. He just runs around like crazy and does what he needs to do.”

“Doing” family

Their life at home is currently culturally and linguistically Japanese dominant, with predominantly Japanese food, Japanese television programs and books (with a few Swahili books) for the children, and the Japanese grandmother living with them almost half the year. Sudi occasionally makes Kenyan food, but he is also content not having food from his country of origin, as long as there is some meat. Sudi and Eriko feel comfortable being different at home from the mainstream Australian way of life.

Sudi feels, however, that speaking less and less of his language is a shame but is inevitable because he believes that forcing the issue might exacerbate differences. Unlike his father, who insisted that his children learned the Guinean language, he prefers to compromise. As his oldest daughter began schooling, he saw that she wanted to be the same as others. He commented that when he speaks Swahili to his children, he does so to tell them off. On the other hand, Eriko saw it slightly differently. She feels that the children are still young and are flexible. She is of the opinion that he should not give up too easily and should keep encouraging them; seizing the right moment, they will learn. In terms of language transmission, while their family life is Japanese oriented, the couple does see the influence of the wider community, especially that of school on their children. For example, Sudi observed that his oldest daughter, when she began school, wanted to be the same as others, and wanted to “mask the difference.” The five-year-old son responded to Eriko as she spoke Japanese, “I don’t speak Japanese.”

The children bring aspects of “Australianness” into the home from school. Eriko reported that their children attend the “Australian dominant” school, which is not “very multicultural.” The children all sing the national anthem by heart, including their two-year-old daughter, which Eriko finds amusing. They bring home Australian
expressions such as “G’day mate,” and sometimes correct their parents’ English so they speak with Australian accents. They are beginning to talk about sleepovers: “My friend is going for a sleepover, why can’t I go?” Eriko commented that in Japan, there is no such custom for children to sleep over with friends.

Sudi noticed that his children are learning to speak back to others, including to their own parents. This behaviour is noticeably different from the way he was brought up, where children were expected to be obedient and not speak up. Sudi finds this a positive aspect of life in Australia and believes that it is reasonable to stand out from the crowd and voice your opinion, whether it is to your parents or to others. In the meantime, there is a negotiation between the parents about ear piercing: the six-year-old daughter wanted her ears pierced because other girls were doing it. Eriko was against piercing at such a young age. In Japan, if a young girl has her ears pierced, it is considered delinquent behaviour. But, according to Sudi, in Kenya babies are pierced as a way to identify as a female. His sister’s ears were pierced at two months old. When his mother visited the family from Kenya, she brought necklaces and earrings for her granddaughters as a gift. She was taken by surprise to see that the girls had not had their ears pierced.

Eriko described one school activity that changed her daughter’s attitude to difference. The Year 1 class teacher did a project introducing different countries and different cultures, and one of the countries was Japan. Eriko’s daughter took origami and a few books to school, and showed the class the art of paper folding. Since then, she had begun to accept differences more, Eriko says. Previously their daughter used to refuse to take rice to school for lunch, but now is happy to do so. She even asked her mother to make sushi to take along for a Christmas party.

In terms of setting the rules of behaviour, Sudi finds “time out” is a good strategy. Sudi is aware that this is a Western idea, and that it does not agree with Eriko’s cultural background. Although Eriko did not like the idea initially, she began to accept it as a reasonable way of dealing with the children. Sudi also wants to encourage his children to think critically. In line with the idea of speaking their minds as a positive thing, he believes that it is also important for him to teach his children critical thinking.
Both Sudi and Eriko believe living in a “third country” is beneficial for them, because it equalises a possible imbalance with respect to power distribution. If they lived in Kenya or Japan, one member of the couple would be in a more advantageous position because of their cultural familiarity, family connections, language, and so forth. Living in Australia, however, their positions are “neutralised” and “equalised.” To them, multicultural Australia provides the ground to build their family the way they wish, to create their unique culture. As Eriko said, “it doesn't matter if you take off your shoes at home, you can eat Japanese food, and be yourself, and that’s okay … We create our own little culture. So it’s not totally Australian, or Japanese, or African.”

This is an interesting observation made by the couple concerning the power relations between them. The traditional social roles attached to gender differences in Kenya and Japan become less relevant in the Australian context, freeing the couple from the assigned gender roles in their home country and enabling them to recreate their own life space in the new social and cultural environment. Drawing on the symbolic interactionist approach, in which roles are one of the key concepts (see Chapter 3), this example illustrates a process of change in the reconstruction of social reality for both Sudi and Eriko, in which negotiations between their own past history and the present take place. The re-evaluation of each of their own cultural backgrounds thus recreates a new meaning in the new environment. Additionally, this process of change resonates with the argument of Berger and Kellner (1964) that marriage provides the space (of interactions) to recreate new meanings and a sense of identity for couples as one social unit.

Eriko and Sudi are surrounded by many groups of friends and feel supported. For Sudi, there is a positive side to both of them being minority members in the host society. This relates back to the power balance discussed above. For Eriko, the fact that both have completed tertiary education and gained a qualification in Australia also helps with having independence from each other. She sees that if she were to live in Kenya, she would be in a different position, far more dependent on her husband. As a family, they hope to raise their children in the place they have made home, where there are multiple cultures co-existing, where it is okay to look different and to speak English with an Australian accent, and where their children can create their own culture. While there are many moments of negotiation within the family about
differences, this suggests the ordinariness of a mixed migrant family becoming part of the social fabric of Australian society.

**Conclusion**

These four stories offer a snapshot of everyday “family practice” (Morgan, 1996), in which ordinary and mundane daily activities of intercultural migrant families are filled with multidirectional negotiations—in the food the families share, the languages parents try to teach their children, the friends and peer groups the children interact with, the family rituals and rules that develop over time, and so on. In all these interactions, multiculturality is at the core of the processes of the construction of identity.

Every family develops its own unique family culture, integrating the triangle of cultures and languages of origin of the father, of the mother, and of Australia. The narratives of the families above demonstrate that cultural diversity is not outside home, but is practised within the family every day. Despite challenges at times and the complexity of negotiations with multiple languages and the mixing of cultural values and beliefs, the parents are content to have raised (and continue raising) a family in Australia. For the children, being ‘mixed’ and having grown up in an intercultural family has been positive as a whole, challenging claims that such a life is problematic and filled with negative experiences. As much as there are differences among families, mixed family life is just as ordinary as any other, regardless of cultural and “racial” differences. As Soliz, Thorson, and Rittenour (2009, p. 821) argued, “a perceived sense of shared family identity in multiracial/ethnic families would suggest a minimal recognition and, more importantly, minimal influence of differences that are based on racial/ethnic identity.”

Luke and Carrington (2000, p. 22) argued that mixed families develop a “third space,” in which “families have renegotiated their identities as subjects and as a social unit in spaces they have created outside the norms of either culture.” They also pointed out that “there are no ‘role models’ or guidelines, so they become bricoleur crafters of themselves and of ‘family’.” These family stories demonstrate such “bricoleur crafters” in action. As discussed in Chapter 2, this “crafting” process is complex with multiple layers of negotiations (Edwards, et al., 2010; Edwards, Song, Caballero, &
Ali, 2012; Caballero et al., 2008). But at the same time, these examples reveal the ordinariness of their family life (Caballero, 2012).

The next two chapters will explore in further detail the family negotiation space. Chapter 5 will focus on family interactions in daily life—both at home and in the environment outside the home such as school and the wider community—in four areas of daily life: food, language, education, and school life. Chapter 6 will highlight the processes of construction of cultural identity/identities among family members, particularly of the children, in the context of Australia and its policy of multiculturalism.
Chapter 5: Family Interactions

Introduction

This chapter explores how intercultural migrant families negotiate different aspects of daily family life through relational interactions. The main aim of this chapter is to illustrate the complexity and diversity of the ways in which cultural transmission and its negotiations take place in different areas of daily life within a family. It focuses on food prepared and eaten, language(s) spoken, education of children, and aspects of children’s social life, in particular sleepovers and parties. Attempts are made to demonstrate the blurriness of cultural boundaries in the daily life of these families. As discussed in Chapter 2, the symbolic interactionist approach is applied in the analysis as the key theoretical lens. This approach treats family as the basic unit of social interactions, and these interactions within the family and with the external world hold the key in the construction of cultural identity for family members. For mixed migrant families, meaning-making processes occur not only through acculturation and child socialisation, but also through shared symbols such as language(s), foods, cultural values and beliefs that parents brought with them, and materials and objects (which carry memories of the parents from their homeland).

The analysis demonstrates how family interactions and negotiations can produce unique patterns of behaviour and attitudes for each family, which in turn may shed light on the deeper understanding of how immigrant families of mixed heritage work out their family life and integrate into a new society. In examining negotiations of multiple cultures within families, the study of interactions is important. Turner (1970) emphasised the importance of mundane daily interactions in understanding family life. Socialisation processes in particular, which occur in the day-to-day activities of family life, hold the key to gaining insight into how families operate. He stressed, however, that although the major socialisation process pertains to children, it is a process that occurs in all family members through each social interaction: “We must keep in mind that, although the most dramatic evidences of socialization apply to children, all members of any group undergo some continuous socialization as a by-product of every interaction experience” (Turner, 1970, p. 166).
In this chapter, acculturation and cultural negotiation processes are considered along with socialisation. I argue that these processes are the “structuring” forces that shape a renewed “habitus” within intercultural migrant families. Drawing on Bourdieu (1986), Gillian Bottomley, a renowned Australian scholar in migration studies, speaks of immigrants’ experiences, using “habitus” as follows:

Habitus is the process whereby those who occupy similar positions in social and historical space tend to possess a certain sense of place, including categories of perception and appreciation that provide a common-sense understanding of the world, and especially of what is ‘natural’ or even imaginable. But these categories are themselves socially produced within very specific contexts, and they continue to mediate the experience and interpretation of changing objective conditions. Thus, the durable, transposable dispositions acquired in childhood are overlaid and transformed by adjustment to later circumstances. (Bottomley, 1992, p. 122)

Throughout this chapter, such acquisition and transformation processes are explored. In so doing, attempts are made to answer the following guiding questions: How do the parents negotiate the differences of cultural values and beliefs in parenting practice? How are the cultures of the parents transmitted to the children? What influences the process of cultural transmission for the parents—what is transmitted and what is not, and why? How do the children negotiate the cultures of their parents and that of the host society?

**Cultural negotiations between spouses**

In Chapter 2, I discussed details concerning the acculturation process and its impact on resettlement among migrants (Berry, 2001, 2003, 2005; Sam & Berry, 2006). There were three key points made regarding acculturation in a new society. First, the acculturation process that migrant parents experience affects the ways in which children are socialised into the Australian way of life. Second, acculturation involves complex negotiation processes about the retention of the culture of origin and the adoption of the new culture. Third, the level of acculturation differs greatly depending on various factors such as country of origin, cultural values and beliefs held where the person grew up, personality, and personal and family history, all of which each individual carries with them to a new place.
In considering acculturation processes in the case of intermarried migrant couples, first-hand cultural contact with “the other” occurs not only in the new society, but also within the couple’s relationship. Each partner is faced with adjustments to the other’s cultural background irrespective of the location of the settlement. In that sense, the parents are confronted with a double-layered acculturation processes: one between the spouses, and the other between the cultures of their origin and of the host society. Before I proceed, however, it is worth noting that in marriage at a more general level, mutual adjustments are necessary regardless of cultural or ethnic difference. As Berger and Kellner (1964) pointed out, not only present experience but also past experiences are shared in the marital relationship. In the authors’ words,

> it is not only the ongoing experience of the two partners that is constantly shared and passed through the conversational apparatus. The same sharing extends into the past. The two distinct biographies, as subjectively apprehended by the two individuals who have lived through them, are overruled and re-interpreted in the course of their conversation …The couple thus construct not only present reality but reconstruct past reality as well, fabricating a common memory that integrates the recollections of the two individual pasts. (Berger & Kellner, 1964, pp. 14–15)

Below is an example of adjustments one couple has made—Sudi from Kenya and Eriko from Japan with three small children. (A background story of their family life was provided in Chapter 4.) As briefly described in Chapter 4, one of the first negotiations made between the couple was about providing food for unexpected visitors at a mealtime. In this example, the difference between two family systems, extended kinship and the nuclear family, can be observed. The following conversation between Sudi and Eriko began with the question of what the couple missed from home. Among the things Sudi missed, despite a quick and smooth adaptation to the Australian way of life, was the kinship system.

Sudi: I think family, friends, and I think the kinship system that I was from, the idea that a friend can come into my house and don't have to give me a call and say, you know, “What time will you be home?” or “I need to organise an appointment”. It's slightly different because we kind of ... it's almost an open house. When you cook, you have to cook enough knowing there might be a guest out of nowhere. And I think that was quite interesting in lots of different ways, and for you as well.
Eriko: Yes, we had that issue. ‘Cos obviously in Japan when you’re visiting someone you let them know way in advance, you just don’t show up. At dinnertime that’s what his friends are doing. I used to cook my plate, his plate, that’s it—there’s no leftover. His friends, coming at dinnertime, they’re expecting to be fed [laughs].

Sudi: They weren’t necessarily expecting to be fed but if it’s there, you kind of share it. And I guess that’s the kind of background that we were from. Especially because we were so used to it because my mom, that’s exactly what she did when she cooked.

Eriko: Now I understand but ...

Sudi: I know you do, but it was just at the beginning, for me it was just normal. It was normal practice—that’s how it works. You know the idea that you cook enough knowing that there may be certain guests coming without necessarily advising you.

Eriko: Even little things like: you just don’t open up someone’s fridge in Japan. That’s very rude. His friends would come and just help themselves [laughter]. So that I struggled with. We had a few [arguments].

While Eriko grew up with a nuclear family in a big city, and meals preparation was usually done for the family only, Sudi came from a culture in which meals were shared by the extended family and friends. While for Sudi, having family or friends unexpectedly appear at mealtime was normal, it was not the case for Eriko. She was not used to preparing an extra amount of food at dinnertime for unexpected visitors. They understood the conflict arose from the cultural difference between a kinship family structure in a village where Sudi grew up and a nuclear family structure in Tokyo. In relation to the adjustments that they have made, it is clear that Eriko had the main adjustment to make, while Sudi seemed to have maintained his custom. The detailed process leading to this solution was not discussed in this conversation, but it suggests that it was more Eriko who was troubled by the difference and who adjusted to Sudi’s way. This is a good example of two cultural systems at the macro level intersecting with the private sphere of personal lives at the micro level. As discussed in Chapter 3, one of the key principles of symbolic interactionism is at play here: the interrelations between society and individuals and the importance of the study of
actions of individuals as active agents (Blumer, 1969). However, while this process of negotiation between the spouses is at the junction between the society and individual, there is another layer of cultural negotiation in the case of intercultural marriage: the acculturation process in the host society, Australia. While situations involving visiting non-immigrant families outside the home were not discussed, it is likely that the rules established at home regarding unannounced visitors would differ from customs among Australian families.

As discussed in Chapter 2, in the acculturation processes various factors play a role and are intertwined in complex manners, for example, language proficiency level, experience prior to coming to Australia, location/locality of the residence, and so forth (Berry, 1997). I will explore below some parents’ experiences of acculturation, referring to their early stage of family life in Australia. The next examples show how some mothers adapted to a new environment. The acculturation process varied greatly. Some had felt the need for minimal or no adjustment, while others had made adjustments with ease or with some challenges.

Mina and her family were introduced in a family story in Chapter 4. For Mina, the most important thing in the adjustment was her sons’ welfare. Having moved house—and country—several times since the children were born in Germany, she wanted to make sure that uprooting so frequently would not affect her children’s wellbeing. She says:

I was actually too busy thinking about my kids’ adjustment and to ensure that the kids will feel okay, to think about my own adjustment ... It was the most important thing for the kids to feel at home, settle in schooling, find friends, and so on. Yeah, that was my first adjustment. I mean, because when my kids were happy, I was happy.

To ensure that her children would feel at home, she made an effort to adopt some Australian ways of life from the beginning. To her, motherhood was something that arose naturally from her childhood (it was an unconscious disposition), but in some cases it was also a conscious decision-making process. She says:

I was conscious of adjusting some ways of doing things to Australian ways, like making sandwiches for lunch for their school, attending sports events, being a taxi driver on weekends for sports club activities and so on.
She also added that living in the United Kingdom prior to moving to Australia, helped them to adjust swiftly, because customs in the two countries were similar. As Becher (2008) argued, parents aspire to ensure that the children are happy in a new environment. This example is also evidence of the process of transforming cultural identity through the adaptation process. As a migrant mother of a mixed family, she negotiates the *habitus* that she has carried into a new environment in the upbringing of her children. Bourdieu’s argument concerning the influence of habitus in re-structuring one’s fundamental worldview is at play here (Bourdieu, 1984; Maton, 2008).

In Jade’s case, she reported that she experienced little need to change after her marriage to her Belgian husband, Walter. As discussed in Chapter 4, their home was filled with materials from the homelands of both Jade and Walter. She believes that living surrounded by such things provided a homely atmosphere. It is possible that life surrounded by the artefacts from her homeland helped bridge the gap between the two countries in the acculturation process to resettle in a new society. Drawing on the personal accounts of Eurasian immigrant women living in Australia, Barrett argued that materials from homeland helps immigrants recreate their identity in a new land (Barrett, 2011).

Comparing herself with her sisters, she finds her marriage doing very well. In the conversation with her husband as they discuss the expansion of their business, Jade explains how “normal” everything has been with no adjustment needed:

*Walter:* I also make sure that we don't work 24 hours a day. We spend time together.

*Jade:* Always. I think we never seem to ... I think for us it's like normal, no transition, no complication, nothing. It just ... in fact we wouldn't ... like others were even like, my family or my sisters were saying, is it difficult to be married to a Belgian, not Filipino? In fact even in the first ... when since I, in the Philippines, I have ... we're six, I'm the youngest, two brothers and three sisters. All of them married to Filipinos. I said I'll be the one, I don't like to marry a Filipino.

*Walter:* [laughs]
Jade later added that her sisters who were married to Filipino husbands are now divorced, suggesting that intercultural marriage is not necessarily the cause of problems. This account supports the argument made by Johnson and Warren (1994) and Hardach-Pickle (1988) that cultural difference is not the most significant cause of problems in intermarriage relationships but, rather, that other factors such as family upbringing and educational background play more significant roles.

**Transmission of the cultures of origin**

**Choice of food at home**

Food is considered one of the most prevalent and obvious forms of cultural maintenance for migrant families, and at the same time the scene of socialisation (Flowers & Swan, 2012; Gabaccia, 1998; Hage, 1997). The symbolic significance of food among minority immigrants and families can be seen in an Australian film *Looking for Alibrandi*. The film is based on the novel by the third-generation Italian-Australian author, Melina Machetta (1992). The film begins with the scene of a big family gathering in the backyard with all the family members enjoying making tomato sauce—men enjoying their drinks, and women pressing tomatoes and chatting away. A young teenager, Australian-born Josephine, the main character, observing her mother, her grandmother, and other women pressing tomatoes in a large pot sitting at an outdoor table, says, “This is tomato sauce making day. I call it national wog day.” And she tries to escape from the gathering with her (“non-wog”) friends who come to pick her up in a car. The use of food at the start of the movie suggests the value of food in conveying a message to the viewers, and the importance of food in self-identification and how one is perceived by others. This prompt indicates the symbolic meaning and the significance of food as the demarcation of ethnic/cultural belonging.

It is, however, not only among immigrants that food plays an important role in life, but, at a broader level, food is considered essential as a signifier of cultural identity. As Fischler (1988, p. 275) argued, “food is central for our identity.” Food, as an expression of cultural identity, is shared and passed on from one generation to the next. It must be added, however, work involved in preparation and consumption of food for the family is mainly the mother’s task, including making meals, shopping for food items, choosing snacks for the children and so on. Lewin (1943, p. 37) argued
that the mother is the “gatekeeper” of food consumption, as she usually selects what to buy based on her experience, attitudes to food, and affordability. However, despite changing gender roles in modern societies, little has changed (Oakley, 1974; Gilding, 1997; Kwak, 2003; Bove & Sobal, 2006). This gendered role is consistent in my research findings regardless of generations, between parents of older generations (in their 60s) and between younger parents (in their late 20s to mid 30s). Although some mothers are in full-time or part-time employment, they are the key providers of food for the family. It is mostly the mothers who have learned to prepare the dishes from the father’s country of origin, and not the other way around. Among some families, grandmother’s cooking played a part in various degrees. For example, a grandmother from Japan would become the main food provider, or a grandmother from Poland would introduce Polish dishes during her stay in Australia. In one family, grandparents lived next door to the family, thus family food was influenced by the taste the grandmother would bring on a regular basis. In one case, the mother of the adult daughters who became mothers themselves began teaching the daughters some Japanese recipes, to pass on some tastes of Japan to her grandchildren. However, perceived “Australian” food (Pettigrew, 2002), such as outdoor barbecues, meat pies, sausage rolls, and so on, were adopted by the families into their home meals to varying degrees. It was often the children who brought in local food from school, or introduced it through their contacts with other families in the school community.

My research findings indicate the important role food at home has as the source of not only day-to-day consumption, but also as the material of negotiation about identities—what to retain or what not to retain from the cultures of origin, what to adopt or what not to adopt from the settlement country, and why those choices are made. Change of food patterns occurs as part of the acculturation process for immigrants whether their settlement in a new society is temporary or permanent. (Hartwell, Edwards, & Brown, 2011; Lv & Brown, 2010).

Without exception, all the households maintained the eating habits from the parents (although mostly foods from mother’s country) to a greater or lesser degree. This supports Gabaccia’s argument (1998) that eating habits are difficult to change. In addition, Gabaccia (1998) emphasised the importance of food as the marker of the cultural boundaries people create. She stated:
Humans cling tenaciously to familiar foods because they become associated with nearly every dimension of human social and cultural life ... Food thus entwines intimately with much that makes a culture unique, binding taste and satiety to group loyalties. Eating habits both symbolize and mark the boundaries of cultures. (Gabaccia, 1998, p. 8)

The question remains, however: What happens to intercultural families with multiple cultures at home?

In a broader sense, this preference and choice of tastes in consumption (of food in this case) resonates with Bourdieu’s view of the reinforcement of boundaries set by one’s social and cultural positions (Bourdieu, 1984). Drawing on Bourdieu (1984), Becher (2008, p. 54) argued that “tastes and preferences in consumption tend to express and reinforce one’s position with respect to social and cultural boundaries.” Material family practice such as food choice contributes to “family identity construction” (Becher, 2008, p. 54). Food can be understood as a form of symbolic consumption, through which one’s self-identity is shaped (Bauman, 1973; Giddens, 1991; Gronow & Warde, 2001: Counihan & Van Esterik, 1997). In addition, Fiese, Foley, and Spagnosa (2006, p. 68) asserted that mealtimes portray “family identity and the creation of a sense of group membership.”

I explore now what families of mixed backgrounds eat at home and how they negotiate food consumption. Depending on each parent’s background, the availability of food items, the family's locality, the parents’ abilities and interest in cooking and so forth, every family had their own way of choosing the food they ate.

Parents’ experience

Each family has developed their own unique ways in the choice of food and what appears on the table in everyday life. Three examples below illustrate this. As a whole, however, families were open to different types of foods and flexible in what they ate. This is an interesting contrast to research results on food preferences of first-generation Chinese families in the United States (Lv & Brown 2010). The research findings indicated that parents hoped to maintain their traditional Chinese diet, but struggled to maintain it and were frustrated that their children adopted a “Western” and “unhealthy” diet very quickly—such as macaroni, half-prepared food like pizza, chicken nuggets, and so on. My research results did not indicate any struggles by the
parents about the change in food consumption. Instead, the blending of various international cuisines was adopted with ease. However, this may be due to the fact that many parent participants in my research cohort were older, so they had become accustomed to different foods over time. It is also possible that, unlike the single-ethnic migrant groups in the above example, the mixed families already had two or more varieties in their diet at home, so that another different food was not a big issue. It may also be due to the fact that the participating children were older, so that the attraction of fast food had diminished and food preferences might have changed. Thus, change of diet did not emerge as an issue for the parents. It is worth noting here, however, that one study regarding family meal consumption among adolescents in Australian households shows that regardless of ethnic backgrounds, families tend to enjoy various multicultural cuisines (Gallegos, Dziurawiec, Fozdar, & Abernethie, 2010).

*Example one—the Morgan family*

The father, Nathan, is a descendant of Dutch Burghers from Sri Lanka, and the mother, Lin, is a Straits-born Chinese-Malaysian. They have two adult sons in their mid-to-late twenties still living at home. The family eats a variety of foods at home. Nathan described how Lin has been open to their sons’ wishes to try different foods that they have experienced outside home.

Below is an extract from the interview with them:


Nathan: Well, I think you basically have ...

Lin: Right.

Nathan: Well, I mean, you are the—you organise—I don't have much to do with the food, I don't cook or ... so rice, traditional family dishes she has introduced to us ... Plus also tried new things as well.

...

Nathan: Initially we started out when we were first married she was making things at home her mother used to cook ... And her family ate. And I quite liked that and I was—I’m quite happy with what, the way she pre ... made, and how they
got later on ... the boys have said they prefer some things, and you've tried to adjust, and she's tried to adjust, and ... incorporate more Western food as well.

Lin: I suppose generally we eat rice, I suppose. Quite a lot of rice.

Nathan: Yeah, rice seems to be the staple basis of most of our food.

In the separate interview with sons Jonathan and Darren, they describe their family food as “a bit of a fusion” and “a bit of a mixture.” Although Malaysian food with rice comes to the table regularly, their mother cooks a wide range of Western-style foods, from steaks to pasta. In addition, there is a strong influence from their grandparents’ family, such as Sri Lankan curries, yellow rice and the like. However, dishes their grandmother prepares are not Sri Lankan (in a traditional sense), but have the influence of the Dutch Burghers. This family’s example shows different layers of adjustments and adaptation of various foods to establish their “family foods.” What is important to note here is the influence of the taste of the grandmother on the children. In this family’s case, Nathan’s (the father) parents live close by and the sons grew up in close contact with their grandparents. They remember fondly some special foods prepared by their grandmother, such as meatballs with distinct Dutch Burgher flavours and a sweet dish called “Bruder”, which is enjoyed over the Christmas festive period. In this family, the grandmother’s presence amplified the influence of the culture of origin in the family’s food customs and habits. Although the examples of food mentioned here are limited, they show that family histories are woven into a new family food culture in which invisible family heritages of diverse backgrounds surface. The concept of habitus (Bourdieu, 1984) helps in understanding the multiple layers of cultural transmission: in this case, the development of food culture/tastes in the intercultural households. Each practice of the transmission of food and taste can been seen as habitus developing in a particular time and space. Lin, after the marriage, has acquired the food tastes of her husband’s heritage. As Jonathan and Darren began schooling, they brought home some new tastes of the host society into their households, which Lin gladly adopted. The grandmother’s foods have also become an important part of the culinary culture of the family. The sweets prepared by the grandmother are a new taste that Lin has acquired, and Jonathan and Darren have grown up with it. Thus, food is a medium of symbolic interaction and different food traditions and customs that are unique to this family have developed. Similar to
Bottomley (1992), discussed in Chapter 2, Navarro (2006) argued that habitus is “developed through processes of socialisation and determines a wide range of dispositions that shape individuals in a given society. It is not a ‘structure’ but a durable set of dispositions that are formed, stored, recorded and exert influence to mould forms of human behaviour” (Navarro, 2006, p. 16).

Example Two—the Muff family

Peter, from Switzerland, and Kim, a Chinese-Malaysian, with an 18-year-old son, Daniel, moved to Australia about seven years ago from Malaysia. Unlike most other families who often maintain the foods from their cultures of origin, Kim provides mainly Western foods at home. She explained that it was due to the easy and fast preparation of Western food:

Kim: Food-wise, I can say I learnt a lot of recipes ... learn a lot how to cook the Western food after I know him, and you know ... Before I knew him usually I would eat all this Asian, Asian-style, Asian food. It’s hard we go for Western restaurants and all this. So that is what I learnt a lot from his culture.

Maki: So what kinds of food do you eat mostly at home?

Kim: In here, mostly it’s Western food, or sometimes I cook stir fry. When I feel like Asian food, you know, and simply because he [her husband] doesn't eat spicy food, and I like spicy food.

[Laughter]

You know, and Daniel [her son] no problem with spicy food, I just don't cook always spicy. And sometimes when I specially cook some spicy food, I usually cook another dish, special dish for him [her husband], you know? That's the only way I can solve it. And the rest are no problem, and mostly I cook Western food, most of the time. I feel that Western food is easier to cook quickly.

As mentioned earlier, mothers were the main food providers, although some fathers did contribute to different degrees, depending on their cooking skills, interest or time availability. Several fathers indicated that they did not cook and that it is the wife’s “job” to prepare meals for the family. Peter says:
I think with parenting and education, usually I let her handle this. It was in [my] culture, more or less, a mother took care of the children, the father was working ... you know, that's how I was brought up, you know.

*Example Three—the Hoffmann family*

In the household of Claus from Germany and Mayumi from Japan, with two young children, most of the food eaten at home is Japanese. However, Claus does cook German food occasionally.

Claus: Uh sometimes, I would say twice a month, I do some German cooking. Usually on weekend, but not every weekend. I would say every second weekend, make some German food.

Mayumi: But the bread is German one.

Claus: Yes, we make our own bread, that is a German sour dough bread.

Maki: So, that heavy one.

Mayumi: Yeah, yeah. [laughter]

Claus: I don't like Australian bread, they're just ...

Mayumi: That white toast bread, isn't it?

Claus: I don't know ... very low value bread [we all laugh]. So, yeah, twice a week, maybe three times a week I'm making bread.

Hans, a German father of two young adult sons, was the only father who routinely participated in preparation of food. He mentioned that he learned to cook on the job as a professional cook in restaurants when he was young. He is pleased that his sons have taken an interest in cooking:

Food is of course a very, very big thing in our family because I’m a passionate cook! And cooking German food or food I like is my way of combatting homesickness. So if I want to have some form of Germanness, then that really is best achieved through German food I used to cook when I was home ... That is something I always kept up, and that was also something of a role model for my kids, who both now are getting good at cooking ...
Gabaccia (1998, p. 6) argued that “the food they [humans] ate as children forever defines familiarity and comfort.” Similarly, food has a nourishing and comforting effect, especially when away from home. Eating food from home helps one to feel connected with the home culture (Brown, Edwards, & Hartwell, 2010). In the study of the relationship between food and migrants’ identity among Latinos in New York, Weller and Turkon (2015, p. 58) argued that immigration always involves negotiations of “the incorporation of new foodways and the loss of traditional ones,” and that the degree of adaptation/maintenance depends on individual immigrants’ environment—access to food, economic and sociocultural circumstances, and emotional attachment to food. Furthermore, the meaning attached to food, which has developed in the primary socialisation process (Mead, 1934), can resurface as “comfort food” (Locher et al., 2005). As Locher et al. argued, “while selecting particular food objects for comfort may appear to be a highly personal choice, it is deeply embedded within larger social and cultural systems” (2005, p. 277). Hans describes cooking the German food as a source of comfort to overcome homesickness. Claus, being unable to enjoy bread in Australia, began making his own bread to enjoy the taste of home. As Fishler (1988, p. 280) argued, consumption of a particular food (the tastes acquired as a child) such as these examples, is a practice that enables “control over the body, the mind and therefore over identity.”

The above empirical data concerning the negotiations in food practice demonstrate that acculturation and socialisation are occurring in multiple directions within the family. As the primary provider of food, mothers learn food preparation from the father’s culture, fathers learn the tastes of the mother’s culture, and simultaneously the parents learn foods and culinary customs from the wider Australian culture, either from outside the home or from their children, the tastes they learn in school. This is an example of tertiary socialisation (see Chapter 2 and Chapter 6), in which the parents are socialised into a third context. The food practice is constantly evolving and changing, leading to uniqueness of each family. Hall (1996) argued that cultural identity is constantly in the making and is fluid in nature.

The data also illustrate that the process of adoption of new culture and retaining of the cultures of origin are ongoing and multidirectional. These findings contend the acculturation theory (Berry, 1997, 2001, 2003, 2005, 2007), which argues that the process is unidirectional and that there is an end point in the acculturation process.
Furthermore, the findings also challenge the argument that acculturation is two dimensional—retaining the culture of origin and adoption of a new culture (Schwartz et al., 2006), since in the case of mixed migrant families, it involves multiple cultures. The question remains how to understand this multidimensionality. There is little research on the relationships between food pathways and cultural identity among mixed migrant families. More research is needed for a better understanding of how food and cultural identity are interrelated in such families.

Children’s negotiations

Example One—Karl (the Geiger family)

School lunch is a big part of school life for children. Although there are variations, a typical school lunch box includes, according to the description of some participants, a sandwich, a carton of juice drink or bottle of water, fruit, and sweets such as a packet of chocolate, muesli bar, or a piece of cake. Mothers who were unfamiliar with Australian school lunches often prepared lunch according to the way they knew from their homeland. Their children were usually the source of information about what goes in a lunch box.

Karl, for example, says he wanted to be the same as other children. His mother Tamiko recalls when the schoolteacher told her about her son not wanting to tell her what was in his lunch. In the lunch box was some onigiri (rice balls, a common snack or lunch in Japan). She learned that her son wanted to be the same as others and part of a group, and not to stand out as different. Young children recognise sameness and difference between themselves and others, but at the same time develop a sense of belonging as a social being and have a need to be connected (Eccles, 1999).

Similarly, Yoko, now a young mother of two small children of three years old and a newborn baby, remembers that her mother was the only Japanese person in town at the time, in a small country community in the northern part of Western Australia.

I remember going to school and my lunch was always very different to the other children’s. Like they would have Vegemite sandwiches, I would have my onigiri [rice balls]. [laughs] I remember being embarrassed when I was younger.
She recalls the time when she asked her mother to pack a sandwich instead. She was embarrassed at the time, but today she says a Japanese lunch (*obento*)\(^{16}\) is probably the most popular lunch.

**Example Two—Kai (the Müller family)**

In contrast to the “embarrassing” experiences above, Kai has fond memories of taking his mother’s packed lunch to school. As mentioned briefly in Chapter 4, especially in high school, he particularly liked taking a thermos lunch container with different warm meals, which he describes below. His schoolmates were envious of his lunch and wanted to have a taste of it.

Maki: What kind of food did you eat at home?

Kai: All sorts of food ... Yeah, the best of all three worlds. Um, coming from Germany, Japan and also just food from the Western world, and East as well, because we were both lucky to have parents who know how to cook. And so we always had good food at home. Going to school with packed lunches, other kids would be always jealous of our lunch box. Especially when we got little soup tubs filled with spaghetti bolognaisce or Japanese style curry and rice, that's still hot for lunchtime. Yeah. Sometimes I would swap my Japanese chicken nuggets (*chicken karaage*) with a friend for a piece of ham sandwich.

**Example Three—Maika (the Karam family)**

Similarly, Maika remembers her mother’s cooking being famous in school. Her friends wanted to have a share of her mother’s food: “My friends would all want to come over to eat or, like, if I have something that my Mum made, they’ll all be like, ‘Oh, can I have some?’ So, yeah, it was really cool.” On the one hand, the two examples above show how a taste from the mother's country of origin is transmitted to

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\(^{16}\) *Japanese obento (or bento)* is a compartmentalised lunch box, which Japanese children take to school. In Japan, mothers go to great lengths to create not only nutritious, but also aesthetically beautiful and presentable *obento*. *Obento*-making practice has become a national phenomenon which reflects society's ideology of maintaining gender roles, reinforcing a mother’s role as the primary caretaker of the children. See Allison (1991), *Japanese Mothers and Obentos: The Lunch-Box as Ideological State Aparatus*. 
the children. On the other hand, it also shows a cultural learning process whereby the children's schoolmates enjoy something exotic but not threatening.

Example Four—Oriana (the Nicolas family)

For Oriana, school lunch provided a chance to learn about differences—differences between “Australian” lunch, and “non-Australian” lunch. Now in her late twenties, she recalls eating her favourite “Australian” lunch. She grew up in the household where her mother would cook various kinds of food, but not foods perceived to be stereotypically Australian, such as meat pies, sausages, chips, or steaks cooked on the barbecue grill. The closest she can remember to “Aussie” lunch she took was a sandwich with apple syrup, a Dutch brown-coloured sweet spread, which resembles vegemite. She said,

I remember one food I always had from my childhood, which I’ll always consider particularly Australian, like for an Australian kid who’s growing up here, is party pies—like meat pies—and choc-milk. [Laughs.] That really is a classic combination, but only an Australian child, at least, you know, will buy it too.

I don’t know what they serve, they probably serve more interesting things in—or probably healthier things too—in the canteens now. But for me, that was my favourite lunch. If I was ever lucky enough to get money to go to the canteen to buy a lunch, I would always have, like, a meat pie and a choc-milk. Yeah, and so, even now, if I have a meat pie, I put the tomato sauce, I put the choc-milk on the side, and that just brings me back to when I was in primary school.

As the above examples illustrate, school lunch played an important role in the process of acquiring new tastes, as well as being a pathway for other children in school to be introduced to unfamiliar tastes. Researchers argued that habitus can change, depending on sociopolitical circumstances (Bourdieu, 1984; Maton, 2008; Bottomley, 1992). In one sense, a lunch box can be understood as a medium of structuration process—whereby children play an active role as the mediator of the process for change. Children are the active agents of cultural transmission, introducing “the other” into mainstream society (Noble, 2009; Renzaho et al., 2011). An example of food exchange between an Anglo-Australian boy’s beef sausage and a Sri Lankan boy’s curry puff at school also illustrates that point (Noble, 2009, pp. 57–58). What Noble calls the “processes of reciprocity” (2009, p. 57) occur in day-to-day ordinary
social interactions. Furthermore, the children as social agents would take the new taste they learned at school and introduce it at home. This cultural exchange is part of ordinary social exchange. In Noble’s words:

At some distance from the critique of the culinary cosmopolitanism of middle-class elites, there is a broader recognition of the social and cultural importance of food in creating cultural meaning, social bonds and senses of personal identity. (2009, p 58)

Food as cultural signifier

“Australian” food for migrant families

Barbecues were perceived to be part of the stereotypical Australian lifestyle by many participants—outdoor life with barbecues in the fresh air: in the garden, in the park, or on the beach. Barbecues were mentioned frequently as one of the features that represent “Australian culture.” Barbecues are perceived as part of the Australian lifestyle and being “Australian” (Pettigrew, 2002). While one family may have no barbecue at home, another family would embrace the custom and enjoy the outdoor lifestyle. One teenage son (who arrived in Australia seven years ago), for example, has fully embraced the barbecue culture. In response to the question of whether he cooks any Australian food, he said, “Barbecue, yeah, already sucked in, to the culture.”

Two brothers remember having a sausage-sizzle barbecue birthday party almost every year outside in the garden with food their parents prepared. According to their mother, birthday parties were a “special” occasion, and she asked her children what they would like her to serve there. Apart from some homemade food such as sushi, pizza, or watermelon punch, some of the snacks that appeared at birthday parties included lamingtons, Tim Tams, mini party pies, sausage rolls, and so on. The mother stressed, however, that such party snack foods were not among the daily food they consumed. Similar experiences were reported by some other mothers. In one sense, for the children, having come to Australia as young children, the snack food they chose was almost like a cultural sampling of exotic food. At the same time, children were the “social antenna” to bring the food of Australia home: a form of “reverse socialisation” from children to parents, informing them of new tastes (Sutton-Brady, Davis, & Jung, 2010). In their study of Korean migrant families in Australia and their “creolisation” of tastes, Sutton-Brady et al. (2010, p. 360) argued that “the young migrant generation
is much more ‘culturally fluent’ and confident in making movements between the perceived and real cultural spaces, constructing particular identities … as an everyday performance of a well-defined bicultural way of being.”

*The significance of the staple foods—rice, bread and potatoes*

Every family had different combinations of staple food choices: potatoes and rice, bread and rice, or rice and rice! In a discussion of “Asianness,” Ang (2004, p. 150) stated, “the representation of rice as a prime emblem for Asian cultural specificity and difference is both trivial and profound.” She also pointed out that “rice arguably sets Asians apart from westerners as well as from other non-westerners such as Arabs and Africans. Indeed, rice is a widely applied popular marker for Asianness in the west” (Ang, 2004, pp. 149–150). In a study of the relationship between rice and people in Japan in the historical context, Ohnuki-Tierney (1993, p. 3) pointed out a significant impact on the population of the symbolic meaning rice has carried, setting the “boundary between the collective self and the other.”

In “trivial” and mundane daily life, we see profound effects of food on symbolic meaning for people. For example, potato and rice came up in the interview with Oriana as the two staple foods that represent different cultural origins of the parents (Belgium/the Philippines). Having grown up with two kinds of staple foods, Oriana observes how her parents cling to their foods of origin.

Oriana: Well, I just know being … growing up in Eurasian household, I’m used to both potato and rice [laughs] that's what I. I, for me, cause I know, like my Dad, if he goes without potato for a few days, we always say “oh he has to shake you, he feels weak.” [big laughter] And my mum, if she doesn't go without rice for a while, she starts to get weak. [laughter]

So it's, yeah. And so I always say, “Oh yeah, I grew up in a house where we'd have potato one day and then rice the next, and then potato.” So we alternate between those two staples. Yeah.

Although Oriana likes to eat both rice and potatoes, when asked which one is the favourite one, she admits she would choose rice.

In another family, different food preferences can be observed within one family. Sakura and Maika grew up eating mainly rice at home with a Japanese mother’s
cooking. Their mother learned to cook Pakistani food, but that became the food for special occasions, such as Ramadan. As an adult now, Sakura says she cooks more Western food, and Maika agrees. However, while Sakura still likes a Japanese breakfast, Maika prefers bread to rice.

Azad from Egypt and Noriko from Japan have lived in Australia for seven years with two young children aged six and two. They lived in Japan and Egypt before coming to Australia. In this family, both rice and bread are important staple foods. Noriko did not say why it took so long for her to remember to buy bread for her husband, but she admits that it has been a challenge to adjust to life with foods that she did not grow up with.

Azad: Japanese food she can’t quit it. And she can forget buying bread, but she cannot forget buying rice. Now, it took her about nine years to understand that bread ...

Noriko: It took a long time to buy bread everyday ...

Azad: Like rice, rice, her life is rice.

Noriko: I can remember about the rice. Because I eat the rice, but I don't have to eat the bread.

Maki: Oh, ok.

Noriko: Not so important.

Maki: What about you?

Azad: In the Japanese house, bread may be not very important to be there. In Egypt ... very important, oh yeah.

Noriko: You have cheese, and bread ... very important.

Maki: So what is typical Egyptian meal?

Azad: There's a lot, it's so major ... lot ... deep, deep culture, but there's no question about it, bread doesn’t leave the house. You can go and buy the rice when you want to eat rice, have some rice with the bread. But house without bread is not a house.
The significance of rice and bread, for Noriko and Azad respectively, is revealed in this conversation above. As Azad points out, for Noriko, "life is rice," while for himself a "house without bread is not a house." The fact that Azad continued to talk about bread, despite the change of topic, suggests his desire to emphasise the significance of his cultural origin as seen in the symbolic meaning of bread. In the study of food as a symbol that marks boundaries between people, Ohnuki-Tierney (1993, p. 116) pointed out the cultural significance staple food has on people’s lives. The author gave the example of rice and bread: “As rice stands for food in general in both the Chinese and Japanese cultures, so does bread in the United States.” Every country has its own bread with its unique tastes, features, and history—be it in France, Italy, Germany, or anywhere else. It can be said that the negotiation of food in this example between rice and bread can be also understood as a process of acculturation, in this case, between the couple. In one sense, this is the process of “mutual accommodation” in practice at a micro level. While Berry (2001, p. 619) argued that this is a necessary process for new migrants (or migrant groups) to integrate into a new society, such adjustment occurs within the home environment.

Significance of the family meal

Some families found that sitting together for meals was important to develop and maintain family bonds. Sitting together for meals was also thought to differ from “ordinary” Australian customs. Walter, from Belgium, asserted, for example, that the “European way” of sitting together for meals was different from that practised by Australian families.

That forms the warmth of the family. Usually is round the table, you sit there, you have a good meal, you talk. There is .. Belgium is like that, we can have eight-hour meal, for example. Not every day incidentally but if you go to Sunday or something. They have, when they came together they really spent a lot of time and talking and all that, resting, go away, come back again, eat again and that’s the .. the forms the bond in the family. And the bond is basically over food.

... Yeah but like you say, this is the ... I think it's pretty much European actually, is the actual meals together. I think Australia’s a bit different. Not ... they do ... they do come together over barbecue but not so much when they ... say like in family every day where every day you have a meal together.
Similarly, in Kai’s family (German/Japanese), dinnertime was a family time almost every day. Kai highlighted the different mealtime practice of his Australian friends’ families. For Kai’s family, mealtime was always the time for eating and conversation with the television turned off. However, at his Australian friends’ houses, mealtime was not always seen as time for families to sit and interact together regularly. Dinnertime was much more unstructured and informal. Kai reported that at one Australian friend’s house, everyone was free to sit and eat wherever they liked—in the lounge watching television, at the dining table, or outside. In another friend’s house, the family would occasionally sit together for meals, but that was not the norm.

Research indicates, however, that “ordinary” families in Australia value family mealtime (Gallegos et al., 2010). This contradicts popular discourse claims that family mealtime is disappearing as a result of busy modern lifestyles in Western society. (Wilson, 2014; Paton, 2012). According to Gallegos et al. (2010), the majority of respondents in their research (625 adolescents in Perth, Western Australia) showed that they have regular family meals, and value homemade food and family bonding over conversations at mealtime. They also reported that no significant difference was found between gender, ethnicity or socioeconomic status in the values the respondents placed on family mealtime. This suggests that family mealtime is valued as a bonding practice across different spectrums by ordinary families.

As demonstrated in the discussion above, food culture and choice of food at home for mixed migrant families is influenced by various factors: familiar foods the parents grew up with, available foods where the families live, and culinary customs of the host society. Because mothers were the main food provider and organiser for the family, family food was influenced mainly by the mother’s cultural origin, and to differing degrees by the father's. Children played a significant role in bringing home Australian food and customs from outside contacts in schools and wider communities. This role is significant: children are clearly active agents who bring the external host “society” into the home environment. This conforms with Berger’s (1963, p. 99) argument on the importance of society for children—that society is not “out there” but “here” within “the two sides of the same coin” (see Chapter 3). Children’s experiences of interactions with others represent the synthesis of the aspects of self and society (or, in this case, societies), contributing to the creation of a distinct family culture while simultaneously perceiving their life experiences as normal.
Above all, the blending and mixing of various foods became part of the creation of a unique family culture and cultural identity/identities. As shown in all the examples above, food is part of the symbolic interaction between the parents and the children, the father and the mother, and, in some cases, from the grandparents to the grandchildren, as well as between the family and the wider community. Food culture is embodied through the process of socialisation and acculturation in which some aspects are challenged while other aspects are embraced by the children. Drawing on Bourdieu’s notion of habitus, Hage (1997, p. 99) calls such a process “home-building”—the act of preserving what one knows and the creation of a new space for migrants. Creation of habitus, a particular space of familiarity, is important because the “sense of familiar knowledge implies special and practical control which in turn creates a sense of security” (1997, p. 103). For Hage, multiculturalism is practised at home in everyday life. What he refers to is “everyday multiculturalism,” which will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 6.

**Choice of language(s)**

This section discusses the process of language transmission. Language transmission emerged as one of the key issues in my findings around the socialisation process—what language or languages the parents wish to or can teach their children, negotiating with the given living circumstances, with the children, and between the parents on their languages of origin.

Language serves a significant role as a carrier and a transmitter of cultural values and traditions into subsequent generations among immigrant families (García, 2003; Smolicz, 1991; Bottomley, 1992; Clyne, 2005; Phinney et al., 2001; Okita, 2002; Mejía, 2016). With the intercultural migrant families of my sample, English is a second or third language for the parents, and in addition they have two languages for transmission within the family: one of the father, the other of the mother. The findings demonstrate diversity and complexity in the approach to language transmission; every family had different ways to deal with the choice. While in one family English was the only language spoken, in another family, three languages were used interchangeably among different members. For yet another family, multiple languages were spoken across generations. For some children, English was either the only language or the dominant language along with limited ability in other languages;
other children became bilingual. Many grew up absorbing and speaking the language(s) of their parents during the primary socialisation stage and had passive knowledge of those languages. However, English became the dominant language in the second socialisation stage, as they began schooling. Bourdieu’s notion of “linguistic habitus” (1977, 1990, 1991) helps in understanding changes in the use of languages for immigrant children. The linguistic habitus is “a sub-set of the dispositions which comprise the habitus: it is that sub-set of dispositions acquired in the course of learning to speak in particular contexts (the family, the peer group, the school, etc.)” (Thompson, 1991, p. 17).

Based on a study using questionnaires and interviews of the intercultural families of British husbands and Japanese mothers residing in the United Kingdom, Okita (2002) asserted that language transmission for intermarriage parents is a challenge, and that each family has its own unique approach to transmit its languages. Contrary to the assumption that occurs naturally in bicultural families, Okita argued that bilingual language transmission not only concerns the matter of language aspects, but it involves sociocultural aspects. It requires much effort from the parents, and is a complex process involving multiple factors such as the parents’ attitudes towards language transmission, social networks, familial or community support, proficiency in a partner’s language of origin, children’s willingness to learn, and so forth. While this study is about bilingualism in families with one non-English-speaking parent (in this case, mothers as a foreign spouse), it gives us an indication of how complex language transmission is, and how much more complex it can be for families with three or more languages living in a third country in which neither parent is the native speaker of the host society's language. While my data cannot be representative of the larger population, it supports Okita’s argument mentioned above.

Different approaches in language transmission

Approaches to language transmission by the parents differed greatly from family to family, depending on various factors such as the living environment, desire of the parents to teach their children their language of origin, acceptance level of cultural/linguistic diversity among the mainstream population, and so on. Many parents tried to make best use of the given living environment. For some, language transmission involved a conscious and active decision process, but for others, it was more contingent on external environments at different points in the family’s life.
Practical strategies to instil the languages of origin in children included providing books, audio-books, videos or DVDs in their languages of origin, or reading good-night stories in the parents’ languages, or writing a letter to grandparents, or speaking to relatives using social media such as Skype (especially for the parents of younger generation).

Some parents made an effort to travel regularly to their countries of origin with their children, to maintain contact with the extended family and to expose their children to a different way of life and language. Choice of school also made a difference: for example, sending the children to a bilingual school or a weekend language school, or attending a playgroup where mothers shared their common language. As mentioned earlier, some families had grandparents visiting regularly for extended periods. For example, in Patryk and Ayako’s case, Patryk’s parents from Poland visited the young family every year and stayed for a minimum of three to four months each time. While Patryk had little time at home with his children, the three-year old elder child, he said, was fluent in Polish, because of the frequent contact with her grandparents. Examples below illustrate various factors influencing how language transmission took place—including personal experiences in language acquisition of the parents themselves, parental beliefs about cultural and language transmission, availability of language education in schools, and location of residence, particularly governed by the father’s job opportunities.

Example one—the Karam family, a bilingual family

For Meiko, a Japanese mother of two daughters with her Pakistani husband, it was important that the children learned Japanese language and culture. Her husband Salim supported her idea fully.

Meiko: So when we talk about value, all these basic values and also other like more of a cultural ... a cultural kind of thing. You can, if you call that the value, maybe the language carries that value of culture. So that I wanted to pass it on.

In searching for a suitable kindergarten for their first child in New South Wales, they chanced upon a bilingual international school, which was just starting the kindergarten section. The school offered bilingual education (English and Japanese) with the Australian curriculum up to Year 6, which the parents found ideal for their
children. That was where both their children were enrolled and completed their primary education. The children became bilingual speakers of English and Japanese.

The common language between mother and daughters remained Japanese. In fact, when I visited their home for the interviews, the interviews were held in English, but other informal conversations switched backwards and forwards between two languages. The mother and daughters conversed in Japanese. The father said that he is comfortable with the situation and that he never felt excluded. Even though he did not fully understand the family’s conversations in Japanese, he said that he could get the gist of what the conversations were about. When the grandmother from Japan visited, Meiko and the daughters communicated only in Japanese.

In their case, it seems that enrolment in a primary school with a bilingual language medium worked as a support mechanism to promote bilingualism. Drawing on the concept of habitus, Jones Díaz (2011) argued that language can be seen as a form of linguistic habitus. Jones Díaz applied “linguistic habitus” as follows in her study of language change and development among immigrants:

Bourdieu’s concept of linguistic habitus must be understood as one dimension of the habitus that is the product of social conditions that produce utterances and linguistic behaviours adapted to the requirements of a given social situation … For bilingual children and adults living in Australia, the linguistic habitus generated in speaking English and the home language undergoes various transformations and conversions within the various social situations they encounter. As young children grow up bilingually, the linguistic habitus required in this process can be impeded or promoted. (Jones Díaz, 2011, p. 256)

The findings of her study on Spanish-speaking immigrants in Australia concluded that the support and encouragements from external environments—such as schools promoting bilingualism, language schools provided by ethnic communities (as community language) and by the government—help to maintain and promote language and culture transmission of the culture of origin. This suggests that the parents’ decision to send their children to a school that offered a bilingual curriculum might have helped the children with developing bilingualism. However, the challenges of maintaining three languages and the transmission of the languages to the next generation remain. For the father, lack of time and the unpracticality of his
Pakistani home language have led to the decision not to speak to his children in his language of origin (this will be discussed further in a later section in this chapter).

Example Two—the Müller family, *English as the main language with two on the fringe*

In the case of Hans and Mina’s family, introduced in Chapter 4, the family had lived in different countries before settling in Australia. The parents found maintaining both languages difficult. As briefly discussed in Chapter 4, when the children were small, Hans and Mina made it a habit to read good-night stories every night to them—alternately in German and in Japanese. That was one of the few routines that they had integrated into their daily life to expose their children to their languages of origin. At both primary and high schools the children attended, Japanese as a LOTE subject (language other than English) was offered; however, as the children’s school life became busier with extracurricular activities, sports and so forth, it became increasingly difficult to maintain the language without other support network groups or friends in a similar circumstance to share the experience. Although their children’s Japanese remained rudimentary, they could still converse in basic Japanese. Hans gave up speaking German to the children at young age, mainly because of his work commitments and lack of time spent at home, he said. Attempts such as enrolling the older son in a weekend German school in Perth, or sending the second son to Germany after high school for language lessons, did not achieve much. However, frequent visits to Germany and having family visits from Germany seemed to have helped in gaining passive knowledge of the language.

Example Three—the Bonner family, multilingual family

In Julio and Masako’s family, language(s) appeared more important than aspects of food or education in parenting practice. Neither parent seemed to have had much difficulty negotiating language. Julio and Masako met in Belgium when they were students—Julio studying at a university and Masako studying French. Their common language was French from the beginning, and it remains so today. The family lived in various parts of Europe and Asia, including Germany, Thailand, and Indonesia. Julio is multilingual and speaks Spanish as his first language; he is also fluent in French, English, Thai, Indonesian, and speaks a few other languages. When the family lived in Europe, Masako spoke mainly Japanese to the children. Her older daughter Mari
spoke French, German and Japanese at the age of five or so. However, when they moved to Australia, the father suggested they narrow the focus of the languages, and that Masako stop speaking Japanese to the children. French remained the family’s common language until sometime when the common language between the siblings became English. The sisters explained that their rudimentary French became too limited to talk about complicated matters.

At the family interview, multiple languages were being spoken amongst the family members. Julio, Masako, and the daughters were conversing in French, while Julio was speaking Spanish to his three-year-old grandson, whose father is from Argentina. Yoko, the boy’s mother, said that her father was trying to “bond” with his grandson through language, Spanish being Julio’s native language. For Julio, language symbolises belonging. He said, “the language—Spanish, French and Japanese. That’s the link to find where we belong.” In fact, many of the friends of the parents are speakers of those languages. In the meantime, Mari and Yoko were talking to each other in English about their children. The interview was held mainly in English, with occasional Japanese between Masako and me, which I then translated into English, since no other member of the family spoke Japanese. Although they did not speak Spanish on that occasion, both Mari and Yoko were fluent in Spanish, having studied abroad in South America after high school.

Limitations in language transmission

Although most parents expressed their hope of teaching their languages of origin to their children, none of the families retained both languages of the parents at an equal level. As discussed earlier, migration inevitably involves changes, adjustments, and compromises. It comes at the cost of familiar environments, contact with family and friends, and often one’s mother tongue (Tannenbaum & Howie, 2002). Research on language maintenance for immigrant children indicates that it is difficult to maintain minority languages, because the exposure to the language of the host society leads to language shift over time for the children (Clyne, 2003; Pauwels, 2005).

As the above examples from my data demonstrate, much of the language choice was circumstantial but, at the same time, that was intertwined in a complex manner with personal histories and other factors often beyond the families’ control. Some research has suggested that the parents’ positive attitudes towards language transmission
contribute to language maintenance and transmission to the next generation (Luo & Wiseman, 2000). However, there has been little research concerning trilingual language transmission and maintenance. To my knowledge, the only literature concerned with raising trilingual children is *Growing up with three languages* (Wang, 2008), and is based on a study using the author’s own family—a French-speaking Austrian father, a Chinese mother, and their two young children, living in the United States. This is a success story of bringing up trilingual children—growing up speaking English, French, and Chinese. The author pointed out that one of the keys to successful language transmission lies in the “one-parent-one-language strategy” (see Döpke, 1992). While it is important to acknowledge that raising trilingual children is possible and can be successful, there is little information and knowledge available about trilingualism. Unlike this success story, my research findings demonstrate complex outcomes that vary for each family. More research in this field is needed for deeper understanding of trilingualism in mixed families.

What stood out as a reason for some fathers not transmitting the language of origin was a lack of time to spend with their children because of work commitments and absence from home, such as the account by Hans, as discussed earlier. In addition, for some fathers, it was the impracticability of the language. Two Swiss fathers, for example, spoke of Swiss German as not useful for the child to learn, since it was distinctly different from High German, which was used internationally. The father from Pakistan explained that although Urdu is Pakistan’s national language, it was not his mother tongue, since he grew up in the area where a different language, Pushto (or Pashto), was spoken. Therefore, it was too difficult to speak it, knowing its limited use only in small regions of Pakistan and Afghanistan. In addition, he feared that bringing in yet another language would overwhelm his children.

As Mina reported (mentioned above), another common obstacle was a lack of community or a group of people who can share the language. A young father from Egypt spoke Arabic when his son was small, but he gave up because speaking the language became single-directional, and lost its purpose of communication. He said:

> I did speak Arabic for a while with my son, but then he got confused because the language is not spoken in front of him, it's only me talking it and no one else. And I'm only talking it, nobody's answering me. So if you don't have this conversation environment, they don't learn. So he was like, "What are you saying? Everybody's
talking different things, what are you saying ... what’s this language?” So I stopped ... I stopped speaking Arabic, every now and then he speaks a little Arabic to us. And grandma and stuff like that, but mainly English ... Japanese.

Some fathers admitted that they felt it was contrived and awkward speaking their native language with their children. Julio said that he felt “unnatural” speaking with his daughter when she tried to speak Spanish with him after returning from her language study in South America. Robert said that he was reluctant to speak German with his son, as the German his son learned at university was not Swiss German. In fact, there is a similar account in Lambert’s (2008, p. 230) research that a daughter, after having learned German through a formal education, failed to persuade her father to communicate in German with her. These accounts also signal the importance of emotional connection attached to language. As neither Julio nor Robert shared their first language with their children over time, the emotional bond is lacking—making conversing with their children feel artificial and unnatural. Pavlenko (2004, p. 189) pointed out in relation to the choice of language “that perceived language emotionality is an important factor for many parents, both in overall language choices and in choices made for particular emotion speech acts.”

Okita (2002) argued that the language transmission of bilingual families is influenced largely by the mothers, who assume the responsibility as the main caretakers of the children. While my data support that argument, my samples are too small to generalise, and the context is different. In Okita’s study, only the mothers were the immigrants, married to British-born fathers, whereas in my study, both parents were migrants, living in Australia, their third country. Jackson (2009, p. 240) challenged Okita’s view, pointing out the different contexts in which language transmission occurs. His study of raising bilingual children involved families of Japanese mothers and native-English-speaking fathers of “white” (European/American/Australian) backgrounds, living in Japan. That is again different to the context of my research. This suggests that it is important to consider different social set-ups in the study of bilingualism/trilingualism.

Contrary to the argument that mothers play a key role in the minority language maintenance, one study (Al-Sahafi, 2015) reveals that fathers have a significant role for language maintenance. According to the author, the Arabic language is strongly related to the religious faith Islam, and it is considered an intrinsic part of Muslim
religion. While the author acknowledges this is not representative of all Arabic-speaking immigrants, he reported that “it was among their responsibilities as Arab Muslim fathers to ensure that their children learned and retained the Arabic language” (Al-Sahafi, 2015, p. 78).

From a slightly different angle, Lambert (2008) pointed out that language transmission is not necessarily solely related to the gender difference of the parents, but motivation provided by the parents makes a difference to the extent of language transmission in the children. The results of the study showed that not only mothers but also some fathers were actively engaged in language transmission and associated decision making (Lambert, 2008, pp. 229–230. See Table 6.1, p. 230). One interesting finding was that there were “non-native German-speaking fathers” among the key language transmission decision makers. Differences in research findings by various studies concerning language transmission as discussed above indicate the complexity of the issue.

Irrespective of inconsistencies and challenges in language transmission for the parents, in retrospect all children wished they had learned more of their parents’ languages. Not learning the languages of origin affected family relationships. Some participants told of the difficulty of communicating with their grandparents and cousins. Because of the language barrier, communication breaks down, which means emotional bonding becomes difficult. For some, language was also a useful skill to have. The account of two sisters below reveals these aspects of language.

Maki: You said you haven’t … your Mum stopped speaking Japanese with you, at one point when you were small. Do you think you would have liked to have learned a bit more …

Yoko: Yeah.

Maki: … from your parents when you were younger? From both your parents?

Yoko: Yeah.

Mari: Yeah.
Yoko: Especially to communicate with our Japanese family, because it puts a distance between us, because we can't communicate with them very like, you know? Our grandmother ...

Maki: So that's one reason. Is there any other reason why you would like to have learned ...

Mari: Just an extra skill to have and ...

Yoko: Easier when you've learnt it when you're small.

Another participant was somewhat frustrated about not being able to communicate with any of his grandparents.

Maki: Do you think you would have liked to learn a little bit of their language? Or their languages?

Daniel: Yeah, yeah.

Maki: And why do you think you would have liked to?

Daniel: Then I can speak to my grandparents, both of them, cos it's hard to speak with them. They only know, from my father's side they only know Swiss, and my mother's side they only know Chinese ... and it's hard. So we don't really communicate much when I'm there. Yeah, so, it's hard to communicate.

Despite the difficulties in language transmission, some children showed keen interest in learning their parents’ language and culture later in their life. Oriana, for example, had acquired basic language skills through some French classes when she was a child. She later majored in European Studies with French language in university and studied abroad in France as part of the university course. Karl was not a keen language learner as a child. He discontinued the Japanese language subject at school after Year 10. During university years, however, he became interested in learning German, although his father's German is Swiss German. As mentioned earlier briefly, he enrolled in the one-year German course, despite the demands of law studies.

These findings demonstrate that language maintenance and transmission were just as complex and diverse in each family as were food preferences and culinary customs. However, some common language challenges included lack of time with the fathers,
absence of community support, and difficulties in finding families to share the languages in similar living circumstances. It is also worth noting the strong interest among the children in learning the languages of the parents. Given that there is a strong link between language and cultural/ethnic identity development, experiences of language transmission from the recipient children’s perspectives may reveal a different view of cultural negotiations. Language issues concerning the relationships between language and culture, bilingualism, and migration and language maintenance are well researched (Tabouret-Keller, 1997; Mendoza-Denton, 2002; Le Page & Tabouret-Keller, 1985; Myers-Scotton, 2006; Grosjean, 2010; Ammon, Dittmar, Mattheier, & Trudgill, 2005; Rampton, 1995; Grosjean, 2008). The depth and breadth of the body of knowledge is indicative of the significance of the research in this area in its own right. However, as the main focus of this thesis lies in the negotiation processes in relation to cultural identity, while language plays an important part, there was little room for deeper analysis. Further in-depth research in that field would be a worthwhile endeavour.

**Education and school life**

**Importance of education for the migrant children**

Education has emerged as one of the central concerns for parents in my data. Research showed that immigrant parents consider good education for their children as the key to integration into the host society (OECD, 2006; Khoo, 2007). This may be reflected in the keen interest among many participant parents in the high academic achievement of their children. However, value transmission of the importance of education varied from family to family, sometimes varying between parents. While education is considered important, it is also important to acknowledge that for some parents, it was important regardless of their migrant position. For one mother, education was one of many aspects of raising children—in her words: “we are normal people and normal parents who wish the best for the children,” part of the normality of life in general as parents that Caballero has noted in relation to mixed families (Caballero, 2012; Caballero et al., 2008). This section discusses some different ways parents’ aspirations for their children's high academic performance have been translated into practice, and explores what has been compromised and why, and the possible consequences.
One of the main areas of concern among the participant parents was the choice of school. While this is a common concern for many parents across the board, the high priority set by the immigrant parents may indicate their wish to give their children the best life opportunities in a new society (Li, 2001). For some, the choice was limited by the location of the father’s workplace or by family income. For others, school choice came before deciding where to live. Even for those who had limited choice, most parents reported that they made an effort to select the best school for their children. But the approach differed from family to family.

For example, one couple with two young children (aged six and three) systematically did research on public schools in Perth, decided on which school or schools might be good, then looked for a place to live. Below, one father, Claus, described how they went about searching for a school:

Maki: With the choice of schooling, how did you decide, was there any particular reason for the decision?

Claus: Yes. [affirmatively] We had a look at different Australian websites that rank schools and rate schools. And we’ve chosen the area here where a number of schools have above average ranking of their results in math and English, and science and so on.

Maki: Of the public schools?

Claus: Of the public schools. So, um, and then we had a look at the map to find out where the schools’ zones are, where school districts are, and then we were searching for a house in that school area. So we picked a couple of schools that had good rankings and that we were comfortable with. Um, I actually draw a map so we had the lines of the school districts on the map, and I would use the map to search a house. Yeah. So that was a very systematic approach to finding a school.

For another couple, they were happy to send their children to a local primary school where they lived (the choice of residence was not discussed). They reflected on their own childhood memories of going to school. Sudi from Kenya went to “the crappiest school,” he said, but felt he came out all right. Eriko went to a prestigious private school, but she hated it. Thus, they decided that sending the children to a private school would not guarantee their children’s future. For them, it is not so much the
kind of school the child goes to, but more about how happy the child is going to school and learning. Eriko says:

... because I went to a very strict kindergarten, you know, I was forced to do a few different things, you know, that I don't want to do with my kids. So I think that kids should be kids. Just, you know, even the idea of studying too hard at school, I don't really like it. And they should be able to enjoy just playing, you know, learning the social skills, learning to like schooling, you know. That's more important.

For Hans and Mina, schooling for their children was an ongoing issue every time they moved country and moved house: from the United Kingdom to Australia, from a suburb to a country town in Western Australia, and then to another suburb. Mina recalled that every time the family relocated, they were faced with concerns over the choice of school. For example, the family relocated from a rural country town to a larger city outside Perth for the sake of better higher-education opportunities for the children.

Thus, each family had their own ways to accommodate expectations and aspirations around their children’s schooling. What was common was that all the parents emphasised the importance of education for the future of their children. Khoo (2007) made this point drawing on the statistics from an OECD report (2006). She stated that: “the successful integration of immigrant children into the education system is a central concern in many countries worldwide (2007, p. 120).”

There was a silent recognition among the participant parents that education of the children was the responsibility of the mothers. Although some researchers argue that traditional strict gender roles within family are invalid today (Olson & DeFrain 2002), in my research, the traditional gender roles of men as breadwinners and women as primary nurturers/carers prevailed (Parsons & Bales 1956; Turner 1970; Oakley 1974). Although childcare was mainly the mothers’ job, each mother had different parenting strategies with varying degrees of adjustments. Examples below illustrate different attitudes and beliefs towards the education of the children.
Example One—There are more important things in life than schools

Yasuko, whose family was introduced in Chapter 4, was one of the few mothers who showed willingness to change her attitude towards education. This is what she describes:

... really, because I grew up in Japan, I thought Japanese way was the "real" way. But gradually I came to realise that educational background is not the best, and, eh, those who have good academic background are intelligent by nature. So, for example, I understood that no matter how hard just ordinary kids studied, the academic background will not become better. So if the child resists [studying], then, it's okay to stop, and not force more, isn't it? I think that there is a point to say "enough."

Since I came here, I realised that it was a mistake to think Japanese way of education the good way. If I was in Japan, I would have still believed that the parent's duty would be to let the children go to a good school, good university, and if you go to a good university the children would be able to find a good job, which was good and forever. I realised here that these are all lies.

It is not clear why she was able to adapt with relative ease. Perhaps her personality helped, or it was due to the influence of her husband, or Australia’s relaxed attitude towards education allowed her to stop pushing her non-academic children to study. As discussed in Chapter 2, immigrant acculturation is a complex process involving many considerations at both group and individual level such as society of origin and society of settlement, all complicated by psychological and socio-cultural factors (Berry 1997, p. 15, See Figure 2). In the study of acculturation, Berry emphasised the importance of considering the cultural distance between the “society of origin” and the “society of settlement” (Berry, 1997, p. 16).

In order to better understand Yasuko’s change in attitude towards education, it is useful to know mothers’ roles in the education of children in Japan. “Education mama” (kyouiku mama in Japanese) refers to a devoted mother who focuses on monitoring her children’s studies tightly. Initially it was a phenomenon among a small number of “elite” families in the post war period, but today it has become widespread among the general population, due to the highly competitive education system and the high value placed on academic achievement (Holloway, 2010, p. 149; Thorsten, 1996,
p. 5; Iwao, 1993, p. 139). With this social background of the Japanese education system and expectations on parents, it is possible that Yasuko was not displeased by less “pressure” being placed on her for the children’s academic achievement. It may also have been the acknowledgement of her husband’s wish that their children learn more generic skills at home, such as gardening, making tools, looking after chickens, or helping in the kitchen, rather than studying all the time for academic achievement only.

In other words, Yasuko’s decision to let go of the familiar way of education from Japan may be in part the result of interactions with her husband’s parenting approach. Further psychological acculturation analysis is beyond the scope of my research. However, it does address the need for further research to achieve a deeper understanding of the process of change in behaviour and attitude. The question remains: in the case of parents of migrant backgrounds, what is an appropriate way to analyse the societal factors, not only of society of origin and society of settlement, but also two societies of origin within one family? Bourdieu and Wacquant (2000) proposed that, in the study of migration, research must begin with the pre-migration period, and they argued for the importance of the life trajectory of individuals in connection with pre-immigration, in order to gain a deeper understanding of the migration experience (2000, p. 176).

Example Two—Invisible negotiation over the education of the child

Unlike Yasuko, Tamiko wished to raise her son as she would have in Japan—she wanted to be active and involved in the school’s activities, and to put him in an early education facility. However, it was decided mainly by her husband that the child should stay home until he started primary school. She explained her understanding of parental practice in Switzerland, that Swiss parents raise the children at home until they start primary school. She said that it was because they wanted to avoid “undesirable” contacts with children of immigrants, such as Italian immigrants, from whom their children might learn “bad habits.” Although she was the primary carer as the mother, she did not seem to have an active role in decision-making processes. Thus, when the family was invited by their neighbours to join the local playgroup numerous times, they declined. When the son began primary school, she wasn’t
“allowed” to visit her son’s school. In the parents’ interview, she says (facing her husband):

You know in Japan we go, parents, they go to the school. You never allowed me to go to the school. Because you didn't, your mother has never been to school. This is not the system. Swiss schools, they don't have this system, you know, parents visiting day or so. But in Japan we have lot and then each visiting day, if I haven't seen my mother, I was very sorry. That why I wanted to go to school. You didn't allow that.

The following conversation reveals the recognition that there are differences in the parenting approach within the couple:

Robert: I think the famous conflict we had ... because me as a Swiss, eh, European, have completely different way of looking at education, very strict and you shouldn’t eat sausage rolls and like that, and must study very hard, and Tamiko was softer as a lady and Japanese. Softer on education, uh, I think more caring, spending lot of time, maybe spoiling.

... In general Japanese spoil their children, even though you can say it's also the way they make them perform at school is not really spoiling ... Just a really completely different way of looking at it.

Tamiko: Yeah, completely different way to look at it, and as a Japanese I would rather go with the society, not against.

Contrary to Yasuko, her experience illustrates a different degree of adaptation in the education of their children. Rather than acculturating to the Australian way, however, in Tamiko’s case, the decision-making power regarding education of their child rested on her husband, who maintained his familiar way from Switzerland. Tamiko described in the interview that she once held a responsible position in a major company in Japan for about ten years or so. It is impossible to tell whether the power positions of the couple have changed since their relocation to live in Australia, in comparison to their marital power structure in the years before their arrival in Australia. But it is possible that the new life environment may have shifted the power relationship between the spouses. Lack of language proficiency for Tamiko may have also contributed to the loss of autonomy and confidence.
According to Galvin (1997), who studied the changing power relationship between interracial/interethnic spouses between mainly Zimbabwean husbands and European wives (United Kingdom, United States, Australia, USSR, etc.), relocation impacts on the power structure within the marital relationship. The author states:

Once the families had re-located, the processes of transition and change in these marital relationships involved changes in factors which influenced the nature of spousal decision-making, which in turn was evidence of a changing marital power structure.

(Galvin 1997, p. 129)

Galvin’s study involves changing power structures between the repatriating spouse back to Zimbabwe and “foreign” spouse, which illustrates the power shift from more equal relationship in western societies to that of more male-oriented power structure with kinship relations in Zimbabwe. Tamiko and Robert’s case resonates with this study, in which cultural change can have effects on their power relations.

What is interesting to note, however, is that Tamiko appeared to have maintained the familiar education strategy from her home country to some degree. This was revealed in the account by her son, Karl, in the separate interview with him. When asked about possible conflicts with his parents in his school life, he talked about arguments over his study habits with his mother, pointing out that 90 per cent of all their conflicts were related to study, because he preferred to do other things. He described his frustrations over the ways his mother insisted on his studying all the time.

Maki: Was that both parents who encouraged you to study as much as possible or...

Karl: I think they both encouraged me. It was mainly my mum that was always angry at me, um, because she thought I was gonna fail everything and turn out to be no one. [Chuckles]

... But my dad always knew that I’d turn out all right in the end. So I had conflicts with my mum because of that, and with my dad just because he wanted to keep my mum happy, so he told me to study and that.

However, when Karl mentioned his frustration in the family interview with everyone present at a later date, his mother responded that it was not anger, but worries over his school achievement. She added that another “worrying” factor was him having a new
girlfriend at a crucial time when he should be focusing on his studies for university entry. She further explained that in Japan, you do not have a girlfriend or boyfriend until the age of twenty or older.

As we have seen in the above examples, parenting practice based on the familiar strategies from the home country differed greatly from couple to couple, and from individual to individual. Yasuko seemed content with making changes to a more “Australian” approach to education. On the other hand, Tamiko, while having conflicting interests in parenting strategy with her husband, maintained her familiar way in daily interactions with her son, reminding him to study frequently at home. Researchers pointed out that it is common among immigrant parents who hold the view that academic achievement is very important, and can cause pressure on their children (Foner & Dreby, 2011, p. 548; Li, 2001, p.477; Mak & Chan, 1995, p. 86). This is often a point of conflict between the parents and the children, especially among East Asian immigrant families. A question arises here that, since all mothers in the examples above are immigrants, why would they have different attitudes to education? This suggests that there may be underlying factors other than being immigrants that affect how different people respond. In a study of Chinese immigrants and their values in education in Canada, Li (2001) found that expectations towards children’s academic achievement (stemming from Confucian philosophy) varies depending on the personal experience of the parents in their homeland and their “acculturative attitudes.” Li reported that while the majority of the parents maintained a Chinese approach to education and parenting, some favoured a “cultural integration” (Li, 2001, pp. 484–485). The author noted that parental expectations stemming from their own childhood were significantly re-shaped by “their immigration experiences and acculturative attitudes” (Li, 2001, p. 490).

This “re-shaping” can be understood as the habitus in the process of change. As discussed in Chapter 2, habitus is an internalised and lasting disposition of one’s ways of doing, seeing, and thinking things, which is created through the socialisation processes in childhood. Drawing on Bourdieu (1977) who argued for the importance of the interrelations between the social environments/conditions and “the habitus of the socialising agents” (Harker, 1984, p. 120), Harker pointed out that “habitus changes with each iteration, and changes in a direction which attempts a compromise with material conditions. However, the compromise is inevitably biased, as the
perception of objective conditions is itself engendered and filtered through the habitus” (1984, p. 120). For migrant parents, parenting practice is filled with such negotiations, complicated by the immigrant position. This is applicable throughout the parenting and family practice.

While reasons for such changes can be complex, another interpretation may base it in personality difference, at least in part, although not exclusively. Edwards et al. (2010) argued that while acknowledging that parenting of “mixed” children can add additional challenges compared to others who are not mixed, recognising the conflicts as personal differences might help them solve the issues more easily than assuming that the conflicts are solely based on cultural differences. This suggests that there is an element of personality involved in cultural adjustment processes. It is, however, important to note that even personalities are to some extent the product of a specific culture and are shaped by the values of the society in which one grows up.

Children’s social life—sleepovers and parties

For parents of teenage children, it is often a time of challenge to balance the children’s autonomy and the parents’ control over the children’s behaviours. Parties or sleepovers can be a source of great concern as part of “growing up” for children regardless of society (Schalet 2011). Such concerns can be seen also at a wider community level. Western Australia Police (2014), for example, provides a guide called “Hosting a party for teenage children,” with advice to parents on the safety and wellbeing of their children. Even within western societies, there is a cultural difference in the level of acceptance of teenage children’s sleepovers. Research indicated a noticeable difference in the attitudes between Dutch parents and US parents, Dutch parents being more permissive than parents in the United States (Schalet, 2011). For immigrant parents who are unfamiliar with Australian youth culture, it can be an additional source of stress and strain.

Among the research participants, some parents expressed concern about this when their children were teenagers. Examples below indicate three case studies of parents’ views on the one hand, and children’s perspectives on the other. While the parents viewed the challenges as arising from cultural difference, children perceived the matter either as a non-issue and were unaware of the parents’ concerns, or partly as a personality issue.
Example One—the Karam family: Tension between father and daughters

Salim from Pakistan and Meiko from Japan, parents of two young adult daughters, Sakura (22) and Maika (20), told me that sleepovers were the main source of their concerns when the children were in their adolescence. Their worries began when they moved to Perth with their teenage daughters. Not only was the issue of sleepovers and the process of negotiations over that matter raised in the interviews, but also gender-related spousal power relationships emerged.

The following is the parents’ dialogue:

Maki: So what were some of the challenges of parenting in those days? Like what is perhaps different from what you know from homeland, but what the kids are experiencing like in different kinds of social life here in Australia compared to your country?

Salim: Yeah, sleepover.

Meiko: Sleepover.

Salim: I found that to be unacceptable. And...

Meiko: I think they have really disadvantaged because of that a lot. They couldn't mix with other kids. I think they will complain [laughs] if you asked.

Maki: Because they were not allowed to ...

Salim: Yeah I didn’t want, as I said in my culture, girls don’t go out, like that. And so, but ... No, I had a chat with her, I chat with her, I had a chat with her, and I said, “Fine, she can sleep over, but I want to meet the parents.” I can't allow my daughter to go and sleep over at old Jack’s, that or James, I don't care, I need to know the person, can I trust them or not? Because they could be [inaudible] they could be maniacs they could be child molesters they could be any ...

Meiko: You've been together with all so many ...

Salim: No. If I just say hi to a person ten times in my life I don't know that person. I don't believe that.

Meiko: You can make an effort to know them.
Salim: Exactly what I said. That's exactly what we did also. I said, “Okay, these people you know, you associate with, if my child wants to spend the night, et cetera, it's okay.” But then ...

Meiko: Then we agreed.

Maki: You agreed.

Salim: We agreed. But that was an issue.

Meiko: Yeah sometimes we couldn't really, ... just let them be, and they didn't really attend to them.

Salim: It was scary, it was scary.

Maki: Were they allowed to have friends over at your home?

Salim: Yes.

Maki: But not outside where you don't know anyone.

Salim: Where I don't know anyone. And she said what, [inaudible], their daughters can come but yours can't, I said. “Well that's for them to think, they can come and meet me, but I, you know, whatever.” So we did, they had sleepovers, but yes I understand that has been an issue. That has been an issue. But if I had to do it again I wouldn’t be very different. Even after ... and having seen all that, if I had been back in that situation, when you say your child wants a sleepover ...

Maki: You'd still be the same.

Salim: I'll be the same. I want to know.

Maki: Is it the same with boys?

Salim: I think to be honest, I would like to be the same with boys, but if I'm really, really honest, perhaps I'll be a little less concerned with boys, but when I put logic, I think no, I should be more concerned with boys. There's more chance of them to get to some mischief. And then when we came here we actually heard of cases for example where underage drinking is almost promoted by some parents. They promote underage drinking.
Salim’s swift response to the question on challenges in parenting suggests the seriousness of his concern over sleepovers. Salim is a Muslim and follows Islamic beliefs, one of which he states as, “in my culture, girls don’t go out.” Coming from this religious faith and cultural background, the father had much to adjust, dealing with his daughters’ desire to follow the Australian way of life—sleepovers, going out, or attending parties, when they were teenagers. He found sleepovers to be “unacceptable,” but over time he realised he needed to make a compromise and “had a chat” with his daughter, which was a major adjustment and change for him. He has set the boundaries that, although he allowed sleepovers, he needs to meet and get to know the friends she is staying over with. He emphasised that saying hello to the person ten times is far from actually “knowing that person.” It is interesting to note that throughout this conversation, it is possible to have a glance at how the father began to deconstruct his traditional sense of rearing girls, make a compromise, and reconstruct his parenting strategy—from not accepting the girls going out at all, to becoming open to discussion with the daughter, and to make a compromise to allow the outing so long as he would know whom she goes out with. This conversation reveals the negotiation processes in relation to the social life of the daughters, especially how the father made compromises, having seen that pressing his customs is not the best solution.

This example illustrates the process of a re-construction of the reality of the habitus that the father had brought with him from his culture of origin. This process can be explained in part from the social phenomenological perspective, which argues that much of socialisation (both primary and secondary) is internalised in a given social structure (Berger & Luckmann, 1991). From the point of view of the father as the significant other,

the significant others who mediate this world [the objective social world] to him [to the child] modify it in the course of mediating it. They select aspects of it in accordance with their own location in the social structure, and also by virtue of their individual, biographically rooted idiosyncrasies. The social world is “filtered” to the individual through this double selectivity. (Berger & Luckmann, 1991, p. 151)

In this case, the filtering process goes through yet another layer of the new location and social structure of a new settlement society, Australia.
Concern over daughters’ independence and freedom in Western societies for parents of immigrant background seems to be commonplace. Research shows that it is prevalent, particularly among immigrant parents from collective societies, in which group interest such as family is valued more than the interest of individuals (Dion & Dion, 2001; Dion, 2006; Foner & Dreby, 2011). Issues concerning discrepancies between the immigrant parents and the adolescent children in relation to the children’s social life are well studied (Dion & Dion, 2001; Dion, 2006; Foner & Dreby, 2011; Chiu et al, 1992; Foner, 1997). As discussed in Chapter 2, discrepancies arise particularly from the immigrant parents’ desire to maintain their cultural values from their country of origin, and their adolescent children who grow up in the host society with different expectations and norms in intimate relationships, especially for girls.

Another noteworthy aspect that is revealed here is that Meiko’s view on the girls’ social life differs from her husband’s. Meiko challenged Salim’s approach a number of times during this conversation. Meiko said that Salim’s non-acceptance of the girls’ social life “disadvantaged” them. To Salim’s argument that saying “hello” to the friend ten times is not enough to know that person, Meiko made a point by saying, “You can make an effort to know them,” implying that he did not make enough effort to know the friends. However, what is even more intriguing is that Salim responded to her statement as if that was what he had done (to make an effort), by saying, “Exactly what I said.” While Meiko did not disagree upfront with her husband’s view and Salim showed his effort to change, on deeper analysis (Hutchby & Wooffitt, 2002), their different views suggest that Meiko perceived Salim’s approach as too strict.

Foner and Dreby (2011) in their analysis on the intergenerational relations between first-generation immigrant parents and their offspring who grew up in the United States stated that one of the main parental worries of the immigrant parents and a source of conflict lies in sexual relations. They argue as follows:

The tensions are particularly acute with daughters, whose sexuality and dating choices cause much greater anxiety than sons … Strict parental control of daughters’ activities and movements outside the home, which often begins the moment they are perceived as young adults and sexually vulnerable, frequently leads to strain and strife. Second-generation daughters often rail against their parents’ surveillance, which places greater
restrictions on them than on their brothers, who are usually allowed much more freedom. (Foner and Dreby, 2011, p. 547)

The negotiation processes are even more complex because the position of the children in the family (whether they were the first-born or later) as well as the children’s personality seem to contribute to different styles of negotiation between siblings. Below is a part of a conversation between two sisters, Sakura and Maika, which suggests there are differences between the sisters: their personalities and the position of siblings within family.

Sakura: Yeah. I think my biggest thing about high school was that, like, my parents, I guess, were stricter than most of the other parents.

Maki: Yeah. Can you tell me examples? Issues?

Sakura: So I guess my thing is like in Year 12 I was a bit of a ... over-enthusiastic person, so I really wanted to, like, go out, stay out till late ... and drink, and things like that. And that was no-go for my parents. And, like, my par—my friends wouldn’t understand why it was such a big deal. And then their parents would also be, like, “Oh, they should just relax a bit.” And then I would also be like, “They should just relax a bit!” But they’re like, “We can’t relax on this one!” And, like, I don’t know, yeah, I think that was my biggest ...

Maki: So, you mean, like going out with friends ...

Sakura: Going out with friends, yeah. Like, I mean, I wasn’t allowed to go out on sleepovers ...

Maika: They were very different for us.

Sakura: Oh, my gosh, yes, they were so strict on me and they were so lenient ... [Laughs]

Sakura: It’s more like they realised that, I don’t know, by, like, not letting me do certain things, for example, like, I was really humiliated in front of all my friends, and things like that, I think they realise that, so then don’t do it to her.

Maika: I think, though, I think it’s like a little bit more about, like, our personalities, sort of, because for her, like, she would, like, if they would say, “No,” she would argue, but she would listen to them in the end.
Sakura: Yeah, in the end I’d listen to what they said.

Maika: Yeah, they'd say, “No,” but I’d be, like, “Okay, okay, whatever, but I’m going
to go; this is my friend's number if you want to contact me there; but I’m going.”
And I would just leave; so that I guess they were like, “Okay …” [Laughs] But I
always—all this, I don’t think this has much to do with culture, but, like, since, like,
primary school, she was the “good girl” and I was, I would be, like, in detention
every day.

The experiences of social life for the sisters were different in that while one felt her
social life was restricted, the other did as she pleased. This may also reflect the
parents’ influence—the first child often bearing the brunt of stricter child-rearing
practices. Comparative studies concerning different experiences of siblings within a
family would be a worthwhile further research area; however, this is beyond the scope
of my current research. Two aspects concerning the negotiations over the children’s
social life emerge from this conversation. One is a possible influence of different
personalities of the children. Another suggests more of a difference in their position in
the family rather than the cultural influence. As Sakura said, their parents were
“strict” with her, but very “lenient” towards her younger sister. This may also suggest
that the parents were better able to adapt to a new environment after the rearing of the
first child.

Example Two—the Geiger family: Mismatches in understandings

Unlike the examples above, in this family, the son was not allowed sleepovers or
parties, although everyone had a different understanding of this rule: for the father,
Robert, it was a fear of the unknown; Tamiko would have liked birthday parties for
her son when he was younger, but it appears she somewhat reluctantly followed her
husband’s wish; meanwhile the son seemed to have accepted the way it was at home.
For him, it was purely a matter of their isolated location that prevented him from
having sleepovers or parties. This is what they described:

Robert: … this sleepover thing is very popular in Australia, and I think it's
neither popular in Japan nor really in where I come from, at least it may be now,
but the way we were used. So this was a bit of an obstacle, it was kind of scary,
even Christmas parties or birthday parties, you know because me, I’ve never had a
birthday like they do in Australia.
Tamiko: You cannot say, “we.” You, I didn’t have ... [Laughs]

Robert: Inviting 20 people, but I think in Japan it’s similar, isn’t it?

Tamiko: No, I visited my friends and we didn’t have big party or something like that, but when close friends had birthday, we give present, or you know, visiting friends’ home is very often after school.

Robert: I wouldn’t say we had arguments or so, because Karl, in that sense, was wonderful. He somehow sensed that we are reluctant and I think he didn’t insist to do it full Australian way. So it wasn’t really a problem. I think it was something where, where the cultures ... kind of he saw the difference, you know, but potentially there might have been tensions if he had sided with completely with the Australian way and then said, “I want to invite 30 people,” or, “I want to have sleepovers very often,” but, uh, he didn’t. We had a few, but uh yeah ...

Tamiko: But I think it’s a, it’s your perception, how to call?

Robert: Yes, of course. Yeah.

Tamiko: But we had, uh, I think I remember that we never had a, we never invited friends for his birthday and he was quite sad, and we were sitting here and together, and then yeah. We were sad but you were all right, because you were re ...

Robert: Relieved.

Tamiko: Relieved. [Laughs]

(Son's perspective)

Karl: I didn’t really think it was that much to do with cultures or anything. I just assumed that was because we live quite far away, maybe inconvenient for me to go there or for them to come here. So I never really viewed it as a cultural thing as a reason why I didn’t have sleepovers all the time. Maybe that was just a simple view because I was young.

But I’m sure if I lived in the city, then there will be always people, most afternoon would be at friend’s houses so, I think that had something to do with it, the main factor was just the location, and ...
Robert: I really didn't think that was the main reason might be.

Karl: ... because if, if I lived in the city you'd have no real reason to stop me from going over to friend's house all the time, I don't think you would ...

Robert: Oh, uh ...

Karl: I don't think anything really to do with your upbringing or anything, it was just, um, it's a bit inconvenient and there's not much to gain from it.

From this family’s conversation concerning the issue of the social lives of children in Australia, some features of family dynamics can be inferred. Hidden resistance by Tamiko against Robert’s decision over their son’s social life (not to allow him sleepovers or parties) can be observed. She made sure that this house rule was not based on the mutual decision, but the sole decision made by Robert, by explicitly stating it was not “we” who made the decision. In defence of their son’s disappointment and sadness over the rule, she also expressed her disapproval over this matter.

Methodologically, there is a triangulation effect (discussed in Chapter 3) occurring in this conversation. The explanation over the house rule against sleepovers and parties by the father appears to be new information for the son. The son believed the reasons for that rule had little to do with cultural differences, but rather the geographical distance and the isolated location of their home. This response by the son in turn surprised the father. This interaction was made possible by the joint family interview set-up. In the separate interviews, one with the parents and the other with the son, this topic was not raised as a concern by either group. In that sense, the family interview helped bring underlying or often hidden features of family relationships to the surface.

**Conclusion**

This chapter explored the ways in which mixed migrant families negotiate multiple cultures within the family and in the wider community in Australia. The analysis of the data suggests multiple levels and complexity of acculturation and socialisation processes among the families, intertwined and interrelated. While cultural differences within the family play an important role in the ways in which negotiations take place, it is difficult to draw clear lines as to how much of family interactions are influenced by cultural difference, how much is due to the external environment, and how much
are due to the personality of individuals and their personal history. It is also likely that birth order of the children may partly influence the ways children negotiate with their parents.

Normal daily activity of food consumption is a space of cultural negotiation and exchange for the mixed migrant families. While mothers are the main organisers in the provision of food, this study demonstrated that every member of the family is engaged in the construction of a unique “family culture” through the mixing of foods of multiple origins. While eating food of various cultures does not automatically equate with acceptance of cultural diversity and differences, food goes beyond the sphere of mere consumption (Flowers & Swan, 2012). The findings also demonstrated intertwined processes of “blending” or “mixing” of foods of different cultural origins at home.

In language transmission, the data indicates some of the challenges that many parents have faced around personal circumstances, the child’s choice, and community support. What is clear is, however, that a language of a host society becomes dominant among the younger generation in general. As Myers-Scotton argued:

[W]hen a younger generation is exposed to a more dominant language in the nation than the L1 (through schooling and school peers), it is hard to stop a shift to that second language by the next generation. That is, … especially in immigrant communities, shift by the third generation is almost a foregone conclusion. (2006, p. 100)

While the author refers to bilingualism, general shift of language under trilingual/multilingual family situations can be inferred.

To some extent, the existence of community support and the strong will by its members can make a difference in retaining the language of origin (Smolizs 1991). As some participants pointed out, the lack of community support or shortage of other families in a similar situation made it difficult to continue the transmission to the next generation. The “one parent, one language” approach, with which Wang (2008) reported a successful outcome, using the case of her own trilingual family—Swiss husband and Chinese (the People’s Republic of China) wife, raising trilingual children with French, Chinese and English in the United States—failed to support the findings of my research. While this is one success story, which others may emulate, there is not enough research done on trilingualism (Wang, 2008). Study of “family
language transmission” (FaLT) (Lambert, 2008) is a highly complex area of language transmission study in bilingualism. While further investigation into this field would be worthwhile, it is beyond my scope in this thesis.

One factor that the intergenerational transmission of food and language have in common is that they are both intrinsic and fundamental cultural aspects of human life. As Gabaccia argued, “food and language are the cultural traits humans learn first, and the ones that they change with the greatest reluctance. Humans cannot easily lose their accents when they learn new languages after the age of about twelve; similarly, the food they ate as children forever defines familiarity and comfort” (Gabaccia, 1998, p. 6).

In all three themes: food, language and education, mothers played a key role, except in a few cases where the father’s view on language was stronger than the mother’s, thus resulting in discontinuation of the mother’s language use. Otherwise, it was mostly the fathers who gave up the language transmission, and it was the mothers who learned how to prepare the food from the father’s country, maintaining both cultural food practices at home. However, as discussed earlier, gender difference was only one of many factors that influenced the processes of language transmission. In the education of the children, it was mainly the mothers who were engaged in the children’s school life more than the fathers. Among some participants, however, tensions between the spouses were observed in terms of the ultimate decision-maker.

What is important to note here is that although mothers were seen as the ones in charge of childrearing practice as a whole, paradoxically, they were often the ones who made more adjustments and compromises than the fathers. Negotiations over autonomy and freedom for the children’s social life differed greatly in each family. As shown in the examples, for some families, it was a big challenge, while for others it did not arise as a problem.

I acknowledge the limitations in this outcome with the emphasis on the gender role. The interpretations of the data are inevitably influenced by my own personal experiences as a mother of mixed family. A male researcher might have collected different data with different sets of questions and different emphases, producing different results. Even the same data might have been interpreted differently. As discussed in Chapter 3, this is a process of reflexivity, in which a researcher self-critiques, acknowledging their own subjectivities and biases (Schwandt, 2007).
addition, researchers need to consider their positionality throughout the process of research (Lincoln & Guba, 2003). As Glesne (2011) argued, the process of positioning oneself is at work when the researcher engages in their research, acknowledging their personal attributes including gender, class, race, cultural and educational backgrounds, personal histories, and so on.

As a whole, this chapter points out the complexity and multidirectional nature of cultural negotiations within mixed migrant families, with each family member working out differences and similarities in their outlook on life, cultural values, and influence of personalities. Construction of a family culture and identity is a continuum of negotiations through everyday family interactions.
Chapter 6: Cultural Identities Within “Mixed” Migrant Families

Introduction

Chapter 5 examined cultural negotiations in mixed migrant families in their day-to-day lives. It demonstrated the complexity of such negotiations over what may seem very ordinary domestic activities: eating, conversing, going to school, and socialising. This chapter explores how wider social factors, such as multiculturalism policies (discussed in Chapter 2) and daily encounters with cultural/ethnic diversity, are influential in family life, and how they can shape and re-shape the cultural identity (identities) of the family members. This chapter shows first how Australia’s multiculturalism might encourage such families to migrate, and then how it might affect the experiences and the identity of those mixed migrants’ offspring. The first section discusses motivations and reasons why the parents decided to live and raise a family in Australia and describes some of their experiences. The second section, which is the main focus of this chapter, explores the children’s accounts of growing up in the mixed family, concentrating on aspects of cultural identity.

Very few of the participating families reported experiences of racism, and if they did, they were usually “one-off” experiences, which they felt did not result in any long-lasting adverse effects on their lives. The experiences of the children growing up as “mixed” was generally not tainted by experiences of racism and, as a whole, they spoke of positive life experiences. However, the data indicates somewhat complex processes of growing up as a “mixed” child for some, while for others, being “mixed” was not something they were always conscious of. This chapter explores the aspects of visibility (physical appearance) and its effects (or lack of effects) alongside the aspects of the cultural identity construction. The complexity of intersection between culture and race is further explored in this chapter.

17 A version of this chapter, “‘A Mini United Nations’: Being Mixed in Multicultural Australia,” has been included in McGavin & Fozdar (Eds.), Mixed Race Identities in Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific Islands (2016 forthcoming).
Motivations to live in Australia: Parents’ experience

Living with diversity

Australia’s multicultural policies and environment, the opportunity to live among other mixed families, and issues around safety, were key factors in the decision of the mixed families to move to Australia. All were related to a perception that Australia was a country accepting of cultural diversity, where these families, as “mini United Nations,” as one participant put it, would feel welcome.

For example, Hans from Germany, married to a Japanese woman, recalled that prior to re-location from the UK he “had his eye on Australia:”

Hans: ... for the obvious reason that my family is of a mixed heritage, and I had a perception of Australia being a good country where all of our heritage would somehow fit in, where not one of us would be a stranger and the other would feel at home, but where we all had some sort of common ground.

Hans noted two key factors—Australia’s multiculturalism, and a desire not to privilege one partner over the other by settling in one or the other’s country. This expectation of acceptance was confirmed for many on arrival. Yasuko (from Japan, married to an Italian), suggested that being and looking different was “normal” in Australia.

Yasuko: One part that is interesting is, in this area, there is a lot of immigrants living here. A lot of Vietnamese, African, any culture, multiculture here. So, everyone is gaijin (it means “foreigner” in Japanese) ... everyone is different culture, so we don’t have to be ashamed. We don’t have to be, “I must follow Australian culture,” ... because everyone different, doing different things. Everyone different thinking. So in this ... I don’t have to feel (culture shock) ... I’m very lucky.

For others, their life was surrounded by other mixed couples with whom they could share common experiences. In response to a question on their experience of racism in Australia, young parents Claus from Germany and Mayumi from Japan agreed that they had not experienced racism in the three years since arriving in Australia.

Claus: We’ve got so many mixed, mixed-race couples and especially Perth. There’s so many Asian and Indians, Chinese and so many backgrounds in Perth. ... I guess
if you go back to Japan, for example, it sticks out if you are a mixed-race couple, but here in Australia, it’s so common, it is not, I don’t think about it anymore.

So Australia’s multiculturalism was a motivating factor in the decision to settle, and for many this choice was confirmed in their subsequent experiences. They saw themselves as “normal” in the Australian social context. Khoo’s (2011) statistics showing an increase in the number of intermarriage couples in Australia suggests that intermarriage is becoming increasingly common. For Eriko, it is the openness and flexibility of people that allow her to feel okay to be different.

Eriko: I think multiculturalism of this country, kind of allows us to do that (to raise the children happily regardless of your culture of origin). You know, it’s okay to be different because we’ve got so many people who intermarry, people of different countries that ... it’s okay if we eat, you know, Japanese food at home all the time. It’s okay if we take off our shoes, that even the people come they can be aware ... you know? If they see shoes at the entrance, they’ll ask if they have to take off their shoes. So ...

Similarly, some fathers reported cultural diversity in their daily workplace, as well as elsewhere in public and at home. Patryk (Polish father of young children), who works in an IT company, commented that his workplace was multicultural, consisting of employees from various national and cultural backgrounds. He commented:

There’s so many Asian and Indians, Chinese and so many backgrounds in Perth. ... But here like everyone’s ... most of the people come from different places and it’s like there’s no one common mentality. ... It’s especially I guess, in my line of work, a lot of international, you know, colleagues, especially in IT, very multicultural. ... I always liked this multicultural society, where there's a mix of different ideas, basically. If you’re from different background, you might have different opinion, different idea and when you bring those different ideas and opinions, you generally come up with something quite good. ... I think that’s one of the main reasons I didn’t want to stay in Poland. It's like everyone thinks the same, it's like the same mentality.

These accounts of daily life surrounded by multiculturalism support the arguments made by scholars such as Ang, Brand, Nobel, and Wilding (2002), Ang, Brand, Noble, and Sternberg (2006), Noble (2009), Wise and Velayutham (2009), and Harris (2009),
that have advocated “everyday multiculturalism,” in which cultural diversity is ingrained in the everyday experiences of ordinary people’s normal life in Australia. This notion of everyday multiculturalism will be discussed in more detail in the next section of this chapter. It must be added, however, that multiculturalism is complex (Ang et al., 2002, 2006). The studies by Ang et al. (2002, 2006) demonstrate that while the people of Australia as a whole embrace cultural diversity and differences, there are multiple interpretations of Australian multiculturalism across the different generations and ethnic/racial backgrounds represented in the population. Drawing on the studies conducted by Ang et al. concerning positive engagements with diversity across generations of the Australian population, Noble (2009) argued that:

Australia seems to be evincing an evolving “hyper-diversity”: it wasn’t just that people lived hybrid lives, or lived them in poly-ethnic neighbourhoods, but that complexity and its subsequent forms of interaction were of such a nature that they went beyond typical understandings of multiculturalism and corresponded to the claim that diversity was becoming more diverse. (Noble, 2009, p. 47)

It is worth noting that according to The Economist Intelligence Unit's liveability survey (The Economist, 2015), four of the best ten cities to live in the world were in Australia. It is argued that Melbourne’s liveability owes much to its multicultural characteristics and enactment of multiculturalism through the history of generations of migrants, and especially through the public recognition (at the political level) of cultural diversity (Jakubowicz & Moustafine, 2010). Similarly, Brett and Moran (2011) found that multiculturalism is part of the cultural landscape of Australia, with many Australians proud of their recent migrant past. It can be said that my findings support the propositions made by Berry in his acculturation theory, where he argued that in societies which adopt the integrational and inclusive approach to migrants, migrants feel well adjusted and accepted.

From a slightly different angle, some parents emphasised the benefit of living in a “third country,” Australia being a foreign country for both parents. As briefly discussed in Chapter 4, one couple, Sudi and Eriko (the Tinubu family), said that Australia provided a more equal and level playing field for both husband and wife, in terms of job opportunities and in parenting practice.
I think for us being in a third country is extremely important ... One for raising kids but also for equalising the power within the relationship and the family. I think if I was in Kenya, I think the power imbalance would be very clear ... and equally if I was in Japan, the power imbalance between us in the relationship would be very, very, very clear ... But being in a third country, it neutralises the idea of power within the relationship.

He added that the fact that they are not the majority is also a positive thing. He said, “It’s really nice in a sense that here, we’re not the majority … we’re not the majority so it’s okay to be different. It’s okay to have that perceived difference.” Eriko, Sudi’s Japanese wife, commented that the fact that both of them have completed a university degree in Australia had also helped them to gain job opportunities, securing a financial independence from each other, which in turn supports more equal partnership relationships. Eriko said:

And the fact that we went to school here, we got our qualification here, we can both work here, you know. I’m not dependent on him. You know, if I go to Kenya, and if I’m having a ... there, I’ll be very dependent. There will be a power difference, you know?

This couples’ account raises a broader question about gender roles in marriage and parenthood. It is worth noting that in all eight older-generation couples, the father was the “breadwinner,” and while some mothers worked part-time, they were the primary carers of the children as well as responsible for the domestic housekeeping tasks. On the other hand, of the five younger-generation couples, four mothers were in employment, either part-time or full-time. It is possible that there is a generational difference in the experiences of migrant parents.

“Easy-going” lifestyle choice

For some parents, cultural or racial diversity was not necessarily the most important factor for moving to Australia. Rather, it was more “ordinary” factors of enjoyment of lifestyle that led to families’ satisfaction as well. As Claus and Mayumi (the Hoffmann family) commented:

Claus: What I was hoping for before we came to Australia was that we would have more time, that we would have more quality time, more time like outside, more easy-going lifestyle, and that we would be happy with that. And that is all the case
... So everything I hoped for before coming here actually was even better in reality. Especially every week we are somewhere outside in the parks, at the beach, so we spend every Saturday morning we spend at the beach while my daughter is in Japanese school.

Mayumi: We wait at the beach. [laughing] Because the Japanese school is far from us, while we are out that way, we go to the beach near the school, go shopping, or go to a café and relax.

Claus: Yeah. Go to the beach for relaxing.

This father of two young children spoke of major changes in their lifestyle since their arrival in Australia in comparison to Germany or Japan, with much more outdoor-oriented life, such as going to the beach with the family, having social life with barbecues outside with friends, enjoying the good weather. Professionally, as a businessman, Claus described good working relationships with colleagues, with reasonable working hours, which contributed to a less stressful life, in turn contributing to a harmonious family life at home. Another factor that may have contributed to the high satisfaction level with the new life for the family is that the couple had met in Australia prior to their move there as a family, when Claus was a university student and Mayumi was on a working holiday. They lived in Japan and Germany before eventually moving to Australia. Thus they were returning to a familiar environment, except this time as parents and to a different city. Lifestyle as a motivation for migration resonates with a government report which stated that for skill-stream migrants, the most important reason was better climate and lifestyle (Australian Government, Department of Social Services, 2007).

Although lifestyle was only one motivation for this family to move to Australia, it is worth comparing their decision with those made by lifestyle migrants. Lifestyle migration is a growing phenomenon, especially among relatively affluent people such as retirees, and consists in moving from a home country to another place, seeking a “better lifestyle” (Oliver, 2011). Examples include moving from Northern Europe to the Mediterranean, or from the United States to Panama, Mexico or Costa Rica, or to Southeast Asia (Oliver, 2011, p. 136). The major difference between lifestyle migration and other forms of migration such as labour migration or forced migration is that lifestyle migrants are predominantly driven by “consumption rather than
Consumption refers to the purchase of property, hospitality services, and better lifestyle.

The two comments below are representative of those who chose Australia as the place to raise their family.

I’m happy with the lifestyle we have, with the family situation, with the schools and neighbours and friends and so on. I’m very happy with work, so I think if you are happy with work, that also reflects back on how you behave at home and, if it would be stressed at work or you wouldn’t like it, then, you would maybe behave differently at home, that you are also stressed at home and you are more aggressive or maybe yeah, I find it very fulfilling and consider it a good move that we came here. (Claus, the Hoffmann family)

My husband said that he made the decision in part to come to Australia as a good place to raise children as a mixed family. Of course we will never find out what it might have been like back in the UK or Germany, but having come here, and raised the children, altogether I think, thinking back, it was a good choice. (Mina, the Müller family)

**Children developing cultural identities**

The previous section discussed the choices parents made and their motivations to make Australia a place to raise children, and their subsequent experiences. This provided some of the influence by the sociocultural framework of Australia’s multiculturalism. I was interested in how the choice made by the parents panned out for the children raised in Australia. This section will explore how this environment influenced the shaping of cultural identity for the children, focusing on the children’s narratives and paying particular attention to the possible effects of “mixed” physical appearance and the influence of those effects on cultural identity. Little Australian research exists on the offspring of such “mixed matches.” The exception is Perkins’s (2007) collection of autobiographical reflections on the experience of being of mixed race in Australia. The majority of contributors are comfortable in their own skin, although they are sometimes made to feel different. They recognise they do not quite “look right,” in terms of fitting neatly into discrete black, white or Asian categories. However this conflict does not necessarily produce a negative marginality, but rather a recognition of the diversity of Australian identities and, for many, a celebration of
mixedness. Ford’s (2009) study of the effects of visible difference on her mixed-race daughter living in Darwin was somewhat less optimistic. In this case, mixedness produced ambiguity, occasional exclusion, and a sense of not quite belonging.

In order to recognise the diversity of racially mixed people in Australia, Perkins (2004) argued against the colour-blindness that assimilation holds up as an ideal, suggesting that colour consciousness is required to understand the impact of race on social, economic, and cultural experiences. To some extent, such identities are becoming valorised as evidence of the success of multiculturalism, as is the case in Canada (Mahtani, Kwan-Lafond, & Taylor, 2014). However Perkins argues that in the general refusal to consider ‘mixedness’ as part of the racial and cultural landscape of Australia, national loyalty and a sense of belonging becomes difficult for mixed Australians. This question is considered in this chapter.

Living with everyday multiculturalism/cosmopolitanism

What is of interest here is the interplay between culture and race in mixed-race, inter-cultural migrant families. I use Bourdieu’s concept of habitus and cultural capital (see Chapter 2) to understand how the political environment influences the broader social environment, which ultimately impacts on the quotidian lived experiences of mixed-race families in Australia. As discussed in Chapter 2, culture is learned through processes of primary (at home), secondary (at school and work) and tertiary (in migrant contexts) socialisation.

Alred and Byram (2002) identified “tertiary socialisation” as socialisation of migrant adults who must learn the cultural mores and practices of a second culture (assuming only one culture has been learned during primary socialisation). It involves the development of affective capacity and cognitive skills that constitute a form of cultural capital useful in contexts of cross-cultural interaction.

Social psychologists call this process acculturation: “the process of cultural change and adaptation that occurs when individuals from different cultures come into contact” (Gibson, 2001, p. 19). In Berry’s well-known typology, positive integration, adaptation to a new culture while retaining elements of the old, is most likely to be achieved when the receiving society has an inclusive and open policy towards cultural diversity, such as multiculturalism (Berry 2001). In such a context, and at a micro level, cultural diversity may be experienced productively as “everyday
multiculturalism,” the “everyday practice and lived experience of diversity in specific situations and spaces of encounter” (Wise & Velayutham, 2009, p. 3, italics in original).

Stratton (1998, p. 15) metaphorically uses the term “rhizomatic multiculturalism” for his idea of everyday multiculturalism, meaning “culture as evolving from the bottom up and, in the process, constantly splitting and proliferating in form.” He describes everyday multiculturalism as the social phenomenon in which “cultures, produced by individuals in their everyday lives, merge, creolise and transform as people live their lives, adapting to and resisting situations, and (mis)understanding, loving, hating and taking pleasure in other people with whom they come into contact.” (Stratton, 1998, p. 15). Similarly, according to Harris (2009, p. 188), everyday multiculturalism “involves attending to the ordinary social spaces within which people of different backgrounds encounter one another, and the mundane practices they construct and draw on to manage these encounters.” It departs from the notion of political ideology or policies of living with diversity, but brings it down to the level of everyday life. In Harris’s words (2009, p. 188), “multiculturalism is a dynamic, lived field of action within which social actors both construct and deconstruct ideas of cultural difference, national belonging and place-making.”

It is worth noting here that along with the notion of everyday multiculturalism, “everyday cosmopolitanism” has also been the focus of research in the last two decades since the 1990s (Onyx, Edwards, Burridge, & Yerbury, 2011). Onyx et al. (2011) emphasised that everyday cosmopolitanism resides in everyday social interactions between cultures, while everyday multiculturalism refers to singular ethnicities and cultures residing side by side in harmony. At the same time, the authors argue that both everyday multiculturalism and everyday cosmopolitanism depart from government policy-level ideology and universalistic vision (2011, p. 50). Delanty (2006, p. 27) suggested that cosmopolitanism should be seen as a “cultural medium of societal transformation that is based on the principle of world openness, which is associated with the notion of global publics.” Similarly, Beck (2007) argued that “cosmopolitanisation does not occur somewhere in abstraction or on a global scale, somewhere above people’s heads, but that it takes place in the everyday lives of individuals” (Beck, 2007, p. 1); he called this “mundane cosmopolitanisation.”
Furthermore, as Appiah pointed out, there are two components in the notion of cosmopolitanism:

One is the idea that we have obligations to others, obligations that stretch beyond those to whom we are related by the ties of kith and kind, or even the more formal ties of a shared citizenship. The other is that we take seriously the value not just of human life but of particular human lives, which means taking an interest in the practices and beliefs that lend them significance. People are different, the cosmopolitan knows, and there is much to learn from our differences. (Appiah, 2006, p. xv)

Noble calls the rich encounters among different cultures and ethnicities practised in the daily life of suburban Australian settings “everyday cosmopolitanism,” and describes it as:

an openness to cultural diversity, a practical relation to the plurality of cultures, a willingness and tendency to engage with others. This “people-mixing” helps produce an evolving cultural diversity in which people managed the competing demands of cultural identity and social co-existence at home, at work and in leisure spaces. (Noble, 2009, p. 48)

The essence of everyday cosmopolitanism lies in the “process of reciprocity” through exchange of cultural items and meanings (Noble, 2009, p. 57). This may take the form of exchange of lunch at school, for example, of a beef sausage and a curry puff between the Anglo-Australian boy and a Sri Lankan girl. Noble emphasises the importance of the negotiation process through social interactions in everyday cosmopolitanism (2009, p. 59). He reminds us that “we need to remember that culture is a process, not a thing” (2009, p. 59). Whether it is about multiculturalism or cosmopolitanism, little has been studied in relation to mixed migrant families and their daily life, in which many of the elements of multiculturalism and cosmopolitanism are daily occurrences. Multiple cultures/races live side-by-side, simultaneously interacting with one another, negotiating cultural differences in everyday life both within the home and outside in the wider community.

Cultural differences are experienced, negotiated, and form and transform identities in the context of social and political structures. The structuring influence of “external” phenomena such as cultural milieu, political discourse and policy have been identified by Bourdieu as being linked to individual experiences and agency through habitus—
embodied dispositions that orient social actors in particular ways. Habitus can change depending on life circumstances (Maton, 2008; Webb et al., 2002). Processes of acculturation are thus individuated through a combination of influences of past socialisation, political context, and, what none of these theorists has paid particular attention to, “race.” There are certain expectations about cultural capital based on the way one looks.

As noted in Chapter 2, “race” is a contested term, referring to classification of groups of people on the basis of biological/genetic characteristics generating visible difference, such as skin colour, type of hair, shape of face, colour and shape of eyes (Song, 2003, p. 9). It is agreed that race has an immediate effect on how people are seen by others, and on the identity options available to them (Hall, 1996; Triandis, 1977). Most people make assumptions about others, such as their cultural background, based on their appearance (Perkins, 2007, p. 27).

It is useful to consider the intersections of these assumptions about race and cultural capital. Bourdieu argued that cultural capital is important in generating social success (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 84). While being ‘non-white’ as well as of migrant background may be presumed to be negative forms of capital, it may be that those from mixed families carry with them cultural and material (embodied) capital that is seen more positively in multicultural societies. Using these theoretical insights, in the next section I explore the ways in which being mixed is experienced in Western Australia.

**Growing up being mixed: ordinary, proud, and at times useful**

*Positive experiences for parents and children*

Several themes emerged inductively from the data. First, the children’s mixedness is not seen as a significant feature of their lived experience—it is “ordinary” to them; second, being “mixed race” was not a problem for the young people growing up, neither from the parents’ nor the children’s perspectives. Indeed it was seen as positive. This is contrary to some of the literature, especially from the United States, that problematises mixed race (Poston, 1990; Root, 1992; Rockquemore & Laszloffy, 2003). And third, mixed-race offspring have multiple and fluid cultural identities. While research reveals that in North America parents consciously make an effort to make their mixed children aware of their mixed heritage and talk with them about
being mixed (Rockquemore & Laszloffy, 2003; Nakazawa, 2003; Crawford & Alaggia, 2008), and that this approach is recommended by therapeutic professionals (McFadden, 2001; Oriti et al., 1996), none of the families in my study appear to have felt the need to do so. Among other factors, it may be that the absence of relevant terminology generates a lack of awareness of race, or alternatively reinforces the “ordinariness” of their mixed experience. Terms such as “mixed race,” “biracial,” “bicultural,” or even “multicultural” were not used, with “mixed background” or “mixed family” used only occasionally in the interviews. These families’ experiences were simply seen as normal, and there was little acknowledgement of their different cultural/racial backgrounds.

This was particularly noticeable in the narratives of the offspring. This proved interesting methodologically as most families had not discussed issues of mixed race or culture. It became clear that most enjoyed the opportunity to discuss these issues in the interviews, but some were also at a loss to know what to say. Parents had few stories about ways their children had experienced racism or been singled out when growing up, and few expressed concerns for them because of the mixedness. Indeed, they noted factors that were protective, such as the range of children from different ethnic and racial backgrounds in their children’s schools, and the advantage provided by the “beauty” of being mixed. For some parents, mixed appearance was understood as a positive feature of the children, as an advantage to be mixed. As one father described:

I have not experienced any problem with the kids being singled out because they sort of turned out looking rather good eh with their mixture of Europeanness and Japaneseness, they, they are good looking boys. So, beauty of course always wins and they have no problem when they are good looking. So in that respect they are lucky. I don't think they have experienced a lot of overt prejudice just from [inaudible words] my experience. (Hans, the Müller family)

Another father viewed the mixedness as an advantage more from an utilitarian point—the link between Australia and Asia:

So actually in his (his son’s) case it's a great advantage (to be mixed). In this ... to look, have a bit of an Asian look because obviously Australia is turning Asian, Asian at a very rapid rate. But he is not truly Asian, he's got a European sort of qualities in him. (Robert, the Geiger family)
For many parents, mixedness was related to cultural differences, and not necessarily “racial” differences—such as physical features of the children that might be different from those of either of the parents—the colour of the skin or eye colours for instance. Little emerged from the data in relation to raising mixed-race children, except in Sudi and Eriko’s case as discussed in Chapter 4. No other parents appeared to have taken the physical mixedness of the children as a major concern of parenting. This is not to say, however, that the parents were not conscious or completely unaware of the possible effects of different physical appearance on their children. For example, a Japanese mother recalls the time when her daughter was attending a pre-school in Germany:

I noticed in Germany, she [her daughter] had like a complex, you know when children are small, they are all blond, their eyes. My daughter had black eyes, black hair. Then she said, “Oh, I like to be blond” and I said to her, “You want me to dye your hair blond?” “Oh, no, no, no.” (Masako, the Bonner family)

The offsprings’ accounts of growing up in Australia were overwhelmingly positive and they saw their life as simply “normal” in the context of cultural diversity within the home and outside of it. What follows are some examples from the children’s experiences.

Darren: I think it established from an early age that other cultures were normal. I’ve always felt comfortable with people with different backgrounds and I don’t know if that’s because I was from a mixed background, or because of the values instilled in me that ... there’s no difference between people.

Jonathan: Yeah, I think for me, definitely I feel at ease when talking to people from other backgrounds, particularly Asian backgrounds, and that comes from some understanding of cultural differences, and I think things that are generally common throughout Asian cultures, like respect for elders, manners ... taking your shoes off when you go to someone’s house and that sort of thing, has helped me feel much more at ease talking to people ... I’m very lucky.

Maki: Okay, any disadvantage? ... [pause] You can think about it ...

Darren: No.

Jonathan: No.
None identified any disadvantage to being mixed, of the sort the marginal outsider thesis suggests. Indeed, many felt their mixedness enabled them to be more open to other cultures. Ric (Italian/Japanese) said, “It gave us a broader understanding of different cultural aspects.” Kai (German/Japanese) suggested openness to different cultures was the result of their parents being open to each other: “I was just thinking the fact that our parents are from two different backgrounds and that, the fact they, they are willing to accept other side’s cultures into their kids’ life as well shows that [they are] already a lot more open [and] accepting.” Thus the offspring see their parents as having modelled positive acceptance of difference, leading to the children developing a cosmopolitan openness.

Some felt their mixedness enabled them to get along with anyone, one describing it as “useful.”

Maki: So, if you are asked where you belong, where would that be?

Karl: Um I guess you could say, because of the both culture, I’m not really sure where I belong, but I can easily fit in anywhere. Yeah, I got a lot of different groups of friends, who probably wouldn’t have associated with each other, but I just fit in with all of them. Yeah it's very strange, very useful, especially when I was studying. I don’t know, I always found that um the groups of Australians, and groups of Asians, and the Indians and sort of fit in with all of them, much more than they fit in with each other. It's always good.

(the Geiger family)

Karl went on to note that being accepted by all groups could be useful—being accepted by the white Australian kids allowed him to fit in in the schoolyard, and being accepted by the Asian kids was an advantage (stereotypically) when assistance was needed with schoolwork. Later in university, he had similar experiences.

There was a sense of playfulness in the ways these young people engaged with their mixedness. Karl noted a perceived advantage to looking “a bit Asian … because people think I’m very hard-working,” but also that looking European and being able to speak well without an accent meant he was similar enough to “ordinary” Australians to “get along with clients” in his work environment. Clearly there is a
valorisation of the mixed identity occurring, with a perception that it has generated both cosmopolitan attitudes but also cultural competencies that are of value.

This sense of pride was also common. The young people expressed pride in both their physical features and in their mixed heritage, noting the value (in some cases superiority) of Asian values and food, language, and the importance placed on family. Several identified themselves as Eurasian. They talked about their comfort engaging across a number of cultures, and enjoyment in the play of different cultural influences. One participant, the daughter of Belgian and Chinese Filipino parents, described choosing to do a school project on Belgium, rather than the more obvious choice of the Philippines, justifying her choice by saying “I think maybe because there were quite a few Asians in my class, and so … I think maybe I held onto Belgium as something really unique, because I was the only Belgian I knew in my school.” These young people were adept at playing up one or other aspect of their mixedness depending on the perceived benefit of doing so, or simply on their own whim.

Several actually used the word pride, and this pride was frequently related to uniqueness. This same young woman linked pride in being mixed to being “a bit” unique and exotic.

Oriana: Actually I always found it more something to be proud of rather than to be ashamed of, to be honest. You know, it's quite unusual. ... I mean it is more common now. I know so many, but, yeah, ... I was always quite proud of it. It’s like, “oh no, I'm Eurasian,” ’cos it’s just something a bit unique, I suppose, and some people find it a little bit exotic, as well, because they can see that you're mixed.

Maki: So no negatives?

Oriana: Not where I grew up, not here. We've got so many different cultures it didn't make a difference.

(the Nicolas family)

Kai similarly felt being mixed is a privileged identity.

Kai: It was like, people were kind of envious of our background or upbringing. They found it really interesting, and when I tell them, [they say] “Oh cool!” “That's really awesome!”
Yoko (Spanish/Japanese) spoke of her own pride at “being half Asian,” but regretted that her visible mixedness was not evident in her own children, who “don't look like they have any Asian in them at all,” a physical assimilation that she saw as “a shame.” This account resonates with a study on multicultural parents’ (partnered with a white person) concerns regarding the transmission of ethnic/racial identity on to the next generation. According to Song and Gutierrez (2015, pp. 684, 696), many parents found that “ethnic and racial ‘dilution’ and cultural loss” were a concern. Although they found the dilution was unavoidable, many were actively engaged in passing on their minority heritage.

There was a general sense that the young people enjoyed being different, perhaps partly because they were just different enough to trigger interest, but not so different as to generate serious hostility. Karl noted “Just … people are interested. Um because I guess being mixed, you look a little bit different, and people can’t figure out exactly where you’re from.” Rena, the Italian/Japanese 13-year-old, noted that if people asked where she was from she would let them guess first, and that the response when she revealed her background was a positive one, with people saying it must be “interesting” and she must be “lucky.” Almost all the offspring were positive about this interest in their “visible difference.” Another example came from Oriana.

Oriana: going to uni, I met a lot of new friends, and so they didn’t know my background, they’d never met my parents before. And when I did introduce them, I think they were surprised at, particularly my Mum, that she is full-Asian. And they were quite surprised, I’ve had comments that, “Oh, I didn’t even know that you were Eurasian until I met …” And it's like, “Wow, your Mum's Asian and your Dad's European, I would never have guessed from the way that you look.” … It just wasn’t really an issue for me. We just had a good laugh about it, and I was like, “Oh, I fooled you, didn’t I?”

It's funny because now it’s all politically incorrect to use the word race, but I do feel that it is a factor, because growing up I … particularly, always Eurasian kids, sometimes you get mixed responses, that I look really European, or I look really Asian. But I'm neither. I'm … in fact, particularly now that I’m grown up, I get more people asking if I’m Mexican, or if I’m Mauritian, or if I’m, you know Spanish, because I’ve got dark hair and I’ve got round eyes. Yeah so, definitely growing up I
used to get a little bit irritated, sometimes, being asked “where do you come from?”
Because, yeah, sometimes it's like, I didn't know myself [laughter]. It's like, well I am from Australia, but this and that.

(Family Nicolas)

As noted, while enjoying their uniqueness and the interest it generates, participants also focussed on the ordinariness of their experiences.

Maki: How did you feel about, being of a mixed family? When you were younger?

Ric: For me, personally, I didn't really think about it, at all.

Rena: I didn't think it would be such a big deal, compared to others.

Maki: And you still don’t?

Ric & Rena: No. Not really.

(the Boccacci family)

This ordinariness was linked to Australia’s multiculturalism, in this instance the range of backgrounds of students in Darren’s university course.

Darren: I … I think because in my university course there are a lot of Asians in there already as well as Australians and Indians, so it's really a non-issue … it’s just the course is already so multicultural that having someone who's half-and-half is not really … neither here nor there. But I think people are curious, they're always interested to find out, and they wonder about the surname. And they're always interested to hear the background.

(the Morgan family)

Several participants mentioned having mixed-race friends, which enhanced the perception that their experience was normal.

But even those who did not have mixed friends, or friends from other ethnic groups appeared not to have felt excluded, or “othered.”

Ric: … In my school, in my year, there are some cultural groups, or … like they're from a particular region or area, and they tend to, yeah group together. But … but
me and my friends, ... we're all from different nationalities. One thing is, in the
group ... a majority are Asians from Vietnam, or something like this.

(the Boccacci family)

Some noted they had felt some anxiety at moving to Australia due to their awareness
of racism, but that generally their experiences proved these concerns unfounded.

This is not to say that the young people had only positive experiences. One participant
found it difficult being of mixed background growing up in a small country town in
northern Western Australia in the late 1970s to 1980s, but noted that being mixed had
become much more acceptable in the last 10–15 years. A brother and sister reported
being verbally abused by mainstream Australian children in a playground, while
accompanied by their Japanese mother; and another young boy was verbally abused
after a sports game, being told by a member of the opposing team to “go back to
where you came from.” He noted that this was during the conservative Howard
government (1996–2007) and at the height of political debate about asylum seekers
when there was a great deal of negativity towards non-white migrants. But others
could not identify any negative experiences, and one, Jano, noted that where
exclusion had occurred, it was by choice, acknowledging: “not being included in the
‘Australian thing,’ but it was more of a choice rather than exclusion. Just not
interested in, um, that kind of stuff … the footie or, you know, just sitting at a pub.”

Plural and fluid cultural identities

So far, I have relayed the sense of ordinariness and generally positive experiences of
the offspring. The third point concerns fluid and multiple identities. Some
interviewees reported a changing perception of being mixed throughout childhood.

Example One—Maika (the Karam family)

Maika (Pakistani/Japanese) enjoyed being mixed when she was in primary school.
She was popular and felt she was able to be friends with a wide range of people.
Especially from the language perspective, as she was fluent in both English and
Japanese, she enjoyed fitting in both with an English-speaking group and a Japanese-
speaking group.
However, when she was in high school, she began to “hate” being mixed. For some time, she did not like her mother to come to the school because of comments others made. She said:

I used to be embarrassed to bring my Mum to school. I did, because ... because I used to like my Dad coming, because he, kind of, looks a bit more, like, white; whereas if my Mum comes, everyone'd be like, “Oh, that Asian lady.” And I used to hate it when people would refer to her like that.

Unlike the stereotypical image of a dark-skinned Pakistani man, Maika’s father is pale in appearance. Maika’s account of her embarrassment suggests the importance of appearance in identifying herself among her peers as the same as others. As Anderson (1999, p. 20) stated, “the child’s experience of its body is intrinsic to its identity and agency in the world.” This account by Maika is similar to one of the children’s experiences reported in a study of Greek/English intercultural families (Anderson, 1999). A nine-year-old girl with a mother from England, and a Greek father, growing up in Greece, was unhappy because she looked different from her friends at school; she looked more “white” and had blue eyes like her English mother, and said she did not like her mother because of it.

However, the account below by Maika shows how her attitude towards being different changed as she grew older.

I went to a school [high school] where most of the kids were, like, white Australian, and then there was, like, the white Australian kids and then an Asian group. And they were, like, you know, like, Malaysian-Chinese second generation kind of Asian people, and I didn't fit into there, and I couldn't fit into the white group as well, kind of. So ... I mean, I had friends all over, but I still felt—that’s when I started disliking it, but then I think, when I started getting to a bit more mature, I realised, like, it doesn’t matter, like, that I belong, that’s why I think, then, I started getting over it. ... I didn't need (emphasis) to be in a group. That’s when ... I got over it.

Example Two—Oriana (the Nicolas family)

Unlike Maika, who has gone through different perceptions of herself at different stages in her life, particularly in relation to cultural identity and the effect of her bicultural/bilingual background, for Oriana a major moment of realisation came when
she was abroad in Europe as an exchange student. One important element in her accounts, different from all the other participants, was the influence of cultural objects in her home environment: household artefacts such as furniture, books, and ornaments, brought by her parents from their homelands. As described in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5, Oriana’s home was full of such objects. She talked at length about growing up surrounded by these artefacts. Anthropologist Daniel Miller (2008) argued in his book *The Comfort of Things*, for the importance to identity of materials that one lives with in everyday life. People express their belonging and their identity through objects they own or inhabit. He pointed out that the objects or ornaments people grew up with carry not only the memories of life, but also the cultural values, lifestyles, and personal histories that they cherish and hope to maintain. In his words, “material culture matters because objects create subjects much more than the other way around. It is the order of relationship to objects and between objects that creates people through socialisation whom we then take to exemplify social categories, such as Catalan or Bengali, but also working class, male, or young” (Miller, 2008, p. 287).

In other words, material things have a social meaning. As Mary Douglas argued, “goods are neutral, their uses are social” (Douglas, 1979, p. xv).

For immigrants, possessions and belongings from their homeland help to affirm their sense of self, which in turn guides them in the acculturation process (Mehta & Belk, 1991). In her study of the maintenance of Eurasian cultural identity, Barrett (2011) argued it is important to examine the personal possessions that immigrants have brought to a new land. These objects carry memories and values which evoke “significant value in the constant (re)creation” of their identity and help position their belonging (2011, p. 118). For them, the objects are a signifier of their cultural identity. The accounts of Oriana also resonate with the point Baldassar (1992) has made (See Chapter 2) concerning identity formation of the second-generation Italian-Australian youth—that materials from the parents’ homeland affect the shaping of their sense of identity, as they carry symbolic meaning and values of the culture of origin.

It can be said that for Oriana’s parents furniture pieces, kitchen tools, a grandfather clock, and her father’s books in French, Flemish, and German carry memories and cultural meanings from the countries of their origin. As briefly mentioned in Chapter 4 in Oriana’s family story, being surrounded by objects embedded with her parents’
nostalgic sentiments has had a profound impact on her identity construction. She believed for a long time throughout her childhood that her real home was somewhere far away in Europe or in the Philippines, thus perceiving herself as “Eurasian” rather than “Australian.” She describes this as follows:

I probably felt more strongly about it [the disadvantage] when I was younger than now. Now I’m sort of quite accepting of who I am. I suppose growing up, maybe my teenage years, I did feel sometimes a little bit of an identity split at times. I think, until I discovered that Australian-ness in me, but just that ... because maybe I did romanticise that European-ness and Asian-ness, and so I did sort of feel that split, where I felt, I don’t really belong here in Australia.

Yeah. Actually, speaking to a couple of Eurasians my age that I met through the club, I think that was a common theme actually, that you don’t feel like you actually belong here, because you’re yearning for that part of your parents’ world, which they’ve brought and maybe they’ve filled up your house with ... your childhood home with.

Like, for example here, we’ve got all these bits of Belgium and this is [inaudible] in the Philippines and you know, and so we've got those things, which sort of make you yearn for that culture I think. And so that’s why I sort of wanted to be there, rather than here.

Then when Oriana actually went to Europe as a young adult, she discovered her Australian identity. To the question of her cultural identity now, she responded:

Definitely more Australian than when I was growing up, but that was only because of that experience I had overseas. Yeah, it’s ... actually it’s funny, cos when I ... yeah, maybe because when I was growing up I did sort of latch onto the—it’s hard to describe—I did latch onto the Eurasian part of me maybe cos I didn’t quite know what my Australian identity was, and so I think growing up I did romanticise very much that European background and that Asian background and then, well, particularly the European, because I’ve always had an interest in languages and sort of I really went ... and even my studies, that’s where I went, I went to French and European literature.

Yeah, and then when I finally went there, which was my big dream to go and live in the country where my dad came from, that’s, yeah, it was a bit of an
awakening—oh this is not exactly what I imagined. And maybe ... Yeah, and that’s when I started identifying with okay, no actually I am Australian, because there are certain values that I have from where I was born.

Overall, these stories relay a rather more “rosy” narrative of the impact of race and cultural differences in Australia than is common (Hage, 1998; Jupp, 2007; Stratton, 1998), but it does reflect the more positive experiences of engagement with diversity reported more recently by Wise and Velayutham (2009), Noble (2013), and Harris (2013). The positive expectations of the migrating parents were, for the most part, confirmed in their families’ experiences in Australia. This data adds to the growing body of evidence that being mixed is no longer seen or experienced as a pathological condition, but rather as an asset or simply a normality (Caballero, 2012; Parker & Song 2001, p. 3; Tizard & Phoenix 2002, p. 114). It is, of course, important not to valorise mixedness in a way that diminishes the status of the non-mixed person (Parker & Song, 2001). However I am simply sharing the self-reported experiences of those of mixed-race migrant heritage in Western Australia, offering evidence that they find value in the cultural capital afforded by their mixed cultural background, but also the embodied habitus of being visibly mixed. It is likely that the political context that evidently continues to value multiculturalism, but also tends to expect migrant assimilation, may offer an environment that is more open to positive recognition of those who vary slightly from the (white) norm (see Hatoss, 2012), such as those of mixed race, than those more visibly different, particularly when these mixed individuals are culturally and linguistically similar to the mainstream. This may explain their positive experiences.

This environment oddly combines "colour blindness" with "colour cognizance" (Frankenberg 1993). The reports of young people of mixed-race in Australia suggest they are engaged with by others, in the process of their secondary and tertiary socialisation, using a degree of “colour blindness”—being seen as “one of us” by those they interact with, regardless of race, and despite having an attractive “exotic” hue. This visible difference triggers some level of awareness of colour, evident in the ubiquitous stories among participants of being asked where they are from, and their proud and playful responses, without this difference being seen as threatening. Rather than the encounter with racial mixity being “a source of discomfort and momentarily a crisis of meaning” (Omi & Winant, 1986, p. 60), it is an opportunity for play and
positive engagement. It is “everyday multiculturalism” in action—as Perkins (2007, p. 27) argued “perhaps people want to be given the opportunity to share the information of their lives with others,” as it offers a basis on which to form connections, rather than distinctions.

Additionally, these young people have internalised their parents’ apparent colour blindness as part of their primary socialisation, enabling them to feel “at home” with people of many races and backgrounds. This colour blindness may correspond to the point Klocker (2014) made, based on a study concerning the media representation of inter-ethnic/racial intimate relations on popular Australian television programs.18 The author identified that there is a shift in the way in which the ethnicity is represented (or not represented) in the media—from treating ethnic minority as a focus of the ethnic minority character in the past, to paying more attention to everyday life interactions. The author pointed out that while this shift may signal the presence of ethnic/racial diversity in everyday life as increasingly normal, this might misrepresent the social reality, which is more complex than the television representation. In other words, by downplaying the significance of differences, ethnicity is made invisible. The author stated “such everyday multiculturalism on-screen has simultaneously been criticised for erasing difference, and absorbing it into the (white) ‘mainstream’” (Kloster, 2014, p. 39). The question remains whether or not this absorption of differences into mainstream society could be responsible for the mostly positive experiences of the mixed children.

Furthermore, these findings support Luke and Luke’s (1999, p. 249) argument that the interracial family is one “where identities, relations of power, cultural practices, and intergenerational continuities are reconstructed and reframed in historically grounded but unprecedented ways, and where ‘new’ human subjects are innovatively crafting themselves.” But it is worth noting that Luke and Luke emphasised the difference in experiences of inclusion, depending on whether interracial couples lived in Brisbane or Darwin, attributing this to the more open cosmopolitan attitudes and greater diversity of Darwin residents, rather than to the national policy of multiculturalism.

18 The study is based on the review of over twenty popular Australian television shows over a nine-week period between 2011 and 2012. (See Klocker, 2014, pp. 41–42)
The question may be asked, why does this data show that Perth mixed-race families’ experience is more like the Darwin experience than the Brisbane one, when Perth is more similar to Brisbane in many respects? The samples are similar (Luke and Luke investigated the experience of mixed Asian and white Australian couples), but the time periods are different (their respondents were recalling experiences from the 1960s to the 1990s, some decades before this study). Thus it may be that Australians nationwide have become more accepting of difference. But additionally, the fact that the focus in the current case study was placed on the experiences of the offspring, rather than the mixed couples, may be key. It suggests that the effect may be one of a privileging of subtle and minor visible difference of the mixed offspring, whereas Luke and Luke were reporting the experiences of the couples themselves, particularly the Asian partner.

Moreover, it may be important that the majority of the research sample was of mixed Asian and white European backgrounds. While Australia has had an ambivalent relationship with Asia historically, development of strong economic ties, as well as the wider population simply becoming accustomed to seeing more people of Asian descent, has shifted the attitudes of Australians towards Asian migrants to become more positive (Stratton & Ang, 2013). Asian-Australians may be more readily accepted by some sectors of the Australian population than other groups (Fozdar, Spittles & Hartley, 2015, p. 327). It may be that Asians have come to be seen as perhaps the least problematic of visible “others” in Australia, when compared to those of say Middle Eastern or black African backgrounds. Thus those of other mixed backgrounds may not have received the positive response our mixed young people did.

The findings also challenge Perkins’s (2004) argument that in the general refusal to consider “mixedness” as part of the racial and cultural landscape, Australian culture makes national loyalty and a sense of belonging difficult for mixed Australians. Instead, the evidence of this research suggests the national category (where Australian-ness is seen as fundamentally multicultural, see Brett and Moran, 2011) may act as an overarching mechanism by which inclusion is experienced by mixed-race young people. Likewise Matthews’s (2007) critique of “mixed race” as “multicultural chic” which commodifies mixedness and ignores the exclusionary potential of racial identification, appears not to have been supported by the data.
Rather than exclusion, the young people in our sample felt included by a range of groups. It must be emphasised, therefore, the ways in which mixing across categories offers fundamentally different types of subject positions, but also generates apparently more positive engagement from those with a more monocultural orientation, evident in the general lack of racist exclusion experienced by the participants. Such crossings challenge the “ethnic absolutism” (Gilroy, 2000) of much identity politics that presumes ethnicity and race over-determine identity, behaviour, and attitudes (both from the perspective of self and other). Yet they also suggest the importance of race in influencing these aspects of subjectivity.

A final key finding relates to the evidence of cosmopolitanism (openness to difference, world citizenship) among the sample. The publicly acclaimed mixed-race Ghanaian/British philosopher Kwami Appiah stated that he could not but have become cosmopolitan in outlook, given the way he looks (Barclay, 2015). Indeed, Fozdar and Perkins (2014) suggest that it is likely that mixed-race individuals will come to hold cosmopolitan identities oriented to global perspectives, partly because of their visible ambiguity and partly due to the need to negotiate different cultural influences. The findings support both these contentions. However, it must be added that while they could be making the best of their mixedness as part of their cosmopolitan features, it is most likely not entirely by choice, as the avenue to identifying with a “mono” culture is apparently not an option for them.

The above data suggests that the opportunity to engage with the world from a body that does not quite fit established racial categories may enable the development of identities and attitudes that support a cosmopolitan outlook, and orientation that is open to and comfortable with, cultural difference. This may, slowly but surely, bring about what Sussman (2000, p. 368) has identified as “a global identity shift. ... neither the integration of home and host culture values (hybridisation) nor the bicultural strategy which results from acculturation experiences, but rather an identity in which the [individuals] define themselves as world citizens.” Being a mixed-race migrant growing up in Australia appears to offer this perspective, but with Australian-ness as an intermediary category of belonging.
Conclusion

As I pointed out at the beginning of this chapter, the findings I have presented here suggest that a social structure that acknowledges cultural diversity and multiculturalism does make a difference to the processes of cultural negotiations within mixed migrant families in providing a niche in the new society and in becoming part of the Australian society. These findings support Berry’s theory of acculturation, in which he argued that the sociopolitical orientation, such as multiculturalism policy, affects the acculturation experiences of individual migrants in a new society (Berry, 1997, 2001, 2003). It is in these sociohistorical frameworks that cultural negotiations, construction, and reconstruction of cultural identities occur. As Lamont (2001, p. 171) argued, “identity is constructed but bounded by the cultural repertoires to which people have access and the structural context in which they live.”

Despite the changing faces of multiculturalism at the political and ideological level, at the grassroots level multiculturalism has gained an increasingly more stable position in Australia (see Wise & Velayutham, 2009; Noble, 2009). Jakubowicz (2003) stresses the importance of creating a multicultural society from the bottom up, not the top down, involving people in the process of constructing such a society. He stated:

In Jakarta in 1997 I presented the Australia Lecture entitled “Is Australia a Racist Society?” My conclusion then was that we had a racist past, but we were trying to move beyond what could be a racist future. My Indonesian commentator reflected on how futures are written—he said that multicultural societies can only work if the script is still being constructed, and everyone can participate in its writing. (Jakubowicz, 2003, p. 12)

My findings resonate with this, with the voices of the younger generation, as well as the preceding generations, demonstrating their daily multicultural social interactions with people of diverse cultural backgrounds are becoming the norm. Perhaps new “scripts,” as Jakubowicz described, are being constructed at this very moment by the younger generation, of which the children of mixed family backgrounds are a part. For the mixed children, daily multicultural interactions have begun at home. The lack of recognition of multi-raciality/multi-ethnicity among the families may in part be due to a more focused interest in Asian–white mixing in my research, whereas if the focus involved other racial/ethnic mixing such as African–white, the experiences might
draw a different picture. Normalisation of differences can be a positive aspect of everyday multiculturalism but, on the other hand, can come under scrutiny for ignoring differences (Klocker, 2014). As one recent study reported (Edwards & Caballero, 2015), many fathers of mixed-race children in two minority groups (in this case, black fathers in the United Kingdom and Maori fathers in New Zealand) consider it their duty to pass on the values of their racial identity and to support their children in dealing with prejudice and racism by highlighting the importance of acknowledging differences.

In regards to the settlement in a new country, the vast majority of the participant migrant parents reported positive experiences of personal encounters with people whom they met since their arrival in Australia. This corresponds to three longitudinal survey reports on overall successful settlement of the new permanent residents and their spouses in their early months after arrival (Richardson, Miller-Lewis, Ngo, & Ilsley, 2002; Australian Government, 2007).

Reasons for settlement in Australia for the families in my research varied, but in essence the parents had a number of common experiences, which were mainly related to the multicultural living environment. Many parents expressed the opinion that it provided a good place to raise their families. Living in a community of cultural diversity and workplaces full of colleagues from diverse backgrounds meant that being different was normal. For some, life in the “third culture”/“third country” provided a more level playing field in terms of gender equality in marriage relations, as well as in the area of cultural adjustments between the spouses. As one of the participants pointed out, both partners being “outsiders” and “minorities” worked to their advantage in terms of cultural negotiations.

Overall positive experiences of growing up in Australia reported by the offspring confirm that an environment supportive of cultural differences and diversity does

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19 The reports of the three sets of Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Australia (LSIA) spanning the periods from 1993 to 2005 provide various information, including “the labour force, income, expenditure, housing, location, reason for migration, language proficiency, qualifications, health and use of support services of recent migrants” (Richardson et al., 2002, p. 1), based on two sets of interviews—one after the early settlement period of the migrants’ first six months, and then subsequently the second interview 18 months after their arrival.
make a difference in their sense of cultural identity. The accounts by the children were characterised by the ordinariness of their experience, a positive outlook on life, valuing their uniqueness as useful, and fluidity and multiplicity of their cultural identity. Occasional experiences of racism were reported, and in some cases, ambiguous physical appearance did cause discomfort and internal conflicts in different stages of life as they grew up. But these seemed to be a part of the “normal” process of growing up for them, particularly in a society in which “super-diversity,” as Vertovec (2007) called it, prevails. While the aspect of mixed race may play a small part in the identity construction process for the offspring, the degree of its importance varied greatly depending on the individual in each unique family environment, as well as other personal and social factors.

While this study does not offer one conclusive answer to the questions of cultural negotiations within mixed migrant families, it does offer a glimpse of the complexities of the processes in which cultural identities are jointly negotiated and constructed in a unique way in each family. The process starts with negotiations between the couples, with transformation of cultural identity for the parents through the influence of social structures, and people’s attitudes towards them in the host society and the living environment, which in turn influence their parenting practice. The parents adopt some of the norms and values practised in daily life in Australia, which in turn reshape thinking and behaviours. Those changes for the parents then influence development in their children, in particular cultural identity, with multiple cultures at play in daily life. At the same time, children play an active role as agents to shape their own identity as well as that of their parents. These negotiations in daily life inevitably influence the parents in choosing what to and what not to transmit from their cultures of origin. In that respect, the construction/reconstruction of identities is a joint effort of both parents and children (Anderson, 1999).

I close the chapter with a conversation from an interview with the Karam family, which illustrates a positive outcome of the cultural negotiations. Maika said (via Skype), “Well what I find interesting is that now I’m in Japan, studying as an Australian, and I’m studying about Pakistan, so I feel like in the end, I’ve incorporated everything together.” In continuing the conversation, Maika’s parents gave a little more detailed description of what their daughter was studying, and reflected on the outcome of their parenting:
Meiko: She's writing about like education in Pakistan and things like that.

Salim: So whenever she gets a project to write, usually she tries to pick a topic to do with Pakistan. That she’s doing on her own which makes me pretty happy. That is what I think we wanted them to be.

Meiko: Their choice.

Meiko’s words “their choice” are significant, since to reach this point for the children to make their choice, many years of parenting, acculturation, and socialisation processes, including countless cultural negotiations of particular importance to the family—all contributed to the choices made available to the children. This was the culmination of the mutual project of growing up in a mixed migrant family and the joint construction of cultural identity in Australia.
Chapter 7: Conclusion

The main aim of this research was to explore the processes of acculturation and socialisation among mixed migrant families, to study their integration into a society of settlement, and to identify challenges, conflicts, and benefits of being different from the majority members of the host society. This thesis journey began with my interest in investigating how cultural negotiations take place within intercultural and interracial migrant families in which multiple cultures co-reside: the culture of the father, the culture of the mother, the culture(s)-in-the-making of the children, and the culture of the host society, Australia. My central interest lay in understanding how the parents and children jointly construct a cultural identity/identities that may be different from the mainstream society but that work for the families and are of value in Australian society. The two key questions (see Chapter 1) on how multiple cultures are negotiated in the process of integration into a new society and how these negotiation processes influence the development of cultural identity, have been addressed throughout the analysis in Chapters 4, 5, and 6. The thesis showed that the cultures are negotiated in the family practice of everyday life through acculturation and socialisation processes in which cultural identity is constructed and re-constructed, albeit with different resulting experiences for each family member. The influences of these negotiation processes on the construction/re-construction of cultural identity are complex with multiple factors involved, including each parent’s personal history along with the cultural and social values that were instilled in childhood (habitus), the responses from children and interactions within family in everyday family practice, and the impact of the social environment in which the families live. As part of the study concerning the effects of differences, I was also interested in exploring how race/mixed race (visibility due to differences in skin colour and physical features) may impact the sense of identity, particularly of the mixed children. The questions concerning physical features among the offspring and its possible impact on the socialisation process and the construction of multiple identities have been addressed in Chapter 6. The children viewed their visibility as a normal part of their life, while recognising the differences, and understood it mostly as an asset rather than a drawback in the multicultural Australian environment. Their multicultural environment and their “mixedness” seemed to foster and produce a
cosmopolitan element in their cultural identity. In one sense, mixed migrant families are the miniature form of a multicultural society, because their immediate living circumstance is multicultural. From this perspective, examining the smallest social unit has shed light on the complexity of the integration process.

The thesis was informed by the broad theoretical field of symbolic interactionism, which emphasises the significance in the meaning-making process through interactions in understanding social phenomena (Mead, 1934; Blumer, 1969; LaRossa & Reitzes, 1993; Smith & Reiley, 2009). Based on the key principles of symbolic interactionism applied to family studies (LaRossa & Reitzes, 1993), this thesis began with the study of interactions between the members of mixed migrant families: between the father and the mother, between the parents and the children, and among the family as a whole.

During the process of data analysis, as the critique of acculturation theory indicated (Schwartz, Unger, Zamboanga, & Szapocznik, 2010; Ward, 2008), it became clear that the immigrant acculturation theory of Berry (1997, 2003, 2005, 2007) was inadequate to examine complex processes involved in the cultural negotiations between family members. However, Berry’s acculturation theory assisted in identifying the importance of the socio-political conditions set by governments in life experiences of mixed migrant families. Berry asserted that support of integration by governments best facilitates the smooth settlement process of migrants (Berry, 1997, 2001, 2003). My research findings demonstrate that, as a whole, mixed migrant families perceived their life with diversity within the family as normality, and found a niche in local communities. Reciprocal relationship between the host society and the mixed migrant families (Berry, 2001) was witnessed in my data—while the migrant families accepted the basic values and rules of the host society, recognition of and respect for cultural diversity in their local community enabled them to retain their cultures of origin and values (albeit in varying degrees in different families).

Acknowledging the limitations of the theory of acculturation, however, such as the assumption of the single-ethnic identity of migrants, the unidirectionality of the acculturation process, and the absence of race/mixed race—the focus of the analytical lens turned to Bourdieu’s (1984, 1986, 1977) concepts of cultural capital and habitus, in which the structural influence on an individual’s life is considered. At the same time, individuals are acknowledged as active agents who influence change in society.
In one sense, Bourdieu’s theory of practice (habitus and cultural capital) and symbolic interactionism are intricately intertwined, since both theoretical frameworks argue for the importance of the interactions between individuals and society in understanding social reality. As discussed in Chapters 2 and 3, the two theories also share the same theoretical roots, having developed out of phenomenology. The key difference appears to be that while symbolic interactionism emphasises the individual’s active agency, the theory of practice focuses more attention on the social structure and its influence on individual lives. This is not to say one precludes the other, however. The study of multiple layers of cultural negotiation at both micro and macro levels required applications of multiple theories to the understanding of the life experiences of the mixed migrant families. This thesis demonstrates the utility of applying different theoretical frameworks side by side, in a sort of “conceptual bricolage.” Thus a diverse range of theories and concepts (acculturation theory, symbolic interactionism, habitus and cultural capital), have all offered significant insights into understanding the experiences of cultural negotiation and identity formation in mixed migrant families.

In my research, the acculturation process of the parents has resulted in changing habitus through migration to a new society. In one sense, change of habitus is inevitable in migration. As Bottomley argued:

As Bourdieu has demonstrated in Distinction (1986), people acquire "knowledge without concepts". Through conditions that differentiate, through exclusions and inclusions, hierarchies and classifications inscribed in cultural practices and in institutions such as families and education systems, in the interaction of everyday life, social divisions are inscribed in people’s minds. In other words, we can attribute to ourselves a "choice" that has actually been predefined by our social conditions. (Bottomley, 1992, p. 124)

My study has demonstrated that among mixed migrant families, habitus and cultural capital are created and recreated under the influence of the social circumstances and conditions available, and the constraints that force change. In particular, through analysis of the children’s experiences, aspects of cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986) were identified in the way the children used their appearance and their mixed cultural backgrounds as assets. In considering the aspect of cultural capital, it is important to remember the social context—the “field” in which social phenomena take place. The
“field” can be defined broadly as “a network, or a configuration, of objective relations between positions” (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 97). Whether conscious or unconscious, the mixed children have grown up surrounded by multiple cultures within their families, and this has made the external multicultural environment seem normal to them. Indeed, this may be one of the “new forms of migration-specific cultural capital,” which Erel (2010, p. 656) pointed out (Erel’s point was discussed in Chapter 2).

The parents’ successful settlement experience as migrants (as discussed in Chapter 6) appears to be in part the result of living in multicultural environments—neighbourhoods, local community, workplace, and above all, home environment with multiple cultures. The accounts of the children also provide evidence that the parents’ overall positive experience has permeated through to the next generation. For the children, growing up with differences was ordinary; at the same time they recognised its uniqueness.

Negotiation of multiple cultures adds some complexities to family life, in the shaping/reshaping of cultural identity, but the data analysis demonstrated that the complexity enriches family life rather than damaging it or being the source of “problems.” While acknowledging that there are personal differences in the level of integration into the host society, my research demonstrated that these families have become and are becoming an integral part of the cultural landscape of multicultural Australia. However, the social and political climate experienced by these families influenced their self-identification, as well as how they were seen by others in the wider society. I acknowledged the significance of historical context in understanding these families’ daily experiences. In the process of the analysis, attempts were made to link micro level family life and macro level social structure. The key principle of symbolic interactionism played an essential role in the analysis of the data: that in order to understand social phenomena, it is vital to study individuals’ interactions with others in a social context.

As Mead (1934) argued, sense of self and identity are developed through internalisation of interactions with generalised others in the wider community. LaRossa and Reitzes (1993) pointed out the importance of interpretation of social reality, as shown in the discussions of the analysis chapters. The accounts of mixed migrant families demonstrated that the social reality of multicultural environment in
Australia has been interpreted in interaction with one another, internalised, and negotiated both within and outside the family. This thesis has shown the influence of the significant other (parents of different cultural and racial backgrounds) and the generalised other (friends, teachers, social groups and communities) in the development of cultural identity among the children of the mixed migrant family.

**Key findings**

As discussed in the introductory chapter, the following key findings emerged from the data analysis. First, cultural negotiations are complex processes for mixed migrant families. Second, ordinariness prevailed in the day-to-day life of the families. Third, mixed migrant families are a sociopolitical phenomenon. That means, their life experiences are influenced by the social settings and political ideology at a given point in history and in a particular location. And finally, everyday cosmopolitanism appeared to be common among the offspring. The complexity of cultural negotiations is in part due to the multiple layers of the acculturation and socialisation processes: primary, secondary, and tertiary. Acculturation and socialisation processes intermingle in multiple directions—acculturation between the father and the mother, socialisation from the parents to the children, and re-socialisation from the children to the parents. These cultural transmission processes are, as we have seen throughout in the analysis chapters (Chapters 4, 5, and 6), complex and unique in each family and, within the same family, different for each individual. Complexity begins with the fact that parents are from two different cultural/racial backgrounds. Variations in the combinations of those backgrounds are numerous. Other factors for complexity include professional and educational backgrounds, personal/family history of the parents, location of the residence, school environment for the children and whom they associate with, each family member’s personality and so on. The complex processes of cultural negotiation were demonstrated through the analysis of family practice, placing a focus on food, language, education, and school life.

I argued that while the lives of mixed migrant families were filled with multiple cultural negotiations, at the same time, the data demonstrated that their family life was ordinary, just like that of any other family. Caballero (2012) argued that the emphasis on ordinariness was important and that ordinary aspects of life had been neglected due
to the over-representation of negative portrayals in past research. In Caballero’s words,

the concept of “ordinary” may seem unusual when applied to racial mixing and its familiar setting of ostracism, marginalisation, “tragic mulattoes” and “marginal men”. Nevertheless, it is there, in both the extent of its presence and its matter-of-factness, the negotiation of those social and practical issues, big and small, which people faced on an everyday level, regardless of their race or colour: friendship, love, marriage, children, money, work, death, cooking, decorating, shopping, socialising, parenting. (Caballero, 2012, p. 49)

The implication of this is the need for the recognition in research on mixed families and their lives that cultural/racial mixing/mixedness is one of many factors of these families’ social reality, and not a sole, or even predominant, influencer of their family life. Nevertheless, it is an important aspect; my data illustrates this point. As Caballero (2012, p. 49) argued, more empirical studies based on narratives, “particularly in collecting more contextually detailed reminiscences—the inclusion of personal accounts certainly allows us to highlight a more complex picture of mixing and mixedness than has traditionally been painted.”

Furthermore, while much of the literature argues that the government policy of multiculturalism supports the life of migrants in general, it has been a challenge to translate the intended outcomes and benefits of the policy directly into the actual lives of migrants as experienced in daily interactions among the families. In order to gain a clearer picture of what these social forces mean to the families and how they experience them, I drew on the concept of “everyday multiculturalism” (Wise & Velayutham, 2009; Stratton, 1998; Harris, 2009), discussed in Chapter 6. Wise and Velayutham (2009) made the point that studies on multiculturalism in past literatures remained at the policy and population management level, and lacked the insight into the micro level understanding of what it means to ordinary people and their experiences. While everyday multiculturalism applies to a wide range of social encounters, one commonality is that “these encounters occur in ordinary spaces and situations in the ebb and flow of daily life” (Wise & Velayutham, 2009. p. 3). Wise (2009) described the ways people of diverse backgrounds encounter each other in everyday life as “quotidian transversality,” whereby cultural differences are
negotiated to create smooth interrelations across cultures. She summarises the meaning of quotidian transversality as follows:

Quotidian transversality is different to hybridity or code-switching. Nor is it an assimilationist or integrationist notion of exchange across difference where the “guest” culture merges with the dominant culture over time. Instead it highlights how cultural difference can be the basis for commensality and exchange; where identities are not left behind, but can be shifted and opened up in moments of non-hierarchical reciprocity, and are sometimes mutually reconfigured in the process. (Wise, 2009, p. 23)

This notion of quotidian transversality resonates with some of the features of the cultural negotiations in daily interactions within the mixed migrant family, in which cultural difference (of the parents) can play a significant role as the basis of transformation or development of cultural identity. In that respect, it can be said that an element of quotidian transversality is at play in the life of a mixed migrant family, as it is filled with negotiations and reconfigurations of identity.

In addition to the complexity and ordinariness of the empirical data of the mixed migrant families, the thesis illustrated that mixed migrant families are a sociopolitical phenomenon. The analysis demonstrated how social structure and the political ideology of multiculturalism may influence the processes of construction and reconstruction of cultural identity. It also showed how “everyday multiculturalism” is reflected in the daily lives of mixed migrant families. The intricate interactions between the macro and the micro levels of social reality echo Bauman’s (1973) argument, which was discussed in Chapter 1, that culture and structure are not separate entities, but two parts of the same entity of the social reality in which people live. It can be said that cultural negotiations are about the multidimensional space of culture and structure intertwining; in turn these negotiations allow for the families to create a new sense of belonging, positioning themselves and being positioned in a particular space at a particular historical time.

While the extent to which the children consider their cultural identity to be “Australian” differs among the participants, as a whole they perceive themselves to be an integral part of the Australian community. The accounts of generally positive experiences resonate in part with the findings of the cross-national comparative study on the effects of different governmental ideologies in four countries (Yagmur & van
de Vijver, 2012). This study compared the level of integration of Turkish immigrants in terms of acculturation, language maintenance, and ethnic identity between Australia, the Netherlands, France, and Germany. The authors found that in Australia, where the government has an official pluralist policy in place, the integration level of immigrants was the highest. Their study reported that immigrants felt strongly that they were a part of the mainstream culture of the host society. The implication of this is that the official pluralist policy influences the general experience of immigrants.

My findings suggest that the migrant families and their offspring feel well integrated into Australia. Many of the children reported that they had friends from diverse backgrounds. Some parents commented that their choosing to settle in Australia was partly because of its multicultural policies, and many parents felt well accepted because of the diversity they regularly encountered. This is just some of the evidence that points to successful integration.

Lastly, aspects of cosmopolitanism were identified in the identities, attitudes and practices of the offspring and, indeed, their parents. Openness to difference was enacted in everyday life—through not only interculturality but also interraciality within the family environment, particularly among the offspring, but also in their wider interactions with the social world as they encountered it. In one sense, it can be said that this is where the intersection between culture and race takes place in everyday multiculturalism and everyday cosmopolitanism. The practice of everyday cosmopolitanism mirrors what Lamont and Aksartova (2002, p. 18) called “everyday practical cosmopolitanism,” which not only transcends the level of middle class academic inquiry, but also extends to “understanding how people do boundary work in everyday life across national and structural contexts.” They argued for the “need for the scholarship itself to open up to new theoretical and empirical horizons and contemplate the existence of non-intellectual forms of inclusive thinking and acting.” This thesis illustrated one such evidence of everyday practical cosmopolitanism in action among these micro-diverse families.

Limitations of the study

As the key focus of this research was cultural negotiation processes in acculturation and socialisation, particularly between parents and children, there were a number of aspects that were not highlighted in the thesis. One such aspect relates to gender
issues. While migration is a gendered phenomenon in many ways (Bottomley, 1992), impacts of gender difference in the migration experience did not see much light in my thesis. Gender difference was apparent, for example, in the accounts of fathers and mothers. Although the main topic was about family life, often the stories for fathers as migrants emphasised their professional life and their experiences in the workplace. I demonstrated that the impact of gendered roles in the family was apparent not only in the ways that the couples communicated and negotiated cultural transmission, but also in much of the data from the joint couple interviews and the family interviews. In the interviews, the gender power relations were frequently revealed. Is this because the migrant wives are the “followers” or “dependent spouses,” because the “traditional” gendered roles are maintained, because the wives are Asian, or are there other hidden factors? As gender is one of the important social factors in the study of identity development (Smith, 1995), it would be a worthwhile endeavour to further investigate the power dynamics related to gender and their possible influence in the decision-making processes concerning cultural negotiations in mixed migrant families, particularly between the father and the mother. At the same time, further investigation highlighting the importance of mothers and mothering in cultural transmission would be an equally significant future research area (see Barn & Harman, 2014).

Class is another aspect that surfaced during the course of the research, but which is beyond the scope of my thesis. My data consists mainly of a middle-class cohort, with parents from professional backgrounds, along with a small number of families who would be characterised as working class. As the purpose of the research was not to seek a representative sample of a particular class, class was not a part of the selection criteria for research participants. However, it is important to consider the changing characteristics of migrants over a given time in history. As Colic-Peisker (2011) pointed out, today's immigrants are increasingly middle-class and independent, unlike the mass working-class immigrants of post-war Australia, whose experiences as immigrants would most likely have been different.

Furthermore, it is important to acknowledge the influence of religion on cultural identity, especially on the general life outlook among those participant families who were devout Roman Catholics. Religion emerged as an important shared value in bonding a family. For those families, fundamental values that they shared in daily family practice based on the religion seemed to transcend cultural or racial
differences. While religion is beyond the scope of my thesis, a study of how religious faith influences cultural negotiations among mixed families would be another useful area of research.

Finally, as briefly mentioned in Chapter 6, while my participants’ accounts demonstrated mostly positive experiences and showed that they felt accepted in the new society, the absence in the samples of mixed families of Aboriginal heritage or African heritage makes the findings in relation to racism or racial discrimination partial and limited. While one couple was of African/Japanese heritage, it is not possible to examine the family dynamics in depth, as the children were too young to be included in the data.

**Suggestions for future research**

One of the recurring themes raised by the offspring of mixed migrant families in this study relates to different experiences between siblings. In all five families with two children each (out of the total of eight families), differences in attitudes and experiences in relation to identity were noticeable between the siblings. While sibling differences are common in family relationships at a general level, the additional feature of being of mixed race adds to the complexity of the understanding of identity among and between siblings (Song, 2010). Some siblings appeared to interpret their physical appearance in different ways. For instance, of the two sisters with Spanish father and Japanese mother, the older sister, who looks slightly more “Asian” than her younger sister, did not like looking “Asian” when she was growing up, and reported that it was only in her late 20s that she began to accept her mixedness. Her younger sister, on the other hand, did not think much about appearance most of the time. When someone commented on her “looks” when she was young, she said that she learned not to take notice of those comments. As a mother of two small children now, she is proud to be mixed and finds it a shame that her children do not have any “mixed” appearance. Is the different attitude solely because of the visible difference, or is it because of the personality difference, birth order, living environment, or all of the above? I argued in this thesis that the formation of cultural identity/identities is complex. This is another element of complexity and is worth further investigation. While limited, this thesis offers a glimpse into differences in the perception of self in
the process of cultural identity development. Future research is needed for a deeper understanding of the different experiences of siblings.

Another area for possible future investigation is food; I argued that food is essential, not only for survival, but also in the development and presentation of cultural identity. While most of the data are comprised of the retrospective accounts of families with grown-up or teenage children, some were younger-generation parents. Having identified family mealtime as a significant cultural negotiation site in this research, further investigation into mealtime in action through videotaping or observations, for example, might be a possible line of enquiry (see Ayadi & Bree, 2010). While more investigation is needed into such methodologies and their effectiveness, a study of mealtimes may add to a deeper understanding of relationships between migration and food.

**Building on the research field**

In Chapter 2, I argued that the existing bodies of knowledge assume the homogeneity of societies at large. My thesis attempted to overcome that limitation and showed the more heterogeneous nature of mixed migrant families. It also showed that in the contemporary world of large-scale mobility, family dynamics are also rapidly changing, and mixed migrant families are an example. As pointed out in Chapter 2, little research exists concerning socialisation in triple-cultural or multi-cultural families. Building on the body of knowledge in the research field of bicultural/biracial families, this thesis contributes to knowledge about a growing proportion of the world’s population by attempting to integrate insights from socialisation/acculturation studies, which deal with aspects of cultural maintenance and adaptation, with race/mixed race studies, which focus on visible difference and identity. Additionally, as this research has demonstrated, the whole-family approach adds to a deeper understanding of complexity of family dynamics, multi-dimensionality, and the contextual nature of interactions and negotiations in the ordinary daily life of mixed migrant families. Finally, in the last few years, new publications have emerged reporting on mixed-race studies at a global level (King-O’Riain, Small, Mahtani, Song, & Spikard, 2014; Edwards, Ali, Caballero, & Song, 2012, Aspinall & Song, 2013; McGavin & Fozdar, 2016). Building on these new developments, this thesis contributes to further development in the research of mixed-race, mixing, and mixed
families in the Australian context, and it fills a gap in limited applications of the existing bodies of knowledge based in the United Kingdom and the United States.

**Concluding remarks**

Over time, population demographics and attitudes towards differences and cultural diversity among the Australian public have changed. On *SBS World News* (SBS, 16 February 2016), in conjunction with the report that the Australian population has reached 24 million, a short interview clip featuring an interracial family was shown to mark the point of population growth: a young couple including an Anglo-Australian father and an English-born black mother with two young mixed-race children, living in Western Australia. In one sense, this report signals the future direction that Australia is taking—towards an increasingly mixed and diverse population. In 1996, a four-page article with the headline “Mixed blessings—Hybrid nation: mixed marriages once drew controversy but now are increasingly the norm” appeared in the Australian magazine *Bulletin* (Kyriakopoulos, 1996). Twenty years on, in 2016, I ask: How much change have we seen? Have mixed families been part of the change? What will the future hold? In the United States a recent large-scale survey reported positive aspects of being mixed-race: “A majority of multiracial adults say they are proud of their mixed racial background (60%)” (Parker et al., 2015, p. 14). Considering much of the research on “troubled” interracial marriages, their mixed-race children, and their family life, the fact that such a survey highlighted the positiveness of being of mixed racial background may be a signal of change in the overall attitude of people to the mixing of diverse backgrounds. This thesis concludes with the suggestion that, with the accelerating rate of population change in Australia as part of global mobility, it is timely that more research in the field of mixed migrant families is undertaken. The accumulation of positive experiences over generations—past, present, and future—may prevail over time. As a result, holding multi-perspective worldviews and pluralistic cultural identities may become a norm rather than an exception.
# Appendices

## Appendix 1: Table of Participant Families

### A. Eight Families

1. The Bonner family

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parents</th>
<th>Father</th>
<th>Mother</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Name</td>
<td>Julio</td>
<td>Masako</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Age</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Educational background</td>
<td>MSc</td>
<td>College degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Occupation</td>
<td>Agricultural consultant</td>
<td>Artist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Country of origin</td>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>Japan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Age / Year you arrived in Australia</td>
<td>34 / 1981</td>
<td>34 / 1981</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Place of residence before arriving in Australia</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>Germany</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Current place of residence</td>
<td>Perth WA</td>
<td>Perth WA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Reason for the choice of the location of residence</td>
<td>Work</td>
<td>Husband’s job</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Children (Offspring)</th>
<th>Daughter 1</th>
<th>Daughter 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Name</td>
<td>Mari</td>
<td>Yoko</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Age</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Educational background/school year</td>
<td>Master degree</td>
<td>PhD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Occupation (if applicable)</td>
<td>Midwife</td>
<td>Communication auditor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Country of birth</td>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>Germany</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Age you arrived in Australia (if applicable)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Current place of residence</td>
<td>Perth WA</td>
<td>Perth WA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The couple lived in nine different countries before settling in Australia. The children were born in Germany. The family lived in different parts of Australia – Sydney, rural towns in Western Australia before settling in Perth. The daughters are both married and are mothers of small children.
2. The Boccacci family

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parents</th>
<th>Father</th>
<th>Mother</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Name</td>
<td>Antonio</td>
<td>Yasuko</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Age</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Educational background</td>
<td>Electric Engineering study (TAFE)</td>
<td>Junior College (two-year tertiary education)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Occupation</td>
<td>Local government employee</td>
<td>Housewife</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Country of origin</td>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>Japan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Place of residence before arriving in Australia</td>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>Japan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Current place of residence</td>
<td>Perth WA</td>
<td>Perth WA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Reason for the choice of the location of residence</td>
<td>Work and finance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Children (Offspring)</th>
<th>Son</th>
<th>Daughter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Name</td>
<td>Ric</td>
<td>Rena</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Age</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Educational background/school year</td>
<td>Year 9</td>
<td>Year 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Occupation (if applicable)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Country of birth</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Age you arrived in Australia (if applicable)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Current place of residence</td>
<td>Lives at home</td>
<td>Lives at home</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The family lives in a multicultural suburb in Perth. The wife became Christian after marriage. They are devout Catholics and attend Church service every Sunday. The children are also engaged in church activities for youth.
3. The Geiger family

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parents</th>
<th>Father</th>
<th>Mother</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Name</td>
<td>Robert</td>
<td>Tamiko</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Age</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Educational background</td>
<td>BSc</td>
<td>Two-year college degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Occupation</td>
<td>Chemical engineer</td>
<td>Housewife</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Country of origin</td>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>Japan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Age / Year you arrived in Australia</td>
<td>43 / 1989</td>
<td>45 / 1989</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Place of residence before arriving in Australia</td>
<td>Tokyo Japan</td>
<td>Tokyo Japan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Current place of residence</td>
<td>Hills outside Perth</td>
<td>Hills outside Perth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Reason for the choice of the location of residence</td>
<td>Lifestyle</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Children (Offspring)</th>
<th>Son</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Name</td>
<td>Karl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Age</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Educational background/school year</td>
<td>University degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Occupation (if applicable)</td>
<td>Lawyer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Country of birth</td>
<td>Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Age you arrived in Australia (if applicable)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Current place of residence</td>
<td>Perth WA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The couple met in Japan, lived in Switzerland, Germany and Japan. The husband studied Japanese in Japan and is a fluent speaker of Japanese. Their family life began in Australia where their son was born. They live on a farm in the hills, about one hour drive south from Perth.
# 4. The Karam family

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parents</th>
<th>Father</th>
<th>Mother</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Name</td>
<td>Salim</td>
<td>Meiko</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Age</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Educational background</td>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>MA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Occupation</td>
<td>Lecturer</td>
<td>Lecturer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Country of origin</td>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>Japan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Age you arrived in Australia</td>
<td>34 / 1992</td>
<td>31 / 1992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Place of residence before arriving in Australia</td>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>Thailand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Current place of residence</td>
<td>Perth WA</td>
<td>Perth WA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Reason for the choice of the location of residence</td>
<td>Job opportunity</td>
<td>Husband’s job</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Children (Offspring)</th>
<th>Daughter 1</th>
<th>Daughter 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Name</td>
<td>Sakura</td>
<td>Maika</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Age</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Educational background/school year</td>
<td>Currently enrolled in Masters degree</td>
<td>Currently enrolled in 3rd year undergraduate study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Occupation (if applicable)</td>
<td>Student, teacher</td>
<td>Student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Country of birth</td>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>Japan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Age you arrived in Australia (if applicable)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Current place of residence</td>
<td>Lives at home</td>
<td>Lives in Japan</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The couple met in the USA when they were university students. After marriage, they have lived in Thailand before arriving in Australia. They lived in New South Wales first, and then moved to Perth with teenage children. The older daughter lives at home, but the younger daughter lives in Japan as a university student.
5. The Müller family

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parents</th>
<th>Father</th>
<th>Mother</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Name</td>
<td>Hans</td>
<td>Mina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Age</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Educational background</td>
<td>MD</td>
<td>BA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Occupation</td>
<td>General practitioner</td>
<td>Teacher, part-time student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Country of origin</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>Japan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Place of residence before arriving in Australia</td>
<td>The United Kingdom</td>
<td>The United Kingdom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Current place of residence</td>
<td>Mandurah WA</td>
<td>Mandurah WA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Reason for the choice of the location of residence</td>
<td>Job opportunity and lifestyle</td>
<td>Husband’s job</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Children (Offspring)</th>
<th>Son 1</th>
<th>Son 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Name</td>
<td>Jano</td>
<td>Kai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Age</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Educational background/school year</td>
<td>University student</td>
<td>University student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Occupation (if applicable)</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Country of birth</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>Germany</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Age you arrived in Australia (if applicable)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Current place of residence</td>
<td>Perth WA</td>
<td>Perth WA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The family moved from Germany to the United Kingdom with small children aged 3 and 7 months. After 6 years in the United Kingdom, they moved to Australia. Both parents have overseas experience – husband has travelled extensively and lived in Japan as a young man. Wife has lived in the USA as a student.
### 6. The Muff family

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parents</th>
<th>Father</th>
<th>Mother</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Name</td>
<td>Peter</td>
<td>Kim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Age</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Educational background</td>
<td>Pastry chef apprenticeship</td>
<td>Accounting certificate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Occupation</td>
<td>Head pastry chef</td>
<td>Accounting clerk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Country of origin</td>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>Malaysia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Place of residence before arriving in Australia</td>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>Malaysia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Current place of residence</td>
<td>Mandurah WA</td>
<td>Mandurah WA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Reason for the choice of the location of residence</td>
<td>Job opportunity and lifestyle</td>
<td>Husband’s job</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Children (Offspring)</th>
<th>Son</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Name</td>
<td>Daniel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Age</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Educational background/school year</td>
<td>University student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Occupation (if applicable)</td>
<td>Student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Country of birth</td>
<td>Malaysia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Age you arrived in Australia (if applicable)</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Current place of residence</td>
<td>Lives at home</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The son was born and raised in Malaysia and the family lived there until their settlement in Australia. The mother is Malaysian of Chinese origin. One of the main reasons to move to Australia was to secure the safety and education of the child. The son lives at home.
## 7. The Morgan family

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parents</th>
<th>Father</th>
<th>Mother</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Name</td>
<td>Nathan</td>
<td>Lin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Age</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Educational background</td>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>Secretary certificate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Occupation</td>
<td>Medical administration</td>
<td>Housewife</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Country of origin</td>
<td>Sri Lanka</td>
<td>Malaysia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Age / Year you arrived in Australia</td>
<td>16 / 1973 (for permanent settlement) (At age 11, lived in Australia with family for one year.)</td>
<td>26 / 1983</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Place of residence before arriving in Australia</td>
<td>England</td>
<td>Malaysia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Current place of residence</td>
<td>Perth WA</td>
<td>Perth WA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Reason for the choice of the location of residence</td>
<td>Convenience to work, school and close to parents' residence</td>
<td>For family</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Children (Offspring)</th>
<th>Son 1</th>
<th>Son 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Name</td>
<td>Jonathan</td>
<td>Darren</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Age</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Educational background/school year</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td>University student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Occupation (if applicable)</td>
<td>Lawyer</td>
<td>Student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Country of birth</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Age you arrived in Australia (if applicable)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Current place of residence</td>
<td>Lives at home</td>
<td>Lives at home</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The couple lived in the United Kingdom before settling in Australia. The father is a descendant of Dutch Burghers. The mother is Malaysian of Chinese origin. The father’s parents live next door to the family. The sons have close relationships with their grandparents.
8. The Nicolas family

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parents</th>
<th>Father</th>
<th>Mother</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Name</td>
<td>Walter</td>
<td>Jade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Age</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Educational background</td>
<td>Technology School</td>
<td>College graduate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Occupation</td>
<td>Small business owner</td>
<td>Housewife / secretary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Country of origin</td>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>The Philippines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Place of residence before arriving in Australia</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>The Philippines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Current place of residence</td>
<td>Perth WA</td>
<td>Perth WA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Reason for the choice of the location of residence</td>
<td>Business</td>
<td>Marriage</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Children (Offspring)</th>
<th>Daughter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Name</td>
<td>Oriana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Age</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Educational background/school year</td>
<td>BA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Occupation (if applicable)</td>
<td>Secretary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Country of birth</td>
<td>Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Age you arrived in Australia (if applicable)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Current place of residence</td>
<td>Perth WA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: The family is devout Catholic and attends church on Sundays. All members of the family are engaged in the family business. Recently the daughter purchased a house next door to the parents. They live in a multicultural suburb of Perth. The mother is Filipina of Chinese origin.
B. Five Couples

1. The Hofmann family

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parents</th>
<th>Father</th>
<th>Mother</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Name</td>
<td>Claus</td>
<td>Mayumi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Age</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Educational background</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td>High School diploma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Occupation</td>
<td>Internal auditor</td>
<td>Housewife</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Country of origin</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>Japan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Age / year you arrived in Australia</td>
<td>30 / 2010</td>
<td>33 / 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Place of residence before arriving in Australia</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>Germany</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Current place of residence</td>
<td>Perth WA</td>
<td>Perth WA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Reason for the choice of the location of residence</td>
<td>Lifestyle and children’s education</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Children and age</td>
<td>Two daughters (6 and 4)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The couple met in Sydney when they were students and working-holidaymakers. Each returned to their home country. After marriage, they lived in Germany and Japan before settling in Australia. Both children were born in Japan.
## 2. The Kaczka family

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parents</th>
<th>Father</th>
<th>Mother</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Name</td>
<td>Patryk</td>
<td>Ayako</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Age</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Educational background</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>BN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Occupation</td>
<td>IT consultant</td>
<td>Registered nurse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Country of origin</td>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>Japan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Place of residence before arriving in Australia</td>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>Japan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Current place of residence</td>
<td>Perth WA</td>
<td>Perth WA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Reason for the choice of the location of residence</td>
<td>His brother lives in Perth</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Children and age</td>
<td>A daughter (4) and a son (2)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The couple met in Perth when they were students. Both children were born in Australia. The husband’s parents visit and stay with them for a few months every year.
### 3. The Riad family

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parents</th>
<th>Father</th>
<th>Mother</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Name</td>
<td>Azad</td>
<td>Noriko</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Age</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Educational background</td>
<td>MD</td>
<td>BA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Occupation</td>
<td>General practitioner</td>
<td>Architect / Artist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Country of origin</td>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>Japan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Age / year you arrived in Australia</td>
<td>33 / 2007</td>
<td>31 / 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Place of residence before arriving in Australia</td>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>Egypt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Current place of residence</td>
<td>Perth WA</td>
<td>Perth WA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Reason for the choice of the location of residence</td>
<td>Work and life</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Children and age</td>
<td>A son (6) and a daughter (1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The couple met in Japan. They lived in Japan and Egypt as a couple before arriving in Australia. Both children were born in Australia.
4. The Rana family

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parents</th>
<th>Father</th>
<th>Mother</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Name</td>
<td>Frank</td>
<td>Hiromi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Age</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Educational background</td>
<td>Dip. hotel management and catering technology</td>
<td>BA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Occupation</td>
<td>Finance</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Country of origin</td>
<td>India</td>
<td>Japan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Age / year you arrived in Australia</td>
<td>26 / 1990</td>
<td>21 / 1990</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Place of residence before arriving in Australia</td>
<td>India</td>
<td>Japan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Current place of residence</td>
<td>Perth WA</td>
<td>Perth WA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Reason for the choice of the location of residence</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Children and age</td>
<td>A son (10) and a daughter (7)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The couple met in Australia. The family has lived in the same location since their marriage. The wife became a Christian after marriage. All the family are dedicated Christians and go to church every Sunday.
### 5. The Tinubu family

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parents</th>
<th>Father</th>
<th>Mother</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Name</td>
<td>Sudi</td>
<td>Eriko</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Age</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Educational background</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>BN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Occupation</td>
<td>Performance analyst</td>
<td>Registered nurse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Country of origin</td>
<td>Guinea</td>
<td>Japan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Age / year you arrived in Australia</td>
<td>20 / 2001</td>
<td>21 / 2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Place of residence before arriving in Australia</td>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>Japan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Current place of residence</td>
<td>Perth WA</td>
<td>Perth WA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Reason for the choice of the location of residence</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Children and age</td>
<td>2 daughters (6 and 2) and a son (5)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The couple met in Perth when they were students. The wife’s mother visits and lives with the family three months or more every year. During her stay, the grandmother helps with the household and care of the children.
Appendix 2: Participant Recruitment Progress

The recruitment of research participants began at the end of November 2012 and ended in February 2014. Data collection through interviews was completed in April 2014. I have kept a record of each recruitment activity, follow-ups, and outcomes. Below is a short summary of recruitment activities. Some of the challenges are also briefly discussed.

Recruitment activities

Key recruitment activities included the following:

- Creating recruitment flyers, and information leaflets and letters:
  - The information leaflets and letters were modified along the way since some of the criteria needed to change. More details regarding changes are discussed in Chapter 3.

- Contacting friends, family friends, student colleagues, and former work colleagues (language teachers and administrators) in the education sector:
  - Numerous suggestions and further contacts were offered by many people I contacted; these were incorporated into further recruiting strategies.
  - I visited some schools to meet and discuss the research and to ask teachers for advice on finding further participants.

- Contacting academic staff at UWA and other universities in Perth:
  - At the invitation of one professor, I visited her classes and spoke for a few minutes about my research, and I distributed information leaflets to the class—in total, I spoke to over 100 students.
  - Some academic staff gave suggestions to contact other institutions or individuals, or offered to pass on the information to others.

- I placed advertisements in the UWA student Facebook page, the UWA staff newsletter (which is distributed to external organisations such as local TV stations, ABC radio stations, and so on), the Postgraduate Students Association newsletter, and the UWA alumni newsletter.

- I contacted and visited various ethnic and multicultural organisations or associations in Perth and environs.
The ethnic organisations I contacted included ones of nationalities such as Dutch, German, Korean, Japanese, Chinese, French, Latin American, Thai, Filipino, as well as others. In total I contacted over 20 organisations and associations. I also attended a food festival and a film festival, organised by ethnic groups, on which occasions I was introduced to stakeholders of the groups who gave me suggestions and further contacts. On one occasion I met committee members of an association who were familiar with some of their members’ family backgrounds. All in all, however, it became clear that most of the members and their families were of single ethnic background.

Other organisations agreed to put the recruiting information in their newsletters or to put the flyer up on office information boards. Others were impossible to contact—no answer to calls, no calls returned, or the contact number was disconnected. The Korean association had the website in Korean language only, which made it difficult to contact. One Chinese association explained that their members were all native Chinese speakers and do not have intermarried couples or families. One club had a policy of not sending out external information such as mine to their members.

One social worker at a migration support centre offered to allow me to speak about my research in her class of trainee childcare centre assistants for migrant women. In another centre for migrants, a coordinator of the migrant centre offered to allow me to sit in her seminars and to speak about my research. However, people who attended such classes or seminars were mostly from a single-ethnic/cultural/national background, and were relatively new to Australia.

**Challenges and issues**

Throughout the process of finding participants, I was met by a number of challenges along the way, as intimated above. Other challenges included the following:

- Some people found terms such as “West European,” “East Asian,” “immigrant family” or “first generation immigrant parents” confusing, and this led to misinterpretation. When people heard the description “European and Asian,” some assumed the combination referred to an Australian–non-Australian couple.
- Another presumption related to gender. As one person admitted, from the moment she read the information, she imagined it described a European male and an Asian
female. Only when I mentioned that it could be the other way around, did she realise that was a possibility.

- After approximately six months of searching for participants, the criteria needed to be reviewed. The initial criteria, which specified a combination of national/cultural backgrounds from selected Asian and West-European countries, was expanded to include more countries of origin (this process is discussed in more detail in Chapter 3). After a few more months the categories were broadened still more to include any combination of parents as long as the couples were of different culture, race, and nationality. This difficulty of finding participants led to a slight change of research direction (also discussed in Chapter 3), and the recruitment of young mixed couples with small children began. Finding participants was easier and within two months five young families agreed to participate in the research.
Appendix 3: Recruitment Flyer

ARE YOU A PART OF A MIXED HERITAGE IMMIGRANT FAMILY?

Looking for interview participants

My name is Maki Meyer, and I am a PhD student in Anthropology and Sociology at the University of Western Australia. I am conducting a research project on the life experience of ‘bi-cultural’/’mixed race’ migrant families living in Australia.

The aim of this project is to understand how immigrant families adjust their cultures of origin and integrate into an Australian way of life. This will be considered both from the parents’ and the offspring’s perspective.

You can contribute by participating in a series of interviews. I am looking for families who meet the following criteria:

- Both parents are first generation immigrants, not Australian-born.
- Parents are migrants from different racial and cultural backgrounds
- Offspring are between the ages of 13 and 29.
- Have lived in Australia at least 3 to 4 years and intend to remain here.

All information you provide is completely confidential. If the above criteria fit you, and you and your family are interested in participating, please contact me for more details.

Contact:

Maki Meyer
(Researcher)

The University of Western Australia

Email: [Redacted]
April 2013

INVITATION TO BE A RESEARCH PARTICIPANT

Dear Potential Participant,

I, Maki Meyer, am a PhD student in the Department of Anthropology and Sociology at the University of Western Australia.

Purpose of the research:

As part of this degree, I am conducting a research project, which will lead to a thesis. The main aim of this project is to explore experiences of migrant families of mixed cultural backgrounds in Australia, with a focus on families with one parent from an “East Asian” background (Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese or Chinese – including South-East Asian Chinese) and the other from a “Western” background (West European or North American), and their children (from 15 years of age to young adults). Both parents should be immigrants and the families need to have lived in Australia for at least 3~4 years and intend to live here long term. I am especially interested in how the families have made cultural adjustments, particularly in relation to the children growing up in Australia. The population of mixed heritage families is rising in migrant countries like Australia. This study will provide a better understanding of how such families adjust, create a new cultural identity, and integrate into Australian society. You are invited to participate in the study.

The title of the research project:

“The joint construction of cultural identity within intercultural/interracial migrant families in Australia”
What you will be asked to do:

This study will involve three interviews. The interviews will be conducted in a sequence with the parents’ interview first, then an interview with the children, and finally an interview with the whole family. The first two interviews may take place on the same day or a few days apart. After these are completed, provided the participants agree, an audio recorder will be left with the family for up to two weeks. During this time, participating families are asked to record any further additional thoughts, reflections, or new experiences. At the time of the collection of the audio recorder by me, we will organize the third interview.

In summary, I would like to invite your participation in the following:

1. An interview with parents (individual interview optional)
2. An interview with children (individual interview optional)
3. Recordings by the family (optional)
4. A family interview

Each interview will last approximately 30 to 60 minutes. The interviews will take place at a location of your choice. The interviews will be audiotaped and transcribed by me. During the analysis, you may be contacted to ensure the correct interpretation of the data.

**About the 1st interview (parents)**

We will talk about:
- your motivations to move to Australia and raise children
- cultural adjustments
- parenting styles and the education of your children
- being a parent in mixed heritage family

**About the 2nd interview (children)**

We will talk about:
- growing up in Australia – school life, friends, and family life
- being a child of a mixed heritage family
- cultural adjustments

**About the self-recording (by the family members) – this is optional.**

On agreement with the family, I will leave an audio recorder after the 2nd interview with you to record additional thoughts, reflections or new events that you would like to share.
About the 3rd interview (the whole family)

• Discussion of your life experience as a migrant family of mixed heritage

Exploration of changes/development of your cultural identity through the experiences of family life, school life and community life.

Confidentiality

All information you provide is completely confidential. It will only be available to my supervisor and me. All recordings and transcribed notes will be stored in a secure place at the University of Western Australia and will be protected by a password. No information that will identify you will be included in the transcripts or in the research reports after the study. Participation is voluntary: if you wish to withdraw from the research, you may do so without any penalty or prejudice at any time. If you wish to withdraw information that has been collected, please inform me.

Potential benefits for you and others

The research provides an opportunity for you to reflect on your experiences as a migrant family, which may lead to a new awareness of benefits and challenges. Although there may be no other direct benefit to you from participating in this study, the results gained from your participation may help families in similar circumstances understand their situation in the future. The research will also provide members of the wider community with awareness and a better understanding of families of mixed cultural backgrounds.

Questions

Approval to conduct this research has been provided by the University of Western Australia Human Research Ethics Committee, in accordance with its ethics approval procedures. Any person considering participation in this research project or agreeing to participate may raise any questions or issues with the researcher or his/her supervisor at any time.

Maki Meyer (Researcher)       Assoc/Prof Farida Fozdar (Supervisor)
The University of Western Australia     The University of Western Australia
Ph: 08 6488 3997               Ph: 08 6488 3997
farida.fozdar@uwa.edu.au         farida.fozdar@uwa.edu.au

In addition, any person not satisfied with the response of the researchers may raise ethics issues or concerns, and may make any complaints about this research project by contacting the Human Research Ethics Office at the University of Western Australia on 08 6488 3703 or by emailing to hreo-research@uwa.edu.au
All research participants are entitled to retain a copy of any Participant Information Form and/or Participant Consent Form relating to this research project.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or comments about the research, and thank you once again for your help.

Regards,

Maki Meyer
Appendix 4B: Invitation Letter for Young Parents’ Interviews

October 2013

INVITATION TO BE A RESEARCH PARTICIPANT

Dear Potential Participant,

I, Maki Meyer, am a PhD student in the Department of Anthropology and Sociology at the University of Western Australia.

Purpose of the research

As part of this degree, I am conducting interviews for my research project, which will lead to a thesis. The main aim of this project is to explore experiences of migrant families of mixed cultural backgrounds in Australia.

I am especially interested in how the families have made cultural adjustments, particularly in relation to parenting and the children growing up in Australia. The population of mixed heritage families is rising in migrant countries like Australia. This study will provide a better understanding of how such families adjust, create a new cultural identity, and integrate into Australian society. You are invited to participate in the study. Part of the research involves joint interviews with parents.

I am looking for parents who meet the following criteria:

- Both parents immigrated to Australia after age 18.
- Parents are from different cultural, ‘racial’ and national backgrounds from each other.
- Parents have lived in Australia at least 3 to 4 years and intend to remain here.

The interview will take place at a location of your choice, and it will last approximately 60 minutes or more. The interview will be audiotaped and transcribed by me. During the analysis, you may be contacted to ensure the correct interpretation of the data.
The title of the research project

“The joint construction of cultural identity within intercultural/interracial migrant families in Australia”

In the interview, our talk will include

• your motivations to move to Australia

• integration into the Australian way of life while retaining the culture of origin

• raising children (parenting styles, education of your children etc.)

• joys and challenges in day-to-day family life

• being a parent in mixed heritage family

Confidentiality

All information you provide is completely confidential. It will only be available to my supervisor and me. All recordings and transcribed notes will be stored in a secure place at the University of Western Australia and will be protected by a password. No information that will identify you will be included in the transcripts or in the research reports after the study. Participation is voluntary: if you wish to withdraw from the research, you may do so without any penalty or prejudice at any time. If you wish to withdraw information that has been collected, please inform me.

Potential benefits for you and others

The research provides an opportunity for you to reflect on your experiences as a migrant family, which may lead to a new awareness of benefits and challenges. Although there may be no other direct benefit to you from participating in this study, the results gained from your participation may help families in similar circumstances understand their situation in the future. The research will also provide members of the wider community with awareness and a better understanding of families of mixed cultural backgrounds.

Questions

Approval to conduct this research has been provided by the University of Western Australia Human Research Ethics Committee, in accordance with its ethics approval procedures. Any person considering participation in this research project or agreeing to participate may raise any questions or issues with the researcher or his/her supervisor at any time.
In addition, any person not satisfied with the response of the researchers may raise ethics issues or concerns, and may make any complaints about this research project by contacting the Human Research Ethics Office at the University of Western Australia on 08 6488 3703 or by emailing to hreo-research@uwa.edu.au

All research participants are entitled to retain a copy of any Participant Information Form and/or Participant Consent Form relating to this research project.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or comments about the research, and thank you once again for your help.

Regards,

Maki Meyer
Appendix 5: Parents’ Interview Questions

1. New life in Australia
   - What motivated you to move to Australia?
   - What was your first impression of Australia?
   - What was it like to adjust to a new way of life?
   - Did you experience culture shock?

2. Culture/cultural identity
   - What do you value the most of our own culture?
     - to husband
     - to wife
   - What do you think the main cultural differences are between you and your partner?
   - How important is it to pass the cultural values on to the next generation?
   - What do/did you do with or for your children to pass on your cultural values? (e.g. reading stories in your language, cooking, music, etc.)
   - What are some of the cultural differences between your country and Australia?
   - What aspects of Australian way of life do you like / dislike?
   - What is “Australian culture” to you (If you were to describe “Australian culture” what would that be)?
   - To what extend do you feel you are a part of the Australian culture?
   - What is the most noticeable cultural clash you have experienced between you two?
   - How do/did you encourage your children to appreciate the cultural values (which you mentioned earlier) that are important to you?

3. Life at home
   - What did/do you do with/for children to pass on your culture to them?
     - food you eat at home
     - language(s) you speak with your children (i.e. story-telling in your language)
     - efforts that have been made to retain your native language and to teach your children the language - celebrating special events/ceremonies
   - Why is it important to transmit your cultural values, traditions and manners to the next generation?
   - Can you tell me some of the manners you teach/taught, and rules or limits in what your children are allowed to do/not allowed to do?
   - What cultural values do you think your children have adopted from you?
   - What group do you feel you belong to? How important is it to feel part of that group?
• Do you think your children feel the same?
• What were your main concerns for your children’s adjustment to a new culture?

4. Parenting and education:
• Did you have a mutual agreement on parenting?
• How did you decide on which school your children should attend?
• Did you have conflicts on disciplining issues with your partner?
  If so, in what ways? Please give me examples.
• What is/was the most important thing for you to provide your children as parents?
• Having come to Australia, have you made a conscious decision as to how to raise your children, which may have been different from parenting in your own country?
• What were some of the challenges of parenting? eg. sleep-overs, going to parties, studying, etc.
• Where do/did you get wider support for your approach/issues in parenting? (friends, other parents, community group etc.?)
• How did your friendship networks affect the parenting and cultural adjustment?
• What cultural values do you think your children have adopted from you?
• What group do you feel you belong to? How important is it to feel part of that group?
• Do you think your children feel the same?
• Do you think your children assisted you in the process of integration into Australian community? In what ways?
• Looking back, is there anything you would have done differently in your parenting?
• Do you think Australia has accommodated you with your desire/hope to achieve your aspirations to raise children and for your future life as a family?

5. Mixed heritage
• Have you experienced racism because of any ‘visible difference’ in physical appearance (either yourself or children)?
  If so, what was your strategy as parents to overcome racism?
• Was there any assistance/help available from others (i.e. friends, other families, school, community support group, etc.) to overcome the problem?

6. Family relationships
• Do/did you keep in contact with your relatives?
• How do you maintain the family relationship with the extended families?
• What is the relationship between your children and other relatives (grandparents, cousins, etc.)?
• What is the relationship like with your extended family members?
• Have you experienced conflicts with your partner’s family?
• Have you experienced racism with your partner’s family?
• Have you experienced racism with others in wider community?

7. Integration
• How well do you feel integrated into Australian way of life?
• Do you feel you are part of the local community?
Appendix 6: Interview Questions for Children

1. Culture/cultural identity
   • Please tell me about your childhood.
     - How old were you when you came to Australia?
     - Do you remember in the first months your interactions with other Australians? Please tell me about this.
     - Do you remember any impressions you had then, and have those impressions changed over time?
     - How did you adjust to the Australian way of life?
   • What kinds of cultural aspects did you learn from your parents as a child?
     i.e., stories, crafts, songs, cultural ceremonies, dress, values, etc.
   • Did you celebrate any special cultural events/rituals? How did you find it?
   • Do you speak the language(s) of your parents?
     - in what circumstances do you speak in the language(s)?
     - how did you feel about speaking the language and how do you feel about it now?
   • If you do not speak your parents’ language, would you have liked to have learned it?
     Why?
   • What type(s) of food do you eat at home?
   • Did you learn how to prepare dishes from your mum and dad’s countries?
   • What is your favourite home-cooking food?

2. Growing up
   School life
   • Do you have friends who are from a similar background to you
     (intercultural family)?
   • In the school you go/went to, are/were there many students from different cultural backgrounds?
   • Do you feel you belong to any particular group?
   • Do you find you belong to more than one group?
   • Is/was there any other group of people similar to your ethnic background?
   • Were you ever asked a question “Where are you from?”
   • What was your response to it? What was the person’s reaction to your response?
• Were there any conflicts with your parents during your school life? e.g., going out with friends, dating a girl/boy, having sleep-overs, about attitudes to study, sports.

• If there were conflicts, why do you think that was?

• How did you deal with them?

• What were your parents like with disciplining? Were they different from other parents?

Mixed heritage:
• When you were growing up, did your parents talk about your mixed heritage to you?
  - If so, in what way?
  - What were the attitudes of your relatives towards your mixed heritage?
  - How did you feel about your mixed heritage as a child?
  - Who are your friends now?

• Did you ever have an experience that made you aware of the difference in the physical appearance between you and your parents (or either of them)?
  - On what occasion?
  - Can you tell me how that made you feel?

• Please tell me about experiences you have had related to your mixed heritage.
  - What were the positive experiences?
  - What were the negative experiences?

• Did you ever feel/notice that your parents were making an effort to teach you the values of their cultures?
  - If so, in what way? Please give me examples.
  - How did you feel about it? How did you respond to it?

• How do you think other people perceive you generally in relation to being of mixed heritage?

As a young adult:
• How would you describe your identity now?

• How did your parents’ cultural backgrounds influence you in your identity?

• Do you have any preference as to what cultural/ethnic group your friends belong to?

• Where do you think you belong?

• Do you think there are benefits of being of interracial/mixed heritage?

• Are there any disadvantages?

• What do you like about Australia, and what do you not?
Appendix 7: Interview Questions for Families

- Have there been any long-lasting conflicts between parent(s) and child(ren) as a result of cultural differences?
  - If so, what were they?
  - Are they related to differences between your cultures of origin or with the Australian culture?
- What was the biggest moment of joy for you as a family?
- What are the fondest memories of things you have done together as a family?
- (To parents) Are they different from what families do in your country of origin?
- What brings long-lasting satisfaction and happiness?
- (Parents) Looking back, is there anything you would have done differently in your parenting?
- (Offspring) Looking back, is there anything you would like to have learned more or less from your parents?
- We talked about what you like or dislike about the Australian way of life in the earlier interviews. Can you tell me a bit more about what you adopted and what you have resisted. (and influence of those choices on parenting/growing up)
- What (Australian) cultural influence as a whole for the family do you think has been the strongest? And why? (And how this was negotiated?)
- Do you feel you are well integrated as a family in the Australian community? If so, in what way? (Rewording may be necessary for teenage children.)
Appendix 8: Parental Consent Form

Parental Consent for Child to Participate in Research Project

Project Title: The joint construction of cultural identity within intercultural migrant families in Australia

Project Description:

- If your child participates, the researcher will interview him/her at his/her most convenient and comfortable location, agreed by you and the child.
- The interview will last for approximately 30 ~ 40 minutes.
- Where more than one child (sisters/brothers) participates, they will be interviewed together unless individual interviews are preferred.
- The researcher (no one else) will be present with your child.
- The interview will be recorded, using a digital audio-recorder.
- Your child will talk about:
  - growing up in Australia – school life, friends, and family life
  - being a child of a mixed family
  - living in bi-cultural home environment

Issues of confidentiality and privacy, voluntary participation, and benefits are as outlined in the information letter.

Consent:

I have read the information provided on the research project, and any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction.
I give permission for my child to participate in the research project entitled, *The joint construction of cultural identity within intercultural migrant families in Australia.*

I understand that, in order to participate in this project, my child must also agree to participate. I also understand my child and/or I can change our minds about participation and withdraw at any time without penalty.

**Name of Child**
(Print): __________________________________________________________

**Age of the Child:** __________

**Name of Parent**
(Print): _________________________________________________________

**Parent’s Signature:** _____________________________________________

**Date:** __________________________

Approval to conduct this research has been provided by The University of Western Australia, in accordance with its ethics review and approval procedures. Any person considering participation in this research project, or agreeing to participate, may raise any questions or issues with the researchers at any time.

Maki Meyer (Researcher)  Assoc/Prof. Farida Fozdar (Supervisor)
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In addition, any person not satisfied with the response of researchers may raise ethics issues or concerns, and may make any complaints about this research project by contacting the Human Research Ethics Office at The University of Western Australia on (08) 6488 3703 or by emailing to hreo-research@uwa.edu.au

Your participation in this study does not prejudice any right to compensation, which you may have under statute or common law.

All research participants are entitled to retain a copy of any Participant Information Form and/or Participant Consent Form relating to this research project.
Appendix 9: Information Letter to Children

Project – Growing up in Australia with parents from two different countries

Dear

My name is Maki Meyer and I am studying how families of mixed cultural backgrounds (your parents are from two different countries) adjust their way of life, and learn new ways as a family to live in a new community. Talking to you and your family about your day-to-day experiences will really help me understand how people from different cultures build a family life in Australia.

As part of the study, I would like to hear about how it is/was growing up in Australia – at home with your parents, brothers and sisters, and at school with your friends, teachers and classmates.

Our talk will be private. I will not tell your family or anyone else what you say. It will be good if we can have a joint talk with your brothers/sisters, but if you prefer to talk alone, that will be fine too. The talk with you will take no longer than half an hour. After that, there will be another talk, but this time with the whole family. It may take half an hour to an hour.

Thank you for taking part in this study. Before we begin our talk, your parents will sign the consent form (permission to participate) on your behalf.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter and for your help.

Yours sincerely,

Maki Meyer
**Reference List**


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