

Adaptation of Arab Immigrants to Australia

N I N A M A A D A D



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Preface

This book examines the psychological problems that Arab immigrants experienced in their efforts to adapt socially and culturally when they settled in Australia. The introduction examines the core values of Islam and Druze religious beliefs and practices, as well as reviewing the history of Arab migration to Australia. It also discusses the ways in which Western societies have perceived Arabs, especially women. The research was based on a group of 40 participants, 16 of whom migrated to Australia between 1973 and 2004. The other 24 were all of Arab descent and born in Australia. The participants' ages ranged between 14 to 66 years of age. The methodology for undertaking the research utilised humanistic sociology principles, particularly when collecting and analysing qualitative data. The research strategies that were used consisted of interviews, open-ended questionnaires, and access to people's private journals and memoirs. The discussion of data centered on respondents' thoughts and feelings and these have been presented as they were communicated, whether in interviews, responses to questionnaires or their personal writings.

This investigation is divided into three sections, and each one discusses the questionnaire and interview data related to a specific topic. The first part focuses on the psychological issues resulting from migration and adaptation to Australian culture and customs. The second section concentrates on socio-cultural factors especially the maintenance of traditional Arab religious practices, family values, language and personal identity. The third and final part analyses the respondents' perceptions of the ways in which Anglo-Australian host society has responded to Arab immigrants and their children. It focuses in particular on the change in attitudes that they experienced in the wake of the terrorist attack in the United States on 9th September 2001. It also considers the respondents' views on educating white Australians about Arab peoples, their religion and their culture.

The findings indicate that Arab immigrants endured many challenges when adapting to a new culture. They had to adjust to its values and morals, which were new and alien to them, and learn to integrate the old with the new culture so they could live comfortably. Such adaptation was not done overnight and the time taken to adjust was often very depressing and exhausting. For some it took many years before any adjustment was accomplished.

The major finding of this book is that the Arab immigrant families did adjust to the new country wholeheartedly, even in the first generation, partly by maintaining the core values of their Arab home culture. Adapting to mainstream Australian culture was more pronounced in the second generations. Nonetheless, there was an equal enthusiasm from younger people of Arab descent who were born in Australia to retain and express the values of their family elders' culture and to explain and share it with Australians from non-Arab backgrounds. The respondents agreed on the importance of other Australians having the opportunity to learn about Arab peoples and their cultures, in order to increase understanding and minimising suspicion and discrimination.

In memory of Professor Kevin Marjoribanks and Professor George Smolicz and in dedication to Dr Margaret Secombe who provided unconditional support throughout my journey.

Introduction

Arabs living in Western societies have had to cope with psychological problems due to the stresses of migration, adapting to a new culture, familiarisation with a new language, and the propensity of Western societies to portray Arabs in terms of stereotypes. Western societies, that is, those countries of Western Europe and the English-speaking world in North America and the West-South Pacific, lack an awareness of and misunderstand what it is to be a Muslim. Furthermore, they have little or no knowledge about Druze culture or the Arab way of life in general. Most Arabs do the best they can to understand these misconceptions and clarify and correct false assumptions. The fact remains, however, that many Western people – given the impact of the events of September 11, 2001 and the subsequent ‘war on terror’- imagine Arab people to be terrorists, landless, and having different educational values.

The Arab world consists of 22 countries (20 states and two territories) stretching from Mauritania in the far west of North Africa to Oman in the east, and their people all speak the Arabic language and are predominantly Muslim in religion. These countries are: Algeria, Bahrain, Comoros, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, Western Sahara and Yemen (Barrakat, 2005). There are two neighbouring Islamic states that are not considered to be Arab: firstly, Turkey, which is the modern secular state that replaced the centuries-old Ottoman Empire in 1918; and secondly, Iran, inheritor of the culture of ancient Persia. In today’s global world, people of Arab culture can be found living in other countries that have a huge immigrant base, such as the United States, Canada and Australia.

The worldwide Arab population numbers approximately 323 million and its economic surplus is one trillion USD, which is increasing annually at a rate of 5 per cent. The Arabic language plays a major role in uniting the Arab world. Each Arab country speaks, reads and writes using standard Arabic but each country also has its own unique dialect, pronunciation and vocabulary. Another important theme is group relations, where Arabs tend to identify with each other in group or collective contexts, with the family representing the basic unit of socio-economic strength and stability. The family, in fact, is the centre of Arab society (Barrakat, 2005).

Islam is the major religion in the Arab world and it has official status in most countries. The Quran is the Holy Book for all Muslims and they maintain that it was sent from God to Mohamed the prophet. Like Judaism and Christianity, Islam is considered to be an Abrahamic religion. Islam began in Arabia in the 7th Century A.D. and spread rapidly through the military conquests and policy of religious conversion undertaken by Mohammad and his successors. Subsequently, Muslims and their faith have spread throughout the world, until today they inhabit the Middle East, south-east Asia, parts of Africa and increasingly live in Western societies through migration. The Arab world is politically represented by an organisation

known as the Arab League, which was originally based in Cairo, Egypt. The headquarters for the Arab League moved to Tunisia when Egypt was expelled from the organisation following the 1978 Camp David Accords (Hitti, 1970).

The Arab economy thrives on substantial reserves of petroleum in the five Gulf States which produce petrol and gas and sell it worldwide. These Gulf States are Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, United Arab Emirates, Iraq and Qatar. Petroleum reserves also exist in smaller amounts elsewhere in the Arab world. In terms of systems of government, the Islamic Arab world consists of two forms: firstly, a monarchical system that is adhered to in eight countries; and secondly, a republican system of government ruled by a male president (Barrakat, 2005).

Approximately 12 per cent of Christian Arabs live in the Arab world (Garfinkle, 2001), primarily in Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Egypt, Iraq and Sudan. These Christian Arabs have historically been denied cultural and linguistic rights even though they are recognised as Arabs (Barrakat, 2005). This has been the case particularly with the nomad populations found in Algeria, Libya, Tunisia and Mauritania, and the Kurdish communities living in Iraq and Syria.

Statement of the Problem

It is often striking to notice the broad generalisations made by the West about all Arabs. People in the West usually do not understand that each Arab country has a distinct culture; hence they tend to make broad assumptions about all of these people as a group. The life of an Arab in Lebanon is very different from that of an Arab living in Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait or United Arab Emirates. These are countries that despite their centuries-long historical connections, based on sharing what might be called Arabian core values (Smolicz, 1999), have very different customs and modes of living reflected in differences in food, dress, music, architecture and leisure activities.

Over the past two decades the governments of Middle East countries and the Gulf have become more interested in the education of their people. Various governments are now emphasising the importance of higher education and funding it accordingly, resulting in a greater number of schools and colleges at this level. In the Gulf States, for example, most education for girls and boys from their first day at school until their university graduation is free.

Current research data shows that over 75 per cent of Arabian women have achieved high school level education in the Gulf and Middle East, while on average, 80 per cent of Arab men are also educated. The fact that Arabs of both sexes do have access to education goes some way to eradicating the Western perception that Arab societies are repressive and anti-progressive. It is crucial to understand the actual beliefs and the core values that influence the decisions of Arabs, their expectations and their cultural patterns in order to properly appreciate the importance of certain actions before judgments and criticisms are made (Hicks, 2001).

Despite these developments, much of the focus of the Western world's political and media elites is still on Muslim religious beliefs and practices, and the assumption that they are uneducated and backward. Islam is depicted as 'the Other' and this has come about through assumptions made by the Western media and a lack of understanding of what drives Arab cultures and traditions. To date there has been little attempt to research the education systems and availability of such institutions in Australia. In particular, there is a great lack of knowledge about the Druze people, who they are and where they come from. The few studies that have examined issues about the

Druze in Australia have mainly focused on their historical origins but not investigated the reasons why they have migrated and what they hoped to achieve in education.

Given the general lack of research in this area, this book recounts the recent experiences of individuals from both Druze and Muslim communities in Australia. It focuses on three major issues: firstly, the psychological effects on Arab migrants of migration - both Muslim and Druze - who settled in Australia; and secondly, the sociological outcomes in terms of major changes in culture, family education and language. The third issue investigates the responses of 'mainstream' Australians to Arab immigrants and their families, as experienced and perceived by Arabs.

It is important to clarify the terminology that is used in this book. The word 'Arab' refers to a nation of people, 'Arabian' describes the culture and traditions of the Arabs, while 'Arabic' means the language spoken by the people of the Arab world, as well as Muslims from other nationalities.

It is also relevant to make clear as the author of this book, my own personal background. I migrated from Lebanon to Australia in 1986 and I am Druze.

Arabian Cultural Background

This section outlines the Arabian cultural background in terms of cultural traditions, core values, and religion and education. It also reviews the history of Druze and Muslims in the Arab world and the migration of Arab peoples to Australia. Lastly, it discusses the ways in which the Western world views Arabs.

Arabian core values

According to Smolicz (1979, 1999), core values are important and central to all social groups' cultures. The major role of core values is to act as a symbolic reality for a given group. Core values also identify social groups according to religion, ethnicity, among others. Furthermore, these values can be viewed in their own original setting or in a plural society. The core values of a group can involve one or more values, such as language, religion and family, and these are evaluated differently depending on cultural context. Some aspects of cultural values change with time and modernisation, while other aspects fundamentally stay the same. The latter are regarded as central and all social and identification systems revolve around them.

The concept of core values is very useful for understanding how the Arab world identifies itself in terms of the key cultural values which all those who call themselves Arab share. It helps to distinguish between countries that are Arab and those that are Islamic, but do not share Arab values, such as Turkey, Iran, Pakistan and Indonesia. In both the Middle East and the Gulf, Arabic language and Islamic religion are important core values for all groups whether they originate in North Africa, Asia or the Saudi Arabian peninsula. On the other hand, the Druze variant of Islam is also very important in the Middle East. These core values are strong binding forces for all these groups and their importance lies in highlighting the emphasis on social stability and familial ties.

Arabic language

In Arabian culture, the Arabic language is an important core value, in that it is more than a means of communication and self-expression. It also serves as a means of self-identification, and symbolises the fact that Arabic speech can not be separated from religious beliefs and practices, or belonging to a certain society or group. The

connection between religion and language varies from one culture to another and is very complex. It depends on the degree of commitment to the community's language with regard to religion. In the case of the Arab world, language is the key to reading, understanding and practicing the Islamic and Druze faiths. The Quran is an original form of Arabic which is shared between all Muslim people who are required to read it. But in Arab countries, the Arabic language is also the language of everyday communication both spoken and written, whereas Iran, Pakistan, Malaysia all have their own languages (Kegan, 1984).

Arabic was the first language in science, particularly for terms such as Algebra and Algorithms. Trigonometry was developed to its fullest extent by Muslim mathematicians. Drawing from Iranian, Greek and Indian history, Muslims made great advances in astronomy, particularly in astronomical tables, measuring the thickness of the atmosphere and interplanetary motion. Islamic science made great progress in the field of medicine and the most influential work in the history of medicine was done by Ibn Sina who wrote *Al Qanun Fil Tib* (Law of Medicine), a work which became a virtual encyclopaedia of medicine (Robinson, 1996). Arabic was the language used by all these scholars.

Family

Lineage and family bonds are of great importance in the Arab world, especially in the Gulf region where family ties are strengthened by traditional marriages. Marriage in such traditional societies is a social and public agreement or commitment and not a romantic individual proposition. It is also of great importance for the bride to be a virgin in order to preserve her family's honour and to secure the future of her children growing up under the protection of one father. The strength of the family and lineage depends on the number of sons born to carry on the name and ensure the family's survival. Since daughters change their names and join another family after marriage, it is therefore the son's job to support and look after his parents when they are incapable of looking after themselves (Beck & Keddie, 1979).

Within her family a girl grows up developing her social personality and consciousness about her gender but knowing that eventually she will have to become part of her husband's family. A boy grows up and forms his social personality and status while remaining within his own family's wings. The relationship between families through marriage is dominated by traditional and religious norms and values passed on from generation to generation. However, set laws that are well recognised in all Arab countries can be influenced by local traditions and altered to suit certain societies. Nevertheless, the family is the basic unit of Arab society (Ayubi, 1991).

The family, then, constitutes the centre of women's lives and social position in Middle Eastern and Gulf societies. The family is the centerpiece of society in Arab states and all establishments revolve around the family and treat it as the basic unit. The Arab views the family as the reason behind a successful and proper education for a healthy society, hence the Arab proverb, "To forfeit one's family is to forfeit one's dignity" (Ayubi, 1991). These words show that the family is not only held in very high regard but also considered sacred.

Marriages within related branches of extended Druze or Muslim families are still common and their purpose is to strengthen the bonds within society. Historically, the identity of the Arabs has long been based on adherence to nationality by members of the community. Each community has its religious institutions which are considered to be centres of cultural, social and psychological pilgrimage (Hourani & Shehadi,

1992), for example, the mosque or the Hall in Adelaide which the Lebanese Druze attend.

Assumed patterns of society

Anthropologists have raised an important issue regarding how members of a particular society all share the same cultural assumptions and may never develop different (or indeed divisive) interpretations of reality. This issue is derived from the notion of culture within any society, and the fact that certain suggestions are common sense in that environment; each individual can presume that people within that society would have a general sympathy for his/her statements and an understanding of his/her actions. However, regardless of certain mutual concepts and shared knowledge and understanding, the nature of their social world and the great majority of people living in it would never consider the 'truth' of significantly different views because of their intimacy and constant contacts with one another (Beck & Keddie, 1978).

Gender relations

One area where "taken for granted" cultural patterns are strongest is gender relations. There is a great difference in expectations concerning the role of males and females in Arab society. These expectations start before the woman gives birth to her child, not knowing if it is going to be a boy or a girl. Parents in general wish for a baby boy especially if it is the first to be born. The boy will inherit the family wealth, take responsibilities for his parents' survival and symbolise their hopes and dreams. Girls are looked on as a burden to the family, essentially because they require more parental responsibility and constant worry in terms of protecting Arab society's definition of honour. For instance, if a girl goes out to play with her friends and she is late in coming home the parents would stress and panic. The female child in Arab society is constantly observed and controlled by her family and relatives in the way she dresses, speaks, sits, laughs, moves and plays. These are important factors that will influence her future (Augustin, 1993). Traditional parents believe that educating girls is a waste of time because they are expected to dedicate their lives to mothering and parenting. Such attitudes are changing with time and most parents now encourage education for both males and females in order to build a better society and healthier environment for the whole community.

Examining the societies in the Middle East and the Gulf and comparing studies done on the social lives of men and women who live there, highlights the differences and separation between the two sexes. This confirms the issues that have been raised above. Like Quranic law, Heckme law (i.e. the Holy Book of the Druze), and folk psychology, the dissimilarities between the two sexes have often been articulated as persistent and justified by the unquestionable principles of natural and legal differences. Although these principles vary according to economic standing, familial relations and local practices that are found in different Arab countries, they have an impact on the social and cultural lives of most Muslims and Druze (Beck & Keddie, 1978).

Personal identity

Being identified as an Arab means that a person is connected to a certain nationality and religion. It should be kept in mind that every Arab country mentioned in this book has its own identity and its own culture and values. Nonetheless, people from Arab backgrounds do share many traditions and customs. During the past decade or

so, the concept of identity generally has attracted much attention. This has included how different groups live with each other and have distinct identities enabling them to connect with some people but split off from others. It is influenced by the image the majority has about the minority group or groups in society and this image is shaped and distorted by each group's own understanding of history. Such an identity can be threatening for the others as it is integral to a person's sense of self, leaving only the fear of "I" against the image of "we" (Hasan, 1998). Nevertheless, this self-identity can be comforting in one's own space or environs.

People's identities in the Arab world are constructed from within, not outside, and they involve the influences of history, language, religion and culture. Unlike the Western world, identities are not so much determined by who the person is or where that person comes from (Hasan, 1998). The expression 'Arab identity' has been widely used in the Western world whenever referring to a Muslim person, even though the Arab world cannot be presumed to represent Islamic people. Not all Arabs are Muslims, and there is a large majority of Muslims who are not Arabs and live in non-Arab countries (AbuKhalil, 1993).

The image of Arab people in Western culture has changed over the centuries and continues to develop. This image often revolves around the interchange of the term Muslim and Arab. Some of the reasons behind this image were reinforced by Western literature and media reports about Islam. In the early 17th Century when Western nation-states were concerned with the expansionist Ottoman Empire, Western writers focused on the Arabian woman and her wearing of the veil, and her life in the seraglio or harem. By the 18th Century, Arabian women in most Western literature were presented as hopeless, angry and oppressed (Hasan, 1998). In the late 20th Century, particularly since the late 1960s/early 1970s when, for example, the Palestinian Liberation Organisation hijacked Western airline planes to publicise Arab dispossession, the entire focus has been on 'the Jihad' (meaning effort or exertion, fighting evil and protecting the rules of Islam). Muslims are now generally viewed as potential terrorists and many Arabs are treated with suspicion and fear.

Islam in the Arab World

The Arabs originally lived on the southwestern Arabian peninsula. Genealogists subdivided the Arabians into two ethnic groups: firstly, the A'ribah, the Arabian Arabs, who were Yemenites descended from Qahtan in Southern Arabia and constituted the aboriginal stock; and secondly, the Musta'ribah, who consisted of Arabicized Hijazis, Najdis, Nabataeans and Palmyrenes, all descended from Adnan, Arabicized Arabs from Northern Arabia, who came and settled in the land (Hitti, 1970). For centuries there were many tribes with different dialects, patterns of life and beliefs, but Islam in the 7th Century AD introduced a radical change in Arab life and infused them all with a new identity. Their dialects developed into the richest and most widely spread language in the world in the early medieval period.

The advent of Islam led to a transformation in Arab society in terms of its structure, beliefs, customs and outlook. Arab culture after the introduction of Islam (much like Western culture and Christianity at that time) was structured on religious lines and within specific laws. Islam introduced a new way of how to live life and it did this through its detailed Shari'ah (political law) and through a moral code of laws concerning the practices of day-to-day life. Islam was a religious movement that created a sense of cultural unification through a common language and religion. The term Islam refers to three senses: religion, state and culture. The independent history or tradition of Arab culture and society had a great influence on Islam and was an

integral part of Islamic history, which applies to the Arabs as well as many others who accepted Islam (Yahya, 1985).

Islam and Arab cultural traditions

Culture and tradition are values and patterns of behaviour that specify certain attitudes and social relations in the Arab world. While Arabic culture is not defined in terms of the Islamic or Druze religion, it is nevertheless a fact that culture and tradition have strongly influenced one another and seem to be inseparable. Arabian culture existed long before Islam began (AbuKhalil, 1993).

Islamic culture in a worldwide sense has many commonalities as well as elements of diversity. This is a result of the Islamic text “the Quran” which forms the whole basis of Islam but has been open to interpretation for many centuries. In the early 7th Century AD the prophet Mohamed united all of Arabia along religious, military and political lines. He did not impose his will on the followers of Christianity of the Jewish faith who lived locally, but respected them and their customs. Islam spread very quickly under the leadership of Mohamed and his four successors, called Caliph or Al Rashidun, which means the rightly guided. The fourth Caliph, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, cousin of Mohamed, was supposed to be nominated as his first successor but this became an issue that provoked a civil war lasting from 656–661 AD. It ended with the Muslims dividing into two rival parties: Sunni (the original followers of Mohamed who practiced the Sunnah); and Shiite (the followers of Ali Ibn Abi Talib). Another group called itself the Kharijit (those who go out), the adherents of which abandoned the other two parties and adapted behaviour that did not fit the Islamic model. Differences between the three parties grew bigger and tension arose over the right of succession. This early history of Islam is mentioned as an example of the divisions and factions that are still apparent within Islam today.

This tension manifests itself as follows. On one hand, culture and tradition demonstrate an element of consistency throughout the Islamic world. On the other hand, however, the tenets and practices of Muslim faith have been subject to many pressures, such as local customs, politics, economics and historical events. These interpretations of Islam have had implications, in particular, for the way women have been treated in different ways, times and places throughout the Islamic world (Tatar, 2000).

Islamic culture has achieved much throughout history, particularly in the fields of art, literature, poetry, music and visual arts. The Quran itself makes many references to poetry. The Qasida (meaning poetry) was a well recognised and widely appreciated Arabic language poem in a lengthy and rhyming style, consisting of three parts (prologue, account of a journey and eulogy). The Arabic language spread as Islam conquered the Mediterranean world along the coasts of North Africa and the Holy Land. It also became the foremost literary tool used by the Princes and Caliphs during the Abassid era (mid-8th Century AD).

The music of the early Islamic era consisted mostly of vocal music and poetry which was chanted. In the 7th Century AD instruments such as flutes, drums, castanets, horn, harp, pipe and pandore were commonly used. Arabic music spread quickly in the wake of the Islamic conquests and most of it was preserved, consisting mainly of the “Ud” instrument, which is a short necked lute. In terms of architecture and the visual arts, the duty to propagate the word of Allah had a huge influence on art and architecture, mosque decorations and calligraphy. Architecture was inspired by the belief that all monuments must reflect the power of the various dynasties that came to

rule the Muslim empire and the specific authority of a ruler. Such buildings included mosques, schools for religious teaching and facilities for education (Vernoit, 1996).

Islam provides a range of options for interacting with different cultures throughout the world. These actions are not automatically determined by Islamic culture. Instead they are formed within a range of practices and are negotiated by groups and individuals to construct strategies for social actions depending on the particular circumstances. As in any other cultural setting, culture in the Islamic world is visualised as a flexible provider for how actors use any given symbols (Tatar, 2000). For example, one of the most well-known, controversial and debated issues concerning Islam is the cultural tradition of women's veiling. Veiling in the West is associated with notions of sexism, restriction, oppression and the confidentiality of the female space. Yet in the East, the veil means that women have more power in their lives and ability to protest (the meaning of which will be discussed in a later section). This divergence in perception is linked to how individuals in the different societies interact with their broader cultural and political environment.

In recent decades the governments of Muslim countries in the Middle East and the Gulf have faced challenges regarding cultural identification of women, which has involved the veil as a powerful political symbol. As a result, a large percentage of women in the Middle East who have a more liberal interpretation of the Quran or have been influenced by Western cultures, do not wear the veil but older women still wear a scarf covering their hair and ears. In the Gulf region, Islamic fundamentalists insist on women keeping the veil and regard the significance of veiling as a political statement and a marker of identity as an Arab woman (Herbert & Nayereh, 1998).

Historically, the identity of Arabs has been based on commitments that members of each community make to each other and the wider community itself. Each community, whether in Middle Eastern Arab countries or living as a minority group as a result of the Arab diaspora, has religious institutions that cater for people's cultural, social and psychological needs. For example, the Lebanese Druze in Adelaide have a hall where they meet for functions, celebrations, weddings, funerals, etc. Similarly, the Muslims have many mosques in which they also engage in similar activities. Being identified as an Arab means that one's identification is indistinguishable from and deeply connected to a certain nationality or religion. Particularly, when they were located in a new country, Arabs, like other immigrants, tended to seek out those from their homeland, and separate themselves socially and structurally from those of other ethnic backgrounds as a way of maintaining their identity. It was therefore very important to associate the existence of mosques and halls with specific cultural and social purposes, as well as religious needs (Hourani & Shehadi, 1992).

Religion

Islam, for all its inner cultural, traditional and political diversity, is entrenched a consciousness regarding society that is in sharp contrast to Western societies. The shift to greater secularism in the west since the 1700s has made this difference all the more noticeable. Islam, which means 'submission to the will of God', provides a set of laws involving the political, social and economic life of a whole community, as well as rituals of worship. Religion plays a major role in the everyday activities of a Muslim's life, unlike the centuries-old tradition in Western societies of limiting required religious observance to only one day per week (Artz, 1996).

The Five Pillars of Islam are the five tenets of pious behaviour that all Muslims must follow: the first Pillar is the Shahada (meaning bearing witness), the faith and belief

that Mohamed is God's messenger; the second Pillar is Salat (meaning group prayer) where all Muslims must pray five times a day and Friday is the day for group prayer, the third Pillar is Zakat (meaning purification) where Muslims give money, food or goods annually to poor people or to worthy causes, normally leading up to Ramadan; the fourth Pillar of Islam is the Sawm (meaning fasting), which occurs during the month of Ramadan; the fifth and last Pillar is the hajj (meaning the pilgrimage to Mecca). The last pillar is the sacred duty of all Muslims to take up a once in a lifetime opportunity to visit the Al Kaabah (Abugideiri, 2004, pp. 345-46).

Religion and culture jointly form the basis of the Economic Cooperation Organisation, which unites many non-Arab Muslim countries such as Iran, Pakistan, Turkey, and Afghanistan. This bridging is based on common cultural and religious foundations derived from the Quran – what to Huntington (1993) appeared to be a “mystical connection” between all Islamic nations. Islamic religious institutions have been responsible for mobilising and justifying socio-cultural patterns, alleviating the impact of rapid social change and sponsoring of schools and universities.

Islamic festivals

Ramadan is a very important holy month for all Muslims, no matter what sect they belong to. They believe that this is when the Quranic verses were originally revealed to Mohammad. Ramadan falls on the ninth month of the Islamic calendar. All able Muslims from about the age of twelve years old fast during that month. They stop eating and drinking during the daylight hours. They wake up for Sohour (which is the meal eaten before the day breaks) and wait to break their fast until Iftar (meaning the meal after the sun sets).

There are many reasons for fasting during the month of Ramadan. Muslims are reminded of those who cannot afford a meal and are suffering. It is also a cleansing time for their body and mind, as well as an opportunity to practice self-control. At the end of Ramadan when the thirty days of fasting are completed, a large celebration takes place known as Eid el Fitr, which is when people dress in their finest clothing, decorate their homes, celebrate with family and friends and give presents to children. Most importantly, all Muslims must share their blessings with others and show their gratitude and generosity by feeding the hungry, dressing the poor and making donations to mosques or needy homes (Hartman, 2006).

Eid el Fitr to the Muslims is the equivalent of Christmas to the Christians. Approximately seventy days after Eid el Fitr, Muslims have another important celebration on the tenth day of the twelfth month (Zul Hijja) of the Islamic calendar. This occasion is known as Eid el Adha, which symbolises the near sacrifice that Ibrahim (the equivalent of the Jewish Abraham) made to God of his son Ismail. It also celebrates the end of the pilgrimage or Hajj for those who make the trip to Al Kaabah in Mecca in Saudi Arabia. The Druze also celebrate this sacrifice but they do not make the journey known as the Hajj. Eid el Adha is an important festival for both Druze and Muslim. It consists of a holiday lasting three to four days when many family festivals and parties take place (Taric, 2000).

Islamic beliefs and gender

The notion that women are inferior to men has historically been part of many cultures and religions. Equality of gender is far from being accomplished even in the most advanced industrial societies. The struggle of feminism is even more evident in the

Middle East and the Gulf according to Fluehr-Lobban (1993). The problem in these regions revolves around how Islam is and should be interpreted.

As a comprehensive system of beliefs and values, Islam evolved principles that touch upon most aspects of social existence. Apologists for the traditional Islamic order believed in strengthening the Islamic way of life by keeping women at home and allowing only men to deal with public affairs (Hussain, 1984, p. 11). As women in Western societies gained more power in economic and political life, there was criticism of the primary home role and perceived subservience of Arab women in a way that misrepresented the relationship between Arab culture and Islam. The perceived oppression of women in Islam has become a political issue in order to discredit and stigmatise Islam and Arabs as a whole (Hicks, 2001).

As in other societies, states, social groups and individuals renegotiate culture in the Islamic world in the framework of their particular social circumstances. The woman's veil and laws regarding the family are the two key symbols of Islam as a culture, and display evidence of diversity. While the veil is a political symbol of Islam it has been used in different contexts depending on how individual women relate it as a cultural symbol. The veil has been worn because it is traditional to do so and at other times to comply with pressures that have been placed on women (for example, post-1979 Iran and Afghanistan under the Taliban in the 1990s). Nonetheless, many continue to see it as a form of empowerment in a male-dominated world or as a practical form of clothing (Bodman & Tohidi, 1998).

History of the Druze Sect

The Druze are strictly a sect of Islam but they are not recognised by the Muslims as Islamic. The Druze had their origins in the 11th Century when an Iranian, Ismaeil Al Darazi, one of the sect's co-founders, became interested in the divinity of Al Hakim with his stories of wisdom and generosity. Al Darazi traveled from Bukhara in Iran to Cairo in 1017 but he did not stay there long due to the lack of response. He went to Mount Hermon in Lebanon and to Jabal Al Symmak in Syria to preach but in 1019 the Turkish soldiers of the Fatimids surrounded him in his house with a large number of his men and killed them all. Soon after this episode another Iranian named Hasan Al Akhran from a town called Farghana announced his declaration of the Doctrines of the Druze religion and he was killed in his house. The other Druze founder was Hamza Bin Ali Ahmad, whose Declaration of his Doctrines was made public in 1017. He sent missionaries to Egypt and Syria and through their efforts recruited many believers. Eventually, the Druze spread throughout Lebanon and Syria (Druze History and Culture, 2005).

During the 19th Century the Druze owned most of the land in Lebanon and in fact governed the country in their own right. By the mid-19th Century the expansion of the Christian community in Lebanon encouraged many Druze people to leave and move to the mountain region of Lebanon and to Jebel El Druze in Syria. In 1858 the Christians wanted to put an end to the rule of the Druze and this precipitated a bloody war and massacres that took place over a two year period. During this period of time the Turkish (Ottoman) government sent troops to Lebanon to keep the peace and restore order. The Christians were not satisfied with this decision because the Druze people were back in charge and no significant concessions had been made (Druze History and Culture, 2005).

Following a Lebanese Christian cry for help the Western imperial powers, Britain, France, Italy, Prussia and Austria participated in a convention and decided to send French troops to Lebanon. General Beaufort d'Hautpoul was put in charge and he

executed hundreds of Druze while hundreds of others were sent into detention or temporary exile. During the 1860s the French administration in Lebanon created a new government and the mountains owned once by the Druze were now called Jabal Lebnan.

The outbreak of World War I in 1914 led to radical changes in the economic and strategic status of Lebanon. The Ottoman Empire once again took charge of Lebanon as a result of the arrangements made between Turkey and Germany. The Lebanese people and Lebanese government suffered greatly when local food supplies were requisitioned for the Turkish army, leading to widespread famine throughout the country. This situation made migration from Lebanon a very attractive option and for some Lebanese was the only option. Many Druze went to Syria to live in Kfarsilwan and Jabal al Druze, while Christians started migrating to the United States and Australia. The Druze are still an independent religious group in Lebanon and Syria and they have their own political party, but they also live in Jordan and Israel as well as in many other countries around the world (Batrouney & Batrouney, 1985).

Druze cultural traditions

The major economic pursuit of the Druze was farming, an activity in which they grew fruit, nurtured olive groves and bred worms for making silk. Most families grew their own vegetables and Druze generally were mainly vegetarian and ate lamb once a week or on special occasions. A traditionally furnished Druze home consisted of wooden furniture with thin curtains along the walls. The women wore a long black or navy blue dress with a thin white scarf on their heads while the men wore a tarboush (a round black hard hat with red flat top) and a sherwal (long baggy pants tight around the ankles).

Family is the most important thing in a Druze person's life. Spending time together and sharing and celebrating with other members of the Druze community also play a major role in the daily routine. The Druze are very well known for their hospitality and generosity. Weddings, births and funerals are occasions that provide an opportunity to be together and help one another during good and bad times. In the Druze tradition, giving birth to a boy is a major event as it brings assets to the family and is normally followed by celebrations and the presenting of gifts.

The role of women in all Druze communities contrasts sharply with their Islamic counterparts. Polygamy is forbidden in the Druze religion and marriage outside the Druze faith is also forbidden. If a Druze man marries a Christian or Muslim woman, his children will remain Druze but the wife can never become one. On the other hand, if a Druze woman marries an outsider her children can never be Druze. Historically, Druze women have generally been literate and educated, and the ability to read and write has not been denied to them. Women have the right to own and dispose of property freely, a right that has been recognised as early as the 18th Century and therefore exceptional. A Druze woman was also permitted to have a full-time job (Intercome, 1998).

Druze beliefs and religious practices

Due to the fact that the Druze community is relatively small and reluctant to share information about its version of Islam, the Druze have a small Khalwa (place of privacy) where they gather normally on a Thursday night and a Sunday night for prayer and religious meetings. Their faith is secretive in nature in the sense of being deeply personal and passed on from one generation to the next with no movement to

convert outsiders and it is therefore not widely known. For those who want to know more about this religion, they need to live a certain religious life and study and learn of all aspects. The Druze believe in reincarnation as a key tenet of their belief system and they also believe in Judgment Day. The Druze share Eid [el?] Adha with the Muslims but they do not fast during Ramadan and do not celebrate Eid [el?] Fitr (Intercome, 1998).

Education in the Arab world

Education is important in that it has played a crucial role in the formation and development of society, and helped shape many societies' dominant social, political and economic manifestations. However, it is also the case that in any society the major strands of economic and political life shape education according to the attitudes of that community (Rogers, 1971). One essential component of Arab of education is gender, which is defined as a socially imposed division between the sexes (Nashat & Tucker, 1999). Gender interferes with other factors that may override and minimise its constraining effects even in societies that are highly sex segregated. Studies carried out in Arab societies have suggested that the status of foreigner permits more flexibility and mobility to the foreign female that it would to the Arab female. Education is the factor that interacts with gender and may overcome its limiting influence (Nashat & Tucker, 1999).

During the 19th and 20th Centuries, the history of women in the Arab world began to be influenced by changes in the world economy, particularly the impact of European imperialism and its ideas on non-Western cultures. The effects of such integration of the Middle East into a world economy created economic and political pressures that had an impact on pre-existing regional economic systems. These pressures led to the development of new Arab states and cultural formations, and consequently forged a new Arab view on how women and men should conduct their lives (Nashat & Tucker, 1999).

Furthermore, in looking at a general historical view of women in the Gulf, it is clear that people did not live in total isolation before the discovery of oil. A small number of men from countries such as Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Bahrain travelled to Europe during the first half of the 19th Century. These were educated people who later on held positions of power in the various Arab political systems, and they put a large emphasis on women's education (Gilligan, 1982).

Historical documents and studies such as that conducted by Alkotob (cited in Allaghi & Almana, 1984) provide a description of women's past activities. These activities depended on class structures. Three major classes were identified as such: one class included wives of fishermen, boat builders and pearl divers; another class consisted of women married to men with small businesses; and in the highest class – the ruling elite - were women who had all their materialistic needs met because their husbands were wealthy. In this last class, however, women were still inferior to men, exploited and not given any real power. Their lives were always threatened and they feared their husbands would marry other women, as they often did. Women in that class had to stay invisible: this was and still is a sacred way of protecting their honour; their only sense of power was the fact that they had servants and slaves. All this changed after the Second World War when the Gulf region faced massive social and economic changes when oil was discovered. These developments affected the status of women and the two major variables were education and employment (Allaghi & Almana, 1984).

In the Arab world generally, education was seen to be important for improving and expanding opportunities for men and women in fields such as politics, social studies and economics. The education of Muslim and Druze women was also essential for the construction of the new society since they constituted half of the population. Progress in female education started in the 18th Century and schools were opened in Egypt (1829), Lebanon (1835) and Iraq (1898). In other Arab countries (especially in the Gulf region) schools appeared in the 19th Century for men and only for women in the 20th Century (Al-Qazzat, 1979).

Historically, most of the Arab world was for a time under the colonial domination of Britain and France, which controlled a number of ex-Ottoman 'mandates' after 1918, but did not renounce their hold until late 1977 and even then many troops stayed in Lebanon for years to come. The colonial powers were not interested in improving education for Arab men and women. The illiteracy rate was so high especially for women to the extent that it the average was 96 per cent. When Arab countries became independent their governments and communities highlighted the importance of education in order to improve the conditions of their people (Al-Qazzat, 1979).

Women's education in the Gulf region started in the late 1920s and improved gradually. In Bahrain, for example, some studies indicated that from 1963 until 1973, there was a 179 per cent increase in female education in primary schools. In secondary schools the education of females outstripped that of males despite the fact that medicine, agriculture, science, pharmacy and engineering were subjects offered only to boys in the entire Gulf. However, despite this increase in higher education for women generally, upper class Arab men and women were still privileged in terms of being able to afford to travel overseas for their higher education (Allaghi & Almana, 1984).

Education in Saudi Arabia experienced big problems a few decades ago because that country's illiteracy rate was very high in 1974, when it was reported by the government that 66 per cent of the population was illiterate. Similarly, in the United Arab Emirates the only educational program available until 1953 was religious studies. In 1964-1965 there were 31 schools in that country but only two of these were for females. After the creation of the United Arab Emirates in 1971, higher education for women was encouraged and many were given scholarships to travel and study in Kuwait (Allaghi & Almana, 1984).

Alkotob's study on adult education students, titled "Perception of Female Students from the Countries of the Arab Gulf in Kuwait University Concerning Certain Social and National Issues", involved interviews with a number of people. The results were as follows: 51 per cent were students of arts and education; 29 per cent were commerce students; 16 per cent went to science colleges; and 3.3 per cent were law students. When students were asked to indicate their preference between education and marriage, most emphasised that the men they intended to marry should have a higher level of education than they did, as their wives (Alkotob, cited in Allaghi & Almana, 1984). Dramatic changes in the status of Arab women regarding access to education have generated criticism and reaction, especially from a religious point of view. This criticism can be understood in terms of cultural traditions which value men's control over women. Looking at the Arab world today, one can see the change and the resulting conflict over women's status as a struggle between the security of traditional values, on one hand, and modern aspirations of liberation, on the other.

Muslims in Australia

The migration of Muslim people to Australia has a long history and predates European contact with the island continent. It began in the 17th Century with the Makassan from Indonesia trading with the indigenous people of northern Australia, followed by the Afghan cameleers in the late 18th Century and some Bosnian and Kosovar Muslims as early as the 1960s (Islam in Australia, 2006). There was another influx of Bosnian and Kosovar Muslims into Australia following the civil wars in Yugoslavia during the 1990s. According to the 2001 census (see Table A below), there were approximately 300,000 Muslims in Australia and 35 per cent of these were Australian-born.

The first specifically Arab immigrants to Australia were the Syrians, Lebanese and Egyptians (see Table A). Only a few Lebanese and Syrians migrated to Australia during the 1870s but their numbers were so low that it was not until the 1880s and 1890s that the census was able to count them. At that time all Arab immigrants were labelled Turks because they had all been issued Turkish documents to travel with and only few mentioned their religion when the data was collected. It was only in 1954 that the Australian census distinguished between Arabs migrating from particular countries of origin (Jupp, 2001). In the following years, the Palestinians, Muslim Sudanese, and Iraqis and, more recently, Arabs from the Gulf States have come to Australia. The 1996 census conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics indicated that at that time 200,885 Muslims lived in Australia and 177,606 were Arabic speakers. Unfortunately, no census has included a breakdown of the Arab population in Australia according to birthplace, so that information is limited to only a general picture of their language and religion (Jupp, 2001).

Table A. Muslim Population in Australia 1991-2001 (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2001)

Year	Religion	Population	Percentage
1991	Muslim	148,096	0.9%
1996	Muslim	200,902	1.1%
2001	Muslim	281,578	1.5%

Source: Kabir and Moore, 2003

Forty years ago the Australian Muslim community consisted of small organisations throughout the States, and functioned to serve the needs of Muslims, building mosques and educating children. In 1963 these organisations united to form a federation known as the Australian Federation of Islamic Society. This was later again changed to accommodate the needs of the growing Muslim community by forming Islamic councils in each State and Territory. The Federation of Islamic Councils came into existence and its headquarters was based in Sydney (Islam in Australia, 2006).

Druze in Australia

Historically, most Druze communities have lived in Lebanon, Syria, Jordan and Israel. Druze communities began to be established in many places around the world and in 1946 started having annual conventions in California. The Druze migrated during the 19th and 20th Centuries to the United States, Australia, Canada, Africa, the Philippines and Europe. In South Australia the first record of two Druze Arabs occurred during the 1891 religious census, and the Druze have become more significant in Adelaide ever since (Jupp, 2001, p. 256).

The Druze Association in Australia has estimated that there are approximately 20,000 Druze living in the country. This estimate has been based not on any census figures but on the grounds that the majority of Druze people were listed according to nationality and not religion. Again, this may be closely linked to the Druze practice of being secretive about their faith and customs (The International Studies and Overseas Programmes, 1998; Jupp, 2001, p. 256). Only one reference work on history and culture of Druze appears to be available (Druze History and Culture, 2005). This has proved invaluable in understanding the contemporary Druze community in Australia.

Theoretical Framework and Research Method

The aim of this book, as mentioned previously, is to examine the psychological impact of experiencing cultural change and differences, emphasising the anxiety and stress triggered by migrants' fear of the unknown. This is balanced by investigating the extent to which Arab migrants in Australia maintain their Arabian culture. In the context of the host society, social distance can be determined by the way in which members of a certain racial or ethnic group or gender subgroup are perceived by other people; these perceptions can also contribute to immigrants' psychological states (Phillips, 1978). It has been suggested that education could help very different societies understand each other and teach respect for each other's values and customs (Cosin, 1972).

Theories of Immigration and Interaction

Taft (1977) stressed the importance of cultural and structural factors in making assimilation successful. He also highlighted some common factors that need to be looked at when studying the way immigrants adjust to Australia. The first factor was that of primary integration, which was based on satisfaction of the individual's and family's lifestyle. How did they perceive Australian people and did they count themselves as Australian? It also measured the level of desire in making Australia a home to stay in. Were they home-sick? The second factor was that of secondary integration, which referred to the language spoken, Australian lifestyle and mixing socially with Australians. The third factor was attitude to their own ethnic group; how much involvement was there in activities within the community of origin? Lastly, the fourth factor concerned social class. This factor was influenced by the level of general education of the individual as well as knowledge about Australian culture, level of occupation and fluency in the English language. The process of assimilation was more difficult for those who could not speak the language and therefore found it very hard to work, communicate and socialise.

The second generation of any group or culture that has migrated to Australia may portray themselves as Australians in many respects but would still have issues to contend with such as social or material symbols, like the type of food and use of slang language. Smolicz (1979) examined some key issues regarding types of cultural interaction in plural societies and made the following conclusions. Firstly, regarding personal and group cultural systems, Smolicz believed that individuals' ideological values and personal cultural systems were influenced by their own personalities and life experiences, but derived from the values of cultural group to which they belonged. Group value systems were the common criteria of validity between individuals and if an individual's action deviated from group norms, alienation could occur unless the whole group approved of that change, which in turn transformed the

group cultural systems. This change could in turn be divided into three sections: first, existence of a group value system; second, individuals using group value systems to construct one's own system; and third, transition from conceptual evaluation of attitude to a concrete act in the form of a tendency.

In terms of personal systems in a culturally plural society, Smolicz (1979) argued that in ethnically plural societies more than one set of group values were available for each aspect of culture; personal cultural systems could then be either homogeneous or heterogeneous. If the synthesis solution was adapted at a societal level, a new kind of uniformity would evolve. In contrast, a dual system of values could lead to ongoing cultural pluralism at a societal level.

Regarding the majority group's ideological orientation to minority cultures, Smolicz (1979) argued for the possibility of external pluralism, whereby an ethnic group was able to maintain its own heritage and language with little or no cultural interaction. He also noted the existence of its opposite – internal cultural pluralism where group members constructed dual systems of cultural values. According to Smolicz, two-way interaction between Anglo-Saxon and ethnic individuals, where each shared the values of the other, could be known as hybrid monism.

In Smolicz's work the conditions for cultural interaction were determined by the fact that firstly, interaction was unlikely to take place if, for example, a country's Anglo-Saxon-descended majority allowed minority ethnic cultures to exist for the benefit of the ethnic communities themselves. Secondly, the success of cultural interaction depended on the activities and attitudes of all ethnic groups. The remaining two factors were briefly referred to by Smolicz (1977) as firstly, applications to cultural systems, wherein in many aspects of cultural life, synthesis solutions were not possible. Secondly, there was the theme of dynamic relationship between personal cultural systems of individuals and the cultural values of the groups with which they were associated; in particular, group ideological values were seen as very significant in determining an individual's personal belief system.

The term 'strangers' was used by three writers when they referred to sociological and biographical unfamiliarity between two people (Simmuel, 1950, Wood, 1934 and Schuetz, 1944, all cited in Levine, 1990). However, Levine (1990) focused on the importance of people's perceptions when migrating to another country, as well as the reasons why their decision was made. These could be due to politics, economics, war, boredom or alienation factors. Levine (1990) noted a few issues that needed to be considered when searching for reasons behind the attitudes of immigrants toward their new country:

1. Treatment on first arrival.
2. Their attitude towards the host.
3. Prior contact before the move.
4. Contact with other strangers.

The reason behind the immigrants' decision had a great influence on the reaction of people living in the host country, in that positive feelings towards that person would reflect friendliness while negative feelings will reflect antagonism. The host also tended to react as a result of influences, knowledge and preconceived ideas about the stranger. These were formed by attitudes towards ethnicity, race, religion, value orientations and language. Ideally, a person should not be judged based on a stereotyped knowledge of a certain culture (Verma & Bagley, 1984). Ethnicity is a concept that incorporates specific cultural and historical phenomena, such as language, religion and belief in common origin. Milton Gordon stated, "Ethnicity is a more general phenomenon than nationality, ethnic groups can be but do not have to

be based on common national origin” (Mucha, p. 168, cited in Balla & Sterling, 1998).

Economists tend to see migration only from the labour market perspective and the resulting issues of jobs and related skills, wages, and social advancement. On the other hand, sociologists look at different aspects of migration and the impact they have on each individual or family. They look at the motivations to migrate, conduct research on who goes back and who stays, and examine the psychological issues that migrants have to deal with and the strategies they use to mark their culture so they can be identified from their non-migrant neighbours.

According to Foltz (1974) a sense of ethnic self-consciousness is brought out in the open when immigrants or members of minority groups compare themselves to the host society. This emphasises that their separate identity and the fact of belonging to certain religion does not change the social obligation in being a member of a particular group. However, religion and nationality together can become a form of identification that labels all the individuals in a certain group. For some this labeling or stereotyping can be a bonus, while for others it can be a problem. It is perhaps inevitable that some members of Arab society deny or hide the fact that they belong to the Muslim or Druze religion, even though this is in fact, an essential factor in their identity (Hourani & Shehadi, 1992).

A major objective of the research presented in this book is to connect these issues of identification with the social realities of Australian society and the reasons why psychological factors are important in relation to Arab migration. It was envisaged that the themes covered here would identify the extent of any cultural, educational and psychological differences across individuals and ethnic groups. It was hoped that it would also provide a platform from which Arab peoples and their culture could become better understood and respected.

Assumptions

There are certain assumptions which I have made based largely on my personal experiences as a woman from an Arab background, specifically, a migrant to Australia of Lebanese Druze descent. My concerns are with the stages that the individual goes through in the process of migration. I believe that depression and alienation are the two phases that most immigrants experience when they are adjusting and adapting to a new culture. Such feelings are an essential part of integrating the old with the new and accepting the change. It must be noted, however, that not all immigrants show signs of depression or feelings of alienation but they may feel stressed or anxious at times. Some individuals may suffer depression for years before successful assimilation and integration into the new culture while others tend to adjust much quicker. These are my own personal beliefs and experiences and I acknowledge that they are likely to have influenced the way the research was developed, as well as the collection and analysis of data.

Research Methodology

The methodology for undertaking the research involved the use of qualitative data in the form of a mixed-method approach to data collection. This was considered most appropriate for a study in which psychological and sociological factors were analysed and understood.

The data collection method reflected a qualitative approach that was exceptionally personalised. For example, personal memoirs, interviews, case studies, questionnaires

and the keeping of journals were used in line with the memoir approach of humanistic sociology (Smolicz, 1979, 1999). Each individual was studied both within the context of the family and within his/her cultural, social and broadly historical milieu. This enabled a better understanding of the ways a minority culture could be subsumed within a majority culture, through looking at people within their own settings, entering their homes, families and personal space. It also provided the respondents with the freedom to talk about whatever they wished in their own time.

This approach has been influenced by the principles of humanistic sociology which seek to investigate the attitudes, feelings and self-reflections that individuals have in order to analyse the ways in which they adapt to the culture of their society and environment (Smolicz, 1979; 1999). The capacity to do this depends completely on the individual and, as they go through the different stages they tend to reflect on their feelings and consciousness. It must be borne in mind that two contradictory situations can exist side-by-side in the human consciousness. These differences do not make the research data invalid, but on the contrary they enrich the value of the research and open the mind to new ideas and concepts. In considering immigration-based research, humanistic sociology can be applied on many different levels. These include an examination of the experiences of participants by analysing their points of view, as well as pointing to the social and cultural outcomes. Regardless of whether these migrants are parents, children, males or females, the research can lead to further practical and useful insights.

Selection of Participants

A total of 40 people from Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Iran and Iraq participated in the research. It is important to emphasise that although Iran, an overwhelmingly Islamic nation, is not an Arab country, the few Iranian people interviewed for this book saw themselves as Arabs and wanted to be involved in the research. All of them were either of Muslim or Druze religion, although they were from different socio-economic backgrounds. The people involved ranged from 14 to 66 years of age.

The participants were selected through personal and professional contacts. I was introduced to the participants and because of the similarity in our backgrounds it was easy to establish a relationship of trust between the interviewees and myself. Certain criteria had to be met before specific individuals could participate in the study. These criteria were as follows:

- Participants must be of Muslim or Druze religion;
- They must have lived in Australia for longer than one year;
- They must have family members still living in their original country of birth.

Essentially, this book focuses on ordinary people from an Arab background and their experiences in normal everyday life settings in Australia.

Questionnaires

As the first stage of the data collection, I posted a set of short questionnaires to the 40 individuals selected, the purpose of which was to develop a relationship between them and myself, and prepare them for a later and longer questionnaire and the eventual interview in the case of some. It is worth mentioning that all 40 participants responded and agreed to continue with the next stages of the study. A few months later I posted the set of longer questionnaires and these emerged as being very effective in allowing them to express insightful thoughts and feelings about their migration experiences. The questionnaire also sought their views on mainstream

Australians' responses to Arabs, Druze Arabs, and Muslim Arabs and, in particular, the influence of the media on people's opinions. Both pre-determined and open-ended participant response questions were included in the questionnaires, these being used to reinforce the information and augment the quality of the data.

Interviews

I selected 16 participants to interview and some were interviewed two or three times. All of these participants were immigrants to Australia and interviews were conducted at the interviewees' homes. The interviews were semi-structured. In the course of the interview process most interviewees seemed to have answered freely and provided answers to the set of questions that I had put to them. The same questions were asked to each individual (see Table B) and each was interviewed separately.

Most interviewees had much to say regarding some of the questions asked. Each interview lasted between one and a half to two hours. Most of the interviews were conducted in the Arabic language as people tended to feel more comfortable and relaxed then. They also remarked that this enabled them to express their feelings more honestly. A few of the interviewees preferred to use English, and some used a combination of English and Arabic.

Table B: Concrete Fact Profile of Respondents (N=40)

Other Background Factors	Birth Place or Ethnic Background						Total N=16I+4Q
	Egypt N=3I+3Q	Iran N=1I+4Q	Iraq N=2I+2Q	Jordan N=2I	Lebanon N=7I+5Q	Syria N=1I+10Q	
Gender							
Male	I9, Q23	Q18, Q20	Q22	I15	I3, I6, I13 Q27, Q34, Q36, Q40	I5, Q26, Q28, Q29, Q33, Q35, Q38	6I+14Q=20
Female	I8, I10, Q24, Q25	I16, Q17 Q19,	I11, I12, Q21	I14	I1, I2, I4, I7, Q37	Q30, Q31 Q32, Q39	10I+10Q=20
Age							
14 - 20	I10, Q25, Q23	Q17, Q18, Q19	-	-	Q37	Q28	1I+7Q= 8
21 - 30	Q24	-	Q21, Q22	-	I3, Q34, Q36, Q40	Q26, Q29, Q30, Q31, Q32, Q33, Q38, Q39	1I+14Q=15
31 - 40	-	Q20	-	-	I2	Q35	1I+2Q=3
41 - 50	I8, I9	I16	I11	I14	I1, I13, Q27	-	7I+1Q= 8
50+	-	-	I12	I15	I4, I6, I7	I5	6I=6
Religion							
Muslim	I8, I9, I10 Q23, Q24 Q25	I16, I17, Q18, Q19 Q20, Q22	I11, I12 Q21, Q22	I14, I15	I7, I17, Q27	I5, Q29	12I+11Q=23
Druze	-	-	-	-	I1, I2, I3, I4, Q34, Q36, Q37, Q40	Q26, Q28, Q30, Q31, Q32, Q33, Q35, Q38, Q39	4I+13Q=17

Note: All (I) participants were born overseas and all (Q) participants were born in Australia.

Memoirs and Journals

The 16 participants who migrated to Australia also wrote down a few pages of memoirs and sent them to me. A few had kept journals of their first few years in Australia. In them I found described the sorts of stages that individuals go through in migration: the trauma of changes, the disappointments of isolation, the hopes of going back one day and other kinds of hopes, and the acceptance and adjustment to their new life.

Analysis of Data

The analysis of the data presented in this book began once all the interviews were completed and all the questionnaires were returned. The interview and questionnaire data were analysed from an interpretative perspective, and from these, three major themes were found to be important. The first was the psychological reaction caused by immigration. The second involved social and cultural changes in people's lifestyles and the third component of this analysis concerned perceptions about Arabs in Australian society.

Concrete Fact Profiles

The 40 respondents were divided into two groups. The first consisted of 16 respondents who had migrated to Australia between 1973 and 2004. All of them had learned or were still learning English. Nine of these respondents were female and seven were male. Four were Druze and the other 12 were Muslims. All 16 participants completed the short and longer questionnaire, and all were interviewed more than once. In the data analysis and presentation, respondents have been referred to as I 1, I 2, and so on, to I 16, for the purposes of interview identification and for reasons of confidentiality.

The other group consisted of 24 respondents who were born in Australia of Arab descent. The respondents in this group consisted of 12 females and 12 males, with an almost equal number of Muslims and Druze. They received the same short and long questionnaires as the other group, but these participants were not involved in the interview process. Therefore, the respondents in Group 2 are referred to in the number sequence, for the purpose of analysis and presentation, as Q 17 to Q 40. Table B provides a concrete fact profile of all the respondents in the study.

The data gathered through the questionnaires, journals and memoirs were analysed according to the main themes identified and are presented in the three sections that follow. The first focuses on the process of adaptation to Australian society; the second on maintenance of Arabian culture; while the third deals with educational factors and the responses of the Australian host society toward Arab immigrants and their Australian-born children, as seen from the perspective of the respondents.

Part 1

Adaptation to Australia

Introduction

This section explores individuals' psychological well-being in the context of their migration. What emerges here is that migration was driven by many causal factors, for example, the realities of war, family problems or the need to advance financially. In contexts such as these, migration in terms of the psychological problems that occurred, were discussed and elaborated. The source materials for this discussion were the records of the interviews and open-ended questionnaires. These emphasised the ways in which individuals tried to manage such cultural change and achieve adaptation.

Recent studies of Arab migrants have emphasised two particular aspects of their lives that influence psychological well-being - social and cultural. The idea of social process in learning originated with Albert Bandura (cited in Woolfolk, 2001) whose earlier work was in the field of behavioral origins of learning. Bandura's latest theory, called the 'social cognitive' theory, focuses on cognitive factors such as expectations, self-perceptions and beliefs. This theory distinguishes between: firstly, active learning, which is learning by doing and experiencing the consequences of that action; and secondly, vicarious learning, which is learning by observing others. Bandura's theories have also focused on the importance of observation for successful learning (Woolfolk, 2001).

Cultural aspects, on the other hand, distinguish between one ethnic group and another. Their existence is derived from resolutely entrenched human needs and nature. These aspects identify one's particular tradition, language, religion and social class. The major role of core values is to act as symbolic values to the group. They identify social groups according to religion, ethnicity, language, etc. Furthermore, these values can be viewed in their own original setting or in a plural society (Smolicz, 1979). According to Smolicz, the nature of core values can involve one or more values, such as language, religion and family. They are evaluated differently depending on cultural context. Some aspects of cultural values alter over time, changing contexts and the impact that modernisation has on a culture, while other aspects remain fundamentally important as the center around which all other social and identification systems revolve.

The literature on existing approaches to understanding cultural shock focuses on migration where the individual or family is 'thrown in at the deep end' in a society about which they know very little or nothing at all. Such an approach comprises many

important broad perspectives, the first one being a combination of psychological, sociological and philosophical theories and their relationship to social change and learning (Cross, 1981; Long, 1983; Candy, 1991; Meriam & Caffarella 1991, all cited in Tenant, 1997, pp. 1-3). In these cases psychologists looked at how adults adjusted and interpreted facts in their new environment, as well as consequences resulting from the change in culture, language, society, religion and tradition. The studies of Tough (1979, 1982), Knowles (1984, 1990a), Mezirow (1991a), and Jervis (1992, cited in Tenant, 1997, pp. 1-3), have provided a clear understanding of the theories of learning in such situations. However, they have not articulated any understanding of the psychological problems resulting from cultural change.

Many theories have shown how both internal and external factors influence cultural changes and adaptation. The social environment seems to be the most influential factor that stands out in personal relationships. With respect to the individual's perspective, there is ongoing research that focuses on emotional development. Its emphasis is on how our concepts of self and conflict proceed and develop in life. Rogers and Maslow (cited in Tenant, 1997) did much research on humanistic psychology and developed a number of categories for people's motives that were related and connected; basically, unless individuals have reached a level of satisfaction at the most basic stage, they do not move on to the second step. Rose (1993) also discussed the influence of general prejudice in society and its impact on individuals and the importance of inter-group connections in order to reduce that prejudice.

This divergence between groups, however, is not unique to Arab immigrants in Australia. Cultural values vary from nation to nation and they also vary in their influence on different families and groups within any one nation. According to Michael Sandel, an individual self does not exist as an independent entity because no one is capable of standing outside his / her experience, or outside of society (Sandel, cited in Theophanous, 1995, p. 254):

But we cannot regard ourselves as independent in this way without great cost to those loyalties and convictions whose moral force consists partly in the fact that living by them is inseparable from understanding ourselves as the particular persons we are, as members of this family or community or nation or people, as bearers of this history as sons and daughters of that revolution, as citizens of this republic. Allegiances such as these are more than any values I happen to have or aims I 'espouse at any given time'. They go beyond the obligations I voluntarily incur and the 'natural duties' I owe to human beings as such. They allow that to some I owe more than justice requires or even permits, not by reason of agreements I have made but instead by virtue of those more or less enduring attachments and commitments which taken together, partly define the person I am.

The citation above explains the extent to which an individual is shaped or influenced by the wider society or community, and having to adjust to the demands and pressures of a new society explains the reasons why psychological reactions occur after migration. These reactions could be eased by introducing 'multicultural education' which helps people to cope with changes and differences (Falk & Harris, 1983). In this way the cultural background or context can be considered as equally influential.

The degree of cultural shock depends on the degree to which the family is separated from similar ethnic groups (Di Leonardo, 1984). In recent decades most nations have changed the aims and practices of education as a deliberate result of policy because economically the world is more globalised and interconnected. The educational contexts in which procedures and policies are formed are determined by a nation's

particular socio-political history, character and traditions (Lewin & Lewin, 1945). Many Lebanese, Syrians, Iraqis, Iranians, Palestinians and Jordanians have fled their home countries over the last few decades and migrated to countries in the West, searching for economic and political stability, personal safety, employment and opportunities for more and/or higher education.

The discussion that follows takes up the themes of psychological adjustment, as revealed in the 16 interviews with Arab immigrants and the questionnaire responses from these 16 and 24 Australian-born children of Arab immigrants. This analysis is illustrated extensively with verbatim quotes from translated interview comments, written responses to open-ended questions in the questionnaire surveys and the personal writings of participants.

Social Alienation

The first aspect of psychological adjustment that many immigrant respondents faced was what Nicassio (1983) has called "Social Alienation". It relates to the loss of family and friends, left behind in their homeland and, in many cases, the absence of anyone in Australia to replace them. It resulted in feelings of emptiness, loneliness and isolation. In terms of humanistic sociology, they were cut off from direct everyday contact with primary social values, such as grandparents, or the members of the extended family or close friends, on whose company they had depended in their home country.

I 2. When I got off the plane, it felt so strange. I was happy to see the few members of family at the airport but was also so scared of the emptiness which is surrounding me everywhere. When I left home 2 days prior to my arrival to Australia, there were over 50 people saying farewell to me and now none of them are here.

I 6. Of course I felt so, so alone. Most days I went to the shops and stood in front of the windows pretending that I was with my sister. I used to have coffee time after time and day after day also pretending that I was sitting with her and having a conversation. Funny enough, but I still do that every now and then when life gets too lonely for me.

I 7. For us young it was hard but also challenging. I stressed because I lost my friends and family members, but I was happy in some ways to experience the new life. I know I am so lucky to have had mum and dad with me otherwise I would not have made it. I do admit though that seeing my parents so unhappy did not help my life.

I 16. I left so many friends and missed them so much. I didn't have the same support at school which helped me throughout my studies... Apart from my friends, I missed my grandpa a lot; he was the one idol for me, he loved me and made me feel so special. He passed away a few months after we left and this incident broke my heart, depressed me and made this move a lot worse for me.

I 8. God only knows how much I had to go through, how hard it was to be in such situation were you are all alone with your kids and husband in a place away from everything you know and grew up with. It was not easy to accept and welcome the loneliness and alienation in your life.

Those who lived away from family or fellow immigrants felt the isolation most strongly, especially as they found it difficult to make contact with their Australian neighbours.

I 9. We were so isolated, away from it all. People here don't talk to you like back home. We lived in the street for 4 months and all we got is a little nod or

head shake from neighbours until one day I said, 'Good morning' to some one and had to say straight away (no English).

I 12. We use to go every weekend and sit in the park across the street where kids used to play so we can feel that we are surrounded with others. It was so quiet and because you don't know anyone and don't speak to your neighbours you feel really isolated from every connection with others in the world.

In Arab countries, neighbours and friends virtually become members of one's family. Your friend can call you or call in to your place as many times as they like during the day, sometime up to four times or more. This type of neighbourliness did exist to an extent in rural and much of nineteenth Australia but in modern Australia it has declined as people lead more atomised lives and in many instances do not even know the name of their neighbour.

The reality of having family and friends around seemed to have made the transformation much easier and more bearable, which confirms Nicassios' theory on the importance of having social connections to prevent alienation and adjust better. Distance and the need to rely on public transport, however, made it difficult for some to maintain regular contact with other family members.

I 4. It took a long time on the bus for us to go and visit our cousins, so it was a little difficult.

Problems with isolation and long distance travel were seen as significant causes of stress to many participants.

I 6. I wish we could afford a car. It was not easy especially if we needed something urgently. We didn't live close enough to the shops or public transport facilities.

It appears that isolation and the lack of communication with people around them played a major role in the life of some individuals.

A number of the respondents, who experienced these feelings of social alienation, went on to describe how they eventually managed to overcome them.

I 6. Window shopping helped me get through. I couldn't afford to buy anything but I used to go looking. This is what I used to do with my sister back home. We used to go shopping together at least once a week and have coffee or lunch out. Now, I use this method as my therapy to keep me going. I pretend that my sister is here with me.

I 10. One of the things that kept me fighting and going was my love for my family. I didn't want them to hear me cry and see me sad all the time. I used to cry in the shower and pretend in front of them that everything is working out OK and there are no problems in our life. Looking at other families who migrated before us gives me hope that one day I will adjust and stop feeling this way.

I 14. There was nothing positive that I could use for back-up. I couldn't speak or understand the language, didn't have any family nor friends, didn't have a job, the only thing left was prayers and dreams. I was grieving all the precious things that I have lost, all the love, the family, the friends even the food and language. I use to have the Walkman on my ears with Arabic songs all the time when alone. It wasn't easy. It hurts me now thinking about it.

Each participant did grieve and seemed to have dealt with the stress in their own way by either listening to Arabic music, dreaming, pretending or even taking time out.

A few of the respondents were fortunate to have some family or find other Arabic community members to support them.

I 8. It was so hard at the beginning; it took a while to get used to things. While now, this is home, my family, children and friends are here around me. I think I am lucky to have that. I feel sorry for those who are alone.

I 6. Even though I had relatives here, I needed more. It is not the same; still I was better than those who had no one. In some ways I was very lucky.

I 8. The Lebanese community was absolutely great. I won't be able to return the favor ever to them. I still remember their kindness. However, even though they were there for me I still had some moments were I cried and felt empty inside.

I 15. Crying, weeping, stressing; none of these things gave me back what I have lost. I use to feel a little happier whenever I catch up with the people down the road. They came from Jordan, I could understand them and relate to their culture.

I 10. I think I was blessed to have few family members and friends here before me. They showed me the way and made me feel welcome. I felt special because I had them around me to show me and care for me, they protected and were often there for me especially when I felt down and lonely.

Most respondents in this book adjusted to the new culture. Some had no problem in accepting the change fully, while others still experienced serious issues that had to be addressed. Their adaptation strategy involved developing a mixture of the old culture and the new culture. This means they consciously sought to associate themselves with both cultures in order to compromise on their perceived losses and ease their way into accepting the new. It meant not risking the loss of the home cultural values they regarded as vital to their survival.

I 3. My connection with my homeland will never fade away. Nothing can replace that love and respect. I still belong there with my family members and friends. My association with them is through my food, my culture, my language and my ways of thinking.

I 7. I have gained a lot in Australia, new language, a little bit of Australian culture. I know what it means to be a migrant. The Australian culture will always be limited in comparison to my Arabic culture.

I 8. I didn't want this other culture to interfere with mine, just because I fear losing who I was and where I came from.

According to descriptions given by the respondents, most of the Arabs who migrated to Australia could communicate with other nationalities using beginner's level English. However, they still communicated with people from their own culture in the Arabic language because it comforted them and it gave them some sense of belonging. To them it was their connection between language, religion and culture (Kegan, 1984).

Psychological Adjustment

The immigrant respondents discussed the need to adjust psychologically to a new society where the people and culture were strange and alien to them.

I 2. When you don't know what to expect and everything is different, such as the language and the culture you feel like an alien from out there.

I 5. It is so hard to become someone else over night, you feel lost and empty. It is impossible.

I 6. *The change in culture did not make life easy. There were so many things that I wouldn't allow my kids to do or say and this did not smooth the progress of adjusting for me nor my kids.*

I 8. *My children kept saying to me, we are not the same as those people. We can't understand them, why are we here?*

All 16 of those interviewed described some kind of disorientation, or sense of being helpless, lost and lonely.

I 15. *I did not belong here. I felt different, strange feelings use to haunt me.*

I 4. *In Jordan I felt normal, I was like everyone else, I ate the same food, spoke the same language, prayed in the same way at the same time and celebrated the same festivities and fetes. Here, my food is different, my language is different, I pray alone and have nothing in common with others to celebrate.*

I 2. *With all the change and differences, my head was no longer the same. I couldn't think straight most of the time. In Lebanon, I have never felt that way, never felt stupid and ignorant while here nobody understands and no body has the time to spend with me. Everything is confusing in my head, the language the culture, the way of life and everything.*

I 3. *In Lebanon, I never felt stupid. I never stood helpless and looked around me not knowing what to do next.*

I 10. *This new culture is liberal and makes me disoriented. You don't know the limits for things, I suppose because there are no limits most times.*

Many reported symptoms of depression and stress. These differences affected them in different degrees. Those with family support found stress easier to handle and assimilated more quickly, while others without support suffered over longer periods of time.

I 16 *My doctor said that I am depressed. I have never heard anything about depression before. I don't know in Arabic what is the equivalent word for the word depression. I picked up my English-Arabic dictionary to look up the word but it didn't appear to be in it. The closest words to it were (crazy, self-pity, anxious, grief, angry, frightened, sad and stressed). I honestly felt a bit of all of that at times. I was emotionally drained and needed help.*

I 11. *At first I denied how I felt, my dreams of the past only kept me going. I used to go around like nothing was wrong until it hit me one day and almost had a nervous breakdown. The doctor said I was living a lie and I needed to talk more to friends about my feelings about migration.*

I 10. *I could hear the pain in my mother's voice for a long time after we arrived here. She had the saddest eyes and she kept trying to smile and act happy in front of us so she didn't make us feel her sorrow and disappointment by sacrificing her life to give us a better future and better education.*

I 5. *My husband still remembers how depressed I used to get, and I couldn't explain to him the reasons because he didn't have to go through this. I felt so lonely for months and years and still do in some ways. I felt threatened and alienated every day. I hated having to be someone I am not, and having to speak a language I am not familiar with.*

I 14. *I refused to speak English; I only wanted to communicate in my language, the language I know.*

Q 30 *My mother spoke English very well for years here in Australia and all of a sudden that went when she lost her memory. She couldn't speak or understand anything but Arabic.*

I 1. My disappointment was in myself and my luck. I couldn't blame anyone else. I stressed and cried day in and day out, I started to lose my hair and lose sleep and couldn't understand why.

I 9. I have had many sad moments, I felt so depressed many times and nothing could cheer me up.

All 16 individuals who migrated to Australia suffered depression and dealt with it in different ways. For example, I 11 said that dreaming is what kept her going; it helped heal the pain of losing her family by dreaming about them and getting to see them in her sleep. Another individual (I 14) stopped speaking to anyone in English and only communicated when possible in Arabic. She said she found it hard to think and this was her way of withdrawing from her depression. It took her over six months to reach the stage of accepting the new language in her daily life. The most intriguing story concerned the mother of Q 30 who spoke English very well but when she lost her memory at the age of 65 she could no longer understand or speak English and reverted to talking in Arabic.

Western society functions differently from Arabic society particularly with regard to family life. Arab families place much emphasis on respect for the family and closeness. The family decides on, or reserves the right to approve, almost every decision their children make before they can go ahead and act on it. On the other hand, Western culture emphasises the freedom of the individual. It is generally the norm in Western families that children do not have to have their parents', teachers' or guardians' approval or permission to do things. This kind of behaviour in Arab families in Australia, however, particularly when it is carried out by their children, who are more susceptible to Western influences, can lead to depression for the women. The tearing apart of Arab family ties is especially feared.

I 4. Some days I am happy and others I am sad, and seem to cry a lot. No reason for that change, like the weather, I don't know. I worry about my family, my values and traditions.

I 11. Immigration makes you suffer morally. It is a severe punishment, a sentence for leaving your country but what else would you do to escape wars and have a good life for your children and a good future.

I 12. My wife was under so much pressure, exhausted and home sick all the time. She had headache all the time and took pills day and night. She kept saying, "Everything is so different here, I am so scared to lose my kids".

For some the depression and stress led to changed sleeping and behavioral patterns. Inability to sleep was one problem.

I 2. Couldn't get one good night's sleep for ages. I used to sit in bed and think of the enormity of it all.

I 4. I envy those who could say that they fall asleep the minute they hit the pillow. Why not me?

I 8. My problem was too much thinking, my brain used to ache. By the time I fall asleep it is time to wake up.

I 16. The dreams I had were so strange, I wanted to avoid sleeping so I don't get terrified. My thoughts were not my own. I use to get this strange feeling in my head. I don't know how to explain it.

For others the difficulties of psychological adjustment manifested itself in chronic tiredness and the desire to sleep.

I 10. If not sleeping was my problem I would have been happy. I just couldn't stay awake. I needed to sleep all the time. I didn't know what was wrong. My

husband said that I should see a doctor and this is not healthy, but nothing was aching I was only tired, very tired and didn't want to speak to any one or see any one, I only wanted to sleep.

I 14. I was very active before and all of a sudden I didn't want to do anything at all that involves effort, not even eating. I wanted to stay in bed and keep the curtains shut.

Others reported difficulties with concentrating on daily tasks, which they had not experienced in their homeland.

I 7. It took me a while to concentrate on tasks no matter how simple they were. Even reading was an effort.

I 9. I started forgetting lots of things, I was writing down basic things to remind myself of what needs to be done.

I 11. Concentrating became difficult.

I 2. I return home a few times after locking the door and getting in the car to check if the stove and oven are off. I knew I switched them off but needed to make sure.

Grieving is a well known process that immigrants go through when they are faced with cultural changes and challenges (Roger and Maslow, 1997). According to Roger and Maslow (1997), unless individuals have dealt with solving their problems at the most basic level, they will not be able to move on to the next step. Here the respondents were asked to describe their thoughts and feelings they experienced while adjusting to the new culture.

From the description of some it is clear that they went through a process of grieving at this sense of personal loss of people close to them.

I 3. It was like I lost someone close to me, I was crying most days, I was grieving something I don't know what it was. I just couldn't stop. I needed time to myself everyday just to help me get through this without depressing my family with me.

I 4. I can't say I was not sad, I would be lying. I used to sit in the front garden and hope that I can relive the memories of having my sisters and brothers pop in to visit like they used to do back there.

Unemployment constituted a major cause of stress for some of the male respondents in particular. Men in an Arab culture consider it very important to have a job, not only to support their family, but also to reinforce feelings of self-worth and status. Losing their job, or not having their overseas qualifications or employment history recognised produced low self-esteem and stress in some people.

I 3. It is very stressful to lose a good position and go down from a foreman managing a big site to a factory worker that sits monitoring a machine all day long. I could not take the job we needed to survive.

I 8. Having to study again for two and a half years after working as an engineer in Iraq for 8 years was hard to take, especially when you have a family that counts on your support. This was a killer, it was so painful.

I 16. My qualifications and university degree were not recognised here in Australia, so I started helping a friend doing home maintenance work since I couldn't afford not working because I have to support two families, one family here and my parents back home. I have been a painter now for years. This was stressful at the beginning and it made me feel that I have wasted so many years on study and hard work for nothing. Well, now I have accepted and life seems to go on.

I 4. I was a school teacher in Jordan. I have taught history and geography and obviously here I didn't have the language nor the appropriate qualification requested by the Australian Education Department so I couldn't teach. It wasn't easy to lose that power and confidence in yourself. By not having a job I started feeling sad and depressed and lost my motivation and my self-worth. Still, I knew so many others here in Australia that went through the same thing and have now achieved high positions and places in life so I still have faith and hope that I could be one of those people one day.

Problems arising from unemployment and related loss of control in one's life and self-worth contributed to immigrants experiencing mental health problems that culminated in high levels of depression and stress. The above respondents illustrate the impact that a lower status in employment had on them, leaving them feeling stressed and unhappy. According to I-8, having to start again from scratch was a painful two and a half year process, while I-16 did not have that chance. Due to financial stress and his commitment to support two families, he had to be content with painting work.

A number of interview respondents felt that they had worked through the difficult stage of psychological adjustment and pointed to factors that had helped them to cope. Maintaining connection with their home culture and the past was of the highest importance for virtually all respondents. It was the only way of dealing with the loss of culture, friends and family and the past. This connection could be in any shape or form; it could be a dream, a memory or a story. Each individual who migrated to Australia that I spoke to said that they wanted to stay in contact with their cultural past, while learning to adjust to Australia. It was important for them to maintain Arabian values, especially with regard to religious beliefs and practices, Arabic language and family traditions.

I 1. The stories which I tend to repeat to myself and my family seems to give me great pleasure when I repeat them again and again but I am sure that my children know them by heart. I can see the look on their faces and in a form of respect they don't try to stop me or interrupt. I can't help it, they keep me going, and they give me hope for tomorrow.

I 16. I teach Arabic to the young generation. I love doing it; I feel proud to see the young children speaking Arabic and singing in Arabic and it seems also that they are laughing in Arabic. It keeps them associated with the Arab community in Adelaide as well as the entire community here or overseas.

For one, a chance to visit his homeland re-established stability.

I 12. After going back to Jordan for the first time in 12 years, I felt a resurgence of the affection and love I once left behind me. You think you have been forgotten but luckily you are not. The minute you go back there you pick up from where you left. It is beautiful because you don't feel alienated any longer.

The respondents made it also obvious that in order to live happily in Australia after migration, they needed to adjust by integrating the new culture with the old one. There were some respondents who indicated that while they were in the process of adapting to the new culture, they were helped by other people from the same culture and community. Such people shared the same language and values and religion, and having this support enabled the new comers to adjust a lot quicker psychologically, as well as emotionally to the unfamiliar linguistic and cultural values of the new country.

I 3. The Arab community showed me and my family lots of support when we first arrived here. Knowing that I still have my culture and can speak the Arabic language with people from my own country was really helpful. I would have lost

my mind otherwise. Language and culture are very important and you learn to appreciate them a lot more only when you happen to miss them.

I 8. When you go somewhere and you meet people from your own country who share the same culture, language, values and religion as you, you are not lost. The important elements are still available and that helps you carry on.

These comments highlighted the important role played by other members of the Arab community in Australia in providing the opportunity to maintain Arab language and cultural values in the midst of the new and still alien Australian society. They also provide evidence of the way the respondents saw no inherent contradiction between maintaining Arab cultural values and learning the mainstream cultural values of the Anglo-Australian majority. The survival strategy of cultural duality (Smolicz 1979, 1999) was most clearly seen in the respondents' adaptation of some aspects of culture. These are considered in the following sections.

Homeland and Family Values

One important theme that emerged out of the questionnaire responses was that of family values, which the interviewees interpreted (see quoted comments below) as having a strong connection to their homeland. All 40 respondents said that they missed their homeland. Even those who had never been there, explained that it would be important for them to visit it.

For those who migrated to Australia their homeland still meant a great deal to them. It was not only through their memories and childhood experiences linked to their parents and extended families but also because they felt that a part of them had been torn away. Here is how a few individuals responded to missing their homeland.

I 1. My parents, God only knows how much I miss them and how much I miss my home where I grew up. Yet, if you mention this to your friends who are not from the same background and haven't experienced a loss of values and culture, they don't understand. As a matter of fact a dear friend of mine told me to get over my past life and live for the future. I was upset and thought how could you forget your past; you might as well forget that you existed all together.

I 4. I was a child when I came here and I do miss going back to visit and check out my home town and friends. When we first left I thought that this would be the last time for me to see the bed I slept in and the toys I played with and the people that loved and surrounded me. I was absolutely frightened because at that time there was no hope of returning. It felt as if I will never see my cousins and grandparents again; it made things a lot harder and more stressful. Going back was always a wish.

I 11. I left quite a bit of me back there, many special memories and endless stories of childhood and growing up. I would love to go back and visit when all our financial troubles are out of the way.

I 12. There is nothing worse than having to wrap the past in a tiny suit case and move on. But to relive the past I don't think that the suitcase will do the trick; you can't just open it and have all that you have lost come back again. I dream about stepping on that ground one more time before I die. I would love to kiss the door step of the house I grew up in. I close my eyes so often and see things that I miss lots and smile having felt that pleasure. I don't know what else to say, I don't know....

I 13. Of course it is very important to go back; your homeland is a part of you, a part of your blood type and DNA; it is a stream in your soul. I have been back twice and will definitely visit with every opportunity I get.

I 14. I miss taking a deep breath and feeling the energy rush through my spine, like it used to many years ago when I was back home. I miss opening my eyes after an afternoon nap and seeing the family around me.

I 16. My homeland is a very important part of me. My land is my history, my past as well as the future of my kids. I talk to them about it all the time and encourage them to go and see. I often tell them the most exciting stories and challenge them to be like the rest of my family back home.

Most respondents reported that their homeland continued to be a very important influence in their lives, an essential part of their culture and their core values. They felt traumatised when they thought they might not be able to return one day.

When asked whether they considered going back home was important, all 16 of the respondents who were not born in Australia emphasised how much they missed their homeland and how much they would like to go back.

I 1. I grew up there so my childhood and memories are left there. When I remember things or have dreams it is always back home. Strange, hey!

I 4. My fond memories are always calling me. My days at school, growing up amongst my friends, all these things I often miss and wish I could visit and re-live.

I 7. They say that when you get old, all you talk about is your good old days and mine were the best days. I think that going back is very important to me so I can visit the shadows of my past.

I 11. Wow, it is a dream to see my homeland; the one that I like to remember and not the one that it has become in the last decade. Going back when things settle, if ever, is something to dream about. Of course, I miss my homeland.

I 12. You sort of understand what it is like to leave it all behind and learn to adjust to a new life. You have been there. To me, I have been snatched out of my soil and replanted here and it took me a long time to adjust to the soil and start to become alive again.

I 13. Maybe I could win the lottery ticket or I could get offered one wish, which would be visiting my homeland again.

I 14. Oof! How much I miss it, but will I ever know when my next trip is? It is so far away and so expensive.

I 16. Not knowing where your life takes you and not knowing how far, makes me appreciate what I once had and took advantage of. Of course I miss it so much and would save and go.

I 9. My garden here is based on what I have had; my furniture is of a similar style. The colors of our bedroom are exactly like they used to be. I did all that but still it doesn't feel like back home. I miss it, not because I am not happy or anything like that. I miss it because it is my past and I would certainly like to go back to visit. I can't go back, because now I have family here who wouldn't go back with me. It is tough.

The other 24 respondents who were all born in Australia were asked whether going to the homeland of their parents was important to them. The analysis of their answers indicated that despite being born here, the knowledge of the stress and grief that their families had faced over the years saddened them. They were therefore curious to go to the family homeland and experience the kind of life they had heard of.

Q 22. You sort of understand what it was like for my parents to come to Australia and not be able to fit in for a while. Because of that, I would love to go and visit the land of my background and find out for myself what it is really like and not only what they have told me through their stories and memoirs.

Q 31. My curiosity would definitely get me far, especially when I have just recently met some relatives who came to visit here. I am more interested in going and visiting my extended family members.

33. It is amazing how much I knew about Syria even before visiting it. I could imagine all the places and even see the little tiny details, because my mother's stories were so alive and well told that I didn't miss anything. After my first trip I knew how hard it must have been for them to leave a culture behind and migrate somewhere new and totally different.

Q 20. I would love to experience what mum talks about and see the kind of friends that she had. I have lots of friends here but my mother keeps saying it isn't the same. I think that the lack of having her family by her side in her life made her a little suspicious and cautious.

Q 35. I keep telling my children that family and friends cannot be replaced while everything else can. What I remember from the stories that my parents have told me tends to live in my memory forever. I have been to Egypt many times and it feels so wonderful to be there amongst people who speak your language and understand your tradition.

Q 40. My wife was born overseas and she came to Australia after we got married. I went there to Syria a few times on holiday in 2001 and the warmth and love I have received took me back again in 2003; that is when I met my wife and got married. I love going back whenever the opportunity comes. It is very special and the feeling of belonging to such a culture is irreplaceable.

One respondent, however, added important qualifications to her assent to this question. Although she would enjoy visiting her parents' homeland, she would not like to live there.

Q 40. Important to visit my parents' homeland, did you say? Well, yes it is. But I am certain that I couldn't live there or bring my kids up there. I have been brought up here and no matter what they say it isn't the same to me. You know, I am not the strict, unreasonable person my grandfather was. He used to repeat constantly, "You are who you are and if you don't follow the steps of your family and religion you can't remain in this society". These were his words. I obviously didn't stick to his words, because my partner is not from my religion or society, but this did not change the person I am and did not stop me from believing and praying or being involved in my Druze society. I did not lose my self-identity just by involving myself with an outsider.

The issue of personal identification resulted in respondents recording a variety of reflections. There were those who seemed so interested in visiting, seeing and sharing their parents' past, feelings and memories. There were others, however, who felt isolated because they followed a different path from that of their grandparents. Nonetheless this change did not deprive them of their original identity and neither did it change who they really were.

All 40 respondents stated that family played a very important role in the life of an individual. Those who came as immigrants also said that it was one of the main reasons behind their stress. Having to deal with the separation of leaving the family was devastating. Family was the cord that tied all of them to their past and it also clarified what they belonged to and who they were. Family made life worth having and full of meaning and helped to give each individual an identity (Smolicz, 1979).

I 1. Having to leave my family behind broke my heart; my life became meaningless. My mother was the hardest one to let go of. I still remember her red eyes from the crying and rubbing; I also remember her prayers and blessing following us all the way to the departure gate. Life is worthless without your family.

I 5. A few months after arriving in Australia my father died. I broke down and cried for weeks. I did not open the curtains in the house because I didn't want to see the daylight. I felt so guilty. My departure caused so many problems to my family. My father couldn't bear the separation. It was entirely my fault.

I 10. It wasn't too bad because I came with my family, but mum couldn't get over it. I used to hear her crying in the toilet. I used to listen to her tell my father he was to blame for dragging us away from everything we once had. I can understand how she felt because I can't imagine for one minute being away from her and my dad. It must have been so terrible for her.

I 12. Not having a family or friends around you makes you an alien on a deserted planet where no one is around to share your joy and sadness. It is a strange and lonely feeling that makes you wonder if life is worth anything, when you don't have the ones you love and care for by your side.

Despite the stress of having their families and friends back in a distant homeland, knowing that they were still there helped respondents to retain a connection to their culture, language and values. It helped them to cope with the loss of their previous social position and loved ones. This was expressed as the greatest stress of all by the great majority of the immigrant group, especially those who had family members living with them and had to pretend that nothing was wrong and to continue being strong.

In summary, the respondents demonstrated that connections to family and friends could make or break a person both in the home society and the new country. They played a very special role in the life of these individuals by providing support, shelter, belonging and safety. Because they are so much a part of the individual's inner world, they can be regarded as an internal factor which helps in the process of adjusting to any external cultural change (Tenant, 1997).

Celebrating Religious Festivals in Australia

Cultural themes and traditions also played a very important role in the lives of the respondents. Most of them emphasised the importance of festive seasons, while commenting on the lack of having family and friends around them, which made celebrating less meaningful. Respondent I 7 reported that she missed her family very much, especially on Adha Eid. Previously, she had described the festive day and its very traditional and ceremonial role in Druze society. It is a day when families and friends visit one another, prepare special meals, and share gifts. Other respondents also talked about traditions, values and the reflection on their lifestyle.

I 3. What is the Eid without your family around and you are in a country where no one knows what it means and when it exists? I always let my children have a day off school for Eid to make it a little special for them, not just another day passing by.

I 5. We are so lucky to have a big family now here in Australia, children, grand children, brothers and sisters; it makes the festive season more enjoyable and meaningful. I know that it is different to when you are back home but still we make the most of it.

I 8. It is so pleasant now because both Druze and Muslim communities have functions to celebrate the festive seasons such as Ramadan and Adha. It is vital for our children to keep the tradition and the celebration going, otherwise they lose the meaning and the importance of such days.

12. When I first arrived to Australia, I hated those important religious days because I felt so lonely and deprived. I made a promise to myself that I will never let this happen to my children.

I 15. Back in Syria, Eid had different meaning and values. I use to look forward to it because it was like Christmas for us, happiness and presents everywhere. In Australia it is different; I still celebrate with my family by it is a little bit sad and quiet when we are around the dinner table. I know my family is wishing that we are surrounded with the rest of our family and so am I.

It is important to note that the majority of people who have migrated to a different country with totally different values and cultures have suffered a great deal of depression and deprivation caused by the cultural change. The prioritisation of certain values which meant a great deal to them does not seem to have any importance or meaning in the culture of the country they have migrated to.

When the second and third generation respondents were asked about festivities and cultural themes, their replies were slightly different from their parents. However, they still had similar views about the importance of such events and what they meant to the community.

Q 18. I haven't experienced the celebration of anything outside Australia, but I hear my parents talk to their families and friends over the phone on the actual festive days and I can tell what we must be missing out on. The noise, the laughter, the rush that they seem to be going through makes the blood rush faster in my body. It sounds like Christmas or New Year's Eve in Australia. Can you imagine?

Q 23. I have been to Lebanon with my parents once, it was unforgettable. It was totally different all together. I loved celebrating Ramadan over there amongst lots of family and many friends. I can't get over how many people visited us. It was fantastic.

Q 39. My wife still gets so depressed every now and then, sometimes I find her crying. She has been here now for a few years but she still misses her family and relatives a lot, especially on festive occasions. She says that it is not the same to be away from everyone.

All the respondents agreed that by keeping traditional celebrations and festivities alive they were keeping a whole culture in bloom. It was as important to them as retaining their language, food, and social occasions in order to nourish their culture of origin and keep it alive. Traditional and religious celebrations seemed equally as important as language and personal identification for the respondents. For instance, Muslims celebrate two big festivals each year - Adha and Ramadan. The Druze, on the other hand, only celebrate Adha. Their answers regarding the importance of these celebrations were as follows.

I 6. Ramadan is very significant to us. I fast every year and even though it is very hard I feel that I have achieved a lot, I discipline myself, my weaknesses, my temptations; this makes me stronger and helps me truly feel for the hungry and needy people.

I 9. Keeping the tradition and celebrating our religious beliefs is what keeps our culture and faith alive. Without these, we are no longer the people we are claiming to be. These are the Arabic principles; they identify us.

I 14. Tradition and religion are the essence of who we are. Praying, fasting and feasts give me and my family a meaning to our life.

Q 25. We are so lucky to have the parents to teach us the traditional things that we are supposed to know. If we didn't have family all this culture and religion would have vanished and our whole society would have deteriorated.

Q 29. Tradition is well needed and so is religion, they are the things that tie the children to us as parents and relatives and keeps the whole chain of culture connected together.

Q 31. If we lose our tradition, our beliefs and religion, we therefore lose our identity.

Q 40. The Eid is a big thing for me. I love celebrating and spending time visiting family members and wishing them Happy Eid. This is our traditional religious festival. It is during those times that you appreciate having your family and you understand the importance of keeping those ties and relations alongside traditions and customs all linked together.

Given the importance of Arabian culture, tradition and religion for both Muslims and Druze, it is critical to understand why they need to protect and respect their core values, tradition and language.

Some questions focused on language and religious lessons and the importance of having children who were born in Australia being able to read and speak Arabic, in order for them to read the Quran and pray. A question as to why Arabic language was important drew one response pointing to its important link with religious practice.

I 2. Reading Arabic is crucial for allowing the individual to pray and read the Quran. In some places the new generation gets to read in English the Arabic words but we are all against that idea now; it is a lot easier for them to learn it at a younger age. It is as important as every other tradition that they keep.

When asked whether they forced their children to learn to read and write, two respondents commented:

I 4. My parents did force me and kept telling me that I will lose my tradition and culture and may lose my identity. This thought didn't scare me much at the beginning but now I regret so much not absorbing more while I was younger of the language because I am finding it harder at an older age.

I 14. Traditional commitments cannot be substituted easily. As a matter of fact if they were lost they will be irreplaceable and it will be a lot harder to keep a culture going if its traditions and meanings were gone. The language is very important for our religion as well as family ties.

In the Arab community, networks of relatives and friends often provided support for people to read and write the Arabic language or teach religion. This was normally voluntary work done by the older people with the intention of enlightening and educating the younger generation. This was how they maintained social connections amongst the Arab community and kept Arab cultural values alive and strong.

Political Adaptation

The respondents who migrated earlier to Australia raised an interesting and positive theme. This was the difference in political values between their own country and Australia.

I 1. At least here you don't have to worry about Israel bombing you every second day.

I 3. The one thing I could adjust to quickly in Australia was the political change. You don't have to worry about anything. This was the only matter that did not seem to stress me.

I 7. People are so relaxed and no one really would vote if it wasn't compulsory. Whoever runs the country can do so as long as everything goes fine, Liberal, Labor, who cares? Back home people die because of electing the opposition. This is more relaxed.

This group of respondents directly commented on the political system and how politics in their home of origin and Australia was so different. They found this

situation one of the easiest to adjust to and were happy to accept mainstream Australian political values.

Linguistic Adaptation

A number of questions in the interview with the overseas-born respondents were designed to explore their linguistic adaptation to Australia. None of the immigrant group had learned English prior to their arrival in Australia. All the immigrant respondents spoke of their struggles to learn this new language, with its different alphabet and its left-to-right and front-to-back pattern of writing. Three indicated that they often felt disoriented and out of place when they could not understand or speak the language.

The frustrations of daily living when they did not know English as the mainstream language of communication were vividly described by some respondents.

I 6. The stressor of assimilation into my new culture was mostly the language barrier. It was so frustrating to not be able to ask for anything. I remember getting on the wrong bus one day and was not able to explain to the driver that I needed to get off. I started crying and the worst part was that the bus I was on was an express and he tried to tell me that but nothing made sense. I will never forget the fear of getting lost, not just the bus but the language.

I 12. Shopping for food used to take forever, especially if you don't know what the package would look like. It felt like I was on a space ship. Wearing the scarf on my head made people look at me, so I used to believe that I was a stranger who landed on the wrong planet. Trying to explain to the shop assistant what I was looking for used to take up to 10 minutes sometimes. It was embarrassing but most times the assistants were so tolerant and patient and used to wait until I finished my whole sentence. I don't wish that frustration on anyone.

The interviews generated responses indicating that most people faced some kind of depression when trying to learn the new language. Some felt traumatised for a long period of time for having let go of some core values or having to accept a large if not total change in cultural mores. The experience of separation was devastating and could lead to depression.

I 7. It was terrible, very depressing having to listen to a language for the whole day and not be able to understand a word. You don't only feel that you can't understand, you will also feel that you have been terminated. You have lost your culture, language, values, family and the lot.

Others felt stupid, lost or left out because they did not know the language, could not communicate and had to learn to think in a new way.

I 6. Lost! Of course, because I couldn't understand anything.

I 8. The fact that I didn't understand the language made me feel left out. I was like a little boy lost in a crowd who was looking around to see a familiar face and a word to grasp.

I 2. It took me a long time to stop feeling like an alien in a strange place. I think I am used to people looking so I smile now instead of questioning their looks.

I 4. I keep trying to get involved with the society around me here, school functions or family fairs but I find it impossible. I don't think the same way and don't feel so comfortable outside my environment. I am really trying but maybe my language is what stands in the way or maybe different issues such as values

and beliefs. It is my ambition to feel safe in this environment and not keep living on hopes and dreams.

Lessons in English were a constant struggle for many in the immigrant group.

I 3. Language was a big stress. It gave me a headache hearing people and not understanding what is going on around me all day. It was very tiring to try and concentrate to maybe pick one or two words every time. I wanted to block my ears or listen to headphones with words of my own language to stop the pain in my head. Going to English classes was so demanding. I had to prepare myself mentally every morning. Sometimes I would cry and ask God, "Why do I have to go through this?" Then it started to become easier especially when I realised that all the others in the group of language study were like me and we started to make friends. It used to take effort to communicate with others; we used sign language most of the time and even with that we had difficulties because some actions did not mean the same thing in our culture.

I 14. I used to laugh at myself trying to speak. I used to say to myself, "Well at least I can understand what I am trying to say". I laughed with my wife often when we used to stumble at speaking and she in her own way would try to correct and help which made things more complicated.

For some the inability to quickly master English greatly limited their employment possibilities.

I 7. I just couldn't learn the language fluently enough to be able to speak or understand others without feeling stupid. However, it is understandable why I couldn't get a job anywhere for a long period of time. Not everybody is smart enough or young enough to pick up a new language.

I 14. If I could only speak the language properly I would have gone straight back to study and adjust my teaching qualifications and would have kept my previous job.

For another, not knowing English meant that he could no longer help his children with their studies at school.

I 13. Not being able to speak the language made it very hard for me to help my children with their studies. I felt that I was robbed of the faith that my children used to have in me because they could count on me by helping them with school work. Now because I couldn't speak well the language I lost that joy that I used to get whenever they looked up at me and needed me to help.

A feature of the immigrant respondents' linguistic adaptation was that, while acquiring English language skills, none of them had lost the ability to speak their native tongue. They all said that they used it mostly with their friends, family and Arabs from their homeland and also when communicating with their children on a traditional or cultural topic. They said that speaking Arabic kept them connected to their culture, community and preserved their identity. Many of them believed that having the Arabic language was what helped them survive the tremendous change and made it easier to them to stay connected to the past and the memories.

I 11. Nothing can be more valuable to an individual than his or her self-identity and this quality is a foundation within core values and language.

It is also relevant to note how the second generation of Arabs in Australia felt about the Arabic language. It was amazing to see the responses to the importance of their home language. These latter generation respondents felt very connected to the Arabic language and its importance lay in helping them identify with the older generation and linking them to a culture and customs that they had only known through an Arabian community within a large Western society:

Q 19. I speak Arabic to my parents and I feel so special knowing that no one else can understand and it makes them so happy to hear me speak to them in a language that they love.

Q 24. Speaking in Arabic is a little hard for me because I tend to make the masculine feminine and the other way round. But I still feel proud when I speak it because I know it identifies me and connects me to my parents' culture.

Q 26. It is very important for me to speak the Arabic language and I also want my children to be able to read it and speak it too. Without the language there is no culture and no religion.

Q 28. Having family from my background was very helpful for me to keep my language and interest in reading and writing strong. I relate to my community and culture by being able to communicate in Arabic.

Q 31. Throughout my childhood I wasn't allowed to speak English at home. I use to hate it and get mad at my parents for not listening to me when I spoke in English. But now I thank them and I understand exactly why they did it and will do it to my own children.

Q 37. I am so glad that I kept up the language with my folks because I enjoy very much the functions that are held here in Australia for the Arab community. I love the singing and dancing night and enjoy the traditional life.

Q 39. Keeping the language is preserving a whole nation, culture and religion. It is very important to speak it all the time to preserve our identity.

Those who were Australian-born citizens of Arabian extraction expressed views similar to their immigrant parents' thoughts about the importance of Arabic values and language, but did not seem to have experienced any depression at all. Their positive feelings were derived from their parents who in their turn were afraid that by losing their Arabic language they would lose their whole identity.

Q 17. I am proud to keep up the use of the Arabic language in my everyday routine with friends, partner and children too. It is so valuable to hang on to along with traditional values and customs. This is what identifies each one and connects them back to a certain culture.

Q 22. I converse in Arabic with my family. I speak to my children in Arabic and they answer back in English. We celebrate and keep up traditional values as well as respecting societal differences by integrating the old with the new. It is normal to us but I suppose the first generation who went through that change had found it very tiring and depressing.

Q 36. Growing up here gave me the privilege to enjoy two cultures and two languages moulded in one as my parents set them to the best for their convenience and to ease the stress of leaving one country and migrating to another that is totally different and strange. The integrating of the two cultures was to keep the original culture alive and be able to adjust to the new one. My grandfather tells me stories about the pain and fear he went through not knowing what tomorrow will bring. I am lucky because I didn't have to go through this and I hope that I never have to leave this country and migrate somewhere else like my grandparents did.

Q 40. I will find it impossible to change what I was brought up to see and believe. It is not simple to eliminate the Arabic core values attached to the Western core values in the way that our parents have integrated the two in order to simplify their stress of having to lose priorities and accept reinforcements of certain rules and culture and new ways of life. Because it means I am changing my entire culture, religion and beliefs.

As seen above, it seemed natural for the Australian-born respondents to live the new mix of culture that their parents before them had created in order to find a compromise between Western and Muslim or Druze culture. The respondents claimed that the reconstruction of such values helped migrants to survive the massive cultural shift in their lives – a combination of adaptation and assimilation.

A few of the Australian-born respondents also mentioned that seeing people who come from another country, speaking no English, helped them understand the difficulties that their parents had to go through when they first migrated:

Q 20. You sort of understand what it must have been like to them when they first arrived. They would have lost everything that meant lots to them and made them feel comfortable. On top of all that they had to learn how to speak again.

Q 25. It must have felt so weird to my parents. My mum said the language stopped her from doing so many things. It felt so strange and uncomfortable to speak English.

The younger respondents stated that although they were born in Australia, speaking the Arabic language was very important for them in order to retain their culture and values. Speaking and understanding the Arabic language was a strategy that also helped them to retain a relationship with their parents who migrated to Australia and to recognise their mother tongue's special and robust nature. In summary, it can be stated that this linguistic adaptation generally accords with the findings of Smolicz (1979) concerning migrants or second generation Australians who might refer to themselves as Australians, but maintained their linguistic values, their religion and their social relations.

Self-Identification

All 40 respondents were given a list of preferences in how they identified themselves. This reinforced the emphasis in the literature review (Hasan, 1998) about the fear of 'I' against the image of 'we'; people are often afraid of losing their own identity when having to face and interact with a new culture, religion and language. This list included seven different headings and each respondent had to highlight the one that he/she thought best described their identity. They also had to rate them in descending order from 'best' (1) to 'least' (7). Some respondents chose only one heading while others numbered the whole lot. The options given included social class, family membership and religious affiliation, and four options related to ethnic identity – Arab, national Arab culture, Australian and Arab–Australian. The categories that most of the respondents used were religious or ethnic ones.

Social Class

Most respondents gave the social class option a low scale preference, indicating that they did not deem it be as relevant as culture and religion in their identification. There were a few who did not recognise this as a choice at all.

Member of Extended Family

Only one respondent, born in Australia, chose to identify in his first choice as a member of an extended family. The comments below, however, illustrate the complexities of identity for someone born into an immigrant family in Australia.

Q 37. Well! Since I was born in Australia but my family comes from a different country you know. They are from a different religion. I feel deep inside that I belong to who they are but also I am an Australian. So I look at this as if I had a

huge family from different parts of the world and different sections of me belong to different things or maybe believe in different things. This issue is not clear and is confusing to me.

This respondent was still quite young and not sure of what he really wanted, as revealed in his remark that “it is all confusing to me”. An immigrant mother reported a similar state of confusion in her son.

I 13. My son says to me now that he is torn and he feels confused because he doesn't know what he really is - an Arab or an Australian.

The evidence of other, slightly older, Australian-born respondents suggests that in a few years time they could change their opinion and know what was important to them.

Arabs

Two individuals identified themselves primarily as Arabs.

I 11. I came here as an Arab and after 20 years of being one I find it impossible to change who I am. I can't change who I am just by migrating somewhere else. My roots, my family, my past do not allow me to say any thing else.

Q 30. People may think that it is funny for me to see my self as an Arab especially when I was born in Australia.

But hold on, my parents, their parents and the entire kinship are Arabs. What rights do I have to change that?

Neither of these respondents were related and they grew up in different circumstances. However, they shared similar beliefs about their identity and its origins.

Muslim/Druze

Six of the respondents (two from the immigrant group and four from those born in Australia) indicated that they saw themselves as Muslim or Druze before anything else.

I 7. My whole life I was brought up with my family which kept reminding me by saying “you are a Muslima” [meaning Muslim female]. Now I teach my children that. It doesn't stop them from living a normal life and it doesn't change who they truly are if they spoke up and said that they are Muslims.

I 10. I have the echo of the voice of my mama (mother) in my head saying telling me always to be proud of the person I am and therefore, I really am proud for being a Muslim.

Q 34. I am more careful now after all the stupid stuff going around to speak up freely and be proud of who I am. Still I don't deny my religion and don't lie about the fact of being the person I am.

Q 35. I choose to go deep in the Druze religion, and the more I know the more fascinated and proud of my beliefs I become.

Q 38. I probably don't know half as much as I should about the Druze religion but to me it is my number one.

Q 40. I don't think anyone can change who they are by running away or denying their roots. I am Druze and don't hesitate to admit to it. Also the knowledge I get from learning about this religion and the philosophy behind it is unlimited.

The perceived knowledge and educational feedback which these respondents obtained from their religion seems to be the main reason for them identifying themselves according to their religion. For some, it began as an obligation to the family, until it attracted their genuine personal interest and widened their understanding. It is worth noting that half of the respondents claiming this primary religious identification were Australian-born Druze.

When asked in what ways religion educated them, the respondents' answers were as follows.

Q 35. Umm! The Druze is not only a religion but also a history. It goes way back to early 1800's. It tells you all about the roots, the starters and the heroes of the past. With the knowledge also you get the power of believing and appreciating who you are. It is in some ways similar to the Jews religion in which you can only be Druze by blood not by kinship [i.e. marriage].

I 7. The Quran is the most fascinating book to read. A few of my Australian friends have read this holy book and wouldn't stop talking about its influence on the mind.

Q 38. Prayers that my grandmother's said and repeated time after time to me bring me joy and great memories. It gives me goose bumps; it is the most enjoyable tune to my ears.

These respondents tended to be amazed that their religion could have such an educational side. Their comments also related to memories which connected them to their families and loved ones.

Only a few respondents referred to their identity in terms of a distinctly National Arab culture, but this was not the first choice on their list.

Q 32. I am an Arab according to how others perceive me and I belong to a National culture which is the Arabian culture with all its traditions, folklore, values and religion.

Q 37. You can say it is easy to look at yourself as one member of a nation according to your religion and culture.

Others made this their fifth, sixth or even seventh option. It seemed from their earlier preferences that their sense of belonging to the Arab nation was contingent on religion or culture.

Australian

Fourteen of the respondents referred to themselves as being Australian before anything else. Their comments, however, revealed the very different ways this was interpreted, as well as a range of other identifications that were maintained alongside this. Some indicated a single identification with Australia.

I 4. Migrated here 25 plus years ago and now married to an Australian-Lebanese. My kids are all Australian. I am proud to be one.

I 12. I can say now that I am Australian, even though I have been here not so long but I like this country and I will stay.

I 15. I got my citizen ship and still can't speak good English. The kids laugh at me every now and then but I often say to them, 'Hey kids, I am Australian too', with a strong accent. They all laugh. But it is true.

I 16. I was born there but grew up here. Australia is my country and Australians are my people.

Q 17. I was born in Australia and married an Australian of an Arab background and I suppose that our expected baby is also an Australian.

Q 29. Australian is who I am, this is my place of birth and nationality before anything else.

Q 22. I was born here and so are my brothers and we all say that we are Australians. That is what I like about this country, multiculturalism and speaking your true opinion.

A number of others referred to a more complex identification, in which they gave priority to being Australian.

I 13. Born in Syria but I am an Aussie now. I could say that I am Syrian–Australian but it makes things complicated so it is easier to say that I am an Australian who came from Syria.

Q 21. I can't understand those who were born here but they still say that their nationality is something other than Australian. If your parents were not born here, I know that by blood you are connected to somewhere else but legally speaking you are Australian.

Q 27. Born here and I love my country Australia. I have never been to Iran, I would like to do so one day and see where my family originated from.

I 1. Even though I was not born here 21 years later I should be saying that I am Australian; it doesn't mean that I am no longer Lebanese but also I am equally Australian.

I 2. I have been Australian for over 30 years. It is longer than me being Syrian. I think that on the priority list, I had to say Australian because I have lived here longer and no matter how Syrian I am or thought I was when I went back to Syria few years ago, my extended family members told me that I am so Australian now and in some ways they were disappointed with a few decisions I have made. I have told them that my culture means lots to me but I have adapted a few new other things and added them to my culture and made one that is more appropriate to live and acceptable to my life outside Syria. Honestly, I have no regrets.

Q34 I was born here in Australia and this is the only country I know. My religion is another thing and will always be my religion no matter what, but my nationality is Australian and I am proud to say it aloud.

Q 35. This is my country, look at me, I am a true kangaroo. I still have particular traditions and values that I will not let go of, but that is what happens when you have two cultures.

The responses highlighted the importance of factors such as birthplace, and place of residence. A few interviewees also commented on marrying Australians, an act which they felt made them more Australian in character and law. Most of the respondents, however, had married people who, although they were born or grew up in Australia, were ethnically from the same Arab cultural stock. Cultural aspects, therefore, seemed to play a major role in defining the complex identification of many respondents and this correlates positively to the findings of Smolicz (1979). He concluded that people identified themselves in terms of their religion, their family or kinship group and their ethnic cultural traditions.

Arab-Australian

In all there were 14 respondents who chose to refer to themselves using the dual identification of Arab–Australian. They were split equally between the immigrant and Australian-born groups. Some of the responses demonstrated an identification based

on external factors, such as birthplace, residence, the family's ethnic origins or other people's identification.

I 1. Only came 5 years ago to this country not - long enough to make me forget who I am but also it feels like forever since I have left home. I love being here but I miss home too.

I 5. I am not exaggerating, 7 people out of 10 tend to ask me where do I come from and what is this accent when they meet me for the first time. Hearing that without a doubt reminds me all the time that my roots belong to somewhere else no matter how hard I try.

I 8. I can answer that question very quickly. I came to Australia a few years ago because I met an Arab- Australian overseas and we got married.

Q 19. I was born in Australia but went and lived in Lebanon for 6 years as a child and my grandparents came here to Australia to live with us. Therefore, you will find that my house is a mini-Lebanon in the heart of South Australia.

Q 28. Because my family and great family comes from another country, I can't just be like a shrub without any roots; my roots are not from here.

Q 33. I grew up in a family that migrated as adults to Australia. They will always believe that they are immigrants to Australia and so will their family even if they were born here.

Others stressed internal factors of personal choice, cultural activation and enjoyment.

I 4. I find it way more comfortable to speak in Arabic and most of the time it is accurate without any grammatical mistakes. And it also feels more just and will get to the point without having to explain what it is I am meaning to say.

I 14. When I think quietly it is always in Arabic, when I remember things it is in Arabic, when I pray it is also in Arabic. Even though I have lived here a long time my privacy is obviously in Arabic and my quality thought and time. But on the other hand, there are lots of the Australian traditions in me and this is how I see myself - as Arab-Australian.

Q 34. Born and grew up here, I am so glad to be an Australian citizen but I still see myself, my background, my history, my family's history as Arabs. This is enough to make me believe that I am an Arab- Australian.

Q 39. My beliefs, culture, traditions all keep me an Arab in my heart and my soul. My everyday life, new language and job make me an Aussie in reality; as a result I am a combination of the two.

A few mentioned both internal and external factors.

I 6. Well! I think that it is only fair to say that I am Arab-Australian because all my family comes from Lebanon; I speak Arabic at home most of the time. I eat Lebanese food, I listen to Arabic music with my family and also I enjoy my Australian traditions too. So I believe that I am both.

Q 24. It is not easy to pick up a new nationality and deny how you were brought up. You can't change who you are and forget all your culture and traditions. On the other hand I love being a part of this community but will always be the one with a different culture.

Q 31. It doesn't feel right to say that I feel that I am firstly Australian when my both parents were not born here nor were my grandparents. We speak the Arabic language at home and celebrate lots of traditional festivities and have the rest of my family in a different country and not here.

One described more a process of cultural adaptation leading to an Arab-Australian synthesis, which has developed over the years, as the basis of her identification.

I 7. *It can only be fair for me to say that I am Arab-Australian. I do so many things at home now for the children and their friends and they all say, 'Oh, I like this mum because it is the Arabian way'. So in some ways I am still Arabian but developed an Arabian-Australian way to justify things and make life more enjoyable and acceptable.*

Two of the Australian-born respondents elaborated further the important aspects of their home culture that underpinned the Arab side of their dual identity.

Q 33. *I don't think that my parents would have ever accepted us to not say that we are Arabs, and in some ways, I now know and understand what they meant, having my own kids. It is a way of security, a way of trying to keep connection beyond the everyday life; a connection that makes you and your kids different and special. It is a magical way that makes your relationship with your own family special and strong.*

Q 31. *I watch my parents and grandparents and love the special ties that keep their relationship strong. I panic when I see my Australian friends and how independent their little ones are. In some ways I envy their independence but also it scares me to let go of my precious connections and culture with my own family. I grew up believing that my family comes first. My family means my culture and my background so I can't let go of any of that without losing things that mean much to me.*

These two respondents made similar comments regarding the importance of culture and family as the ties that give them pleasure and a sense of security. Furthermore, such beliefs are explanations of how people develop their sense of belonging. These findings reinforce Sandel's theory (1995) that the individual does not exist alone outside of his or her society.

Table C provides a summary of the respondents' religious and ethnic cultural identification. A religious identification was given by about 15 per cent of the respondents, half of these being Australian-born Druze. Only two Australian-born respondents embraced a national Arabic identity. Over two thirds chose an ethnic cultural identification. A little more than one third chose the dual identification of Arab–Australian and were able to explain the basis for their feelings. Among the other one third, who chose Australian identification, there was evidence in their comments that they were aware of, and, in some cases committed to, other identifications alongside the Australian one.

TABLE C: Summary of respondents' religious and ethnic cultural identification

Birthplace	Ethnic Identification					Religious Identification			Total Respond.	
	Australian		Arab-Australian			Arab Culture				
	Single	Other Resid.	Other*	Extern.	Intern. Extern.	Intern.	Arab	Muslim	Druze	N=16I+24Q
Overseas –	I4		I1	I1		I4				
Born	I12		I2	I2		I7		I7		19
Interview	I15	I13	I14	I5	I6	I14	I11	I10	–	
Group	I16			I8						
Australian-Born	Q17	Q21	Q28	Q19	Q24		Q30	Q17	Q35	
Question.	Q29	Q22	Q34	Q33	Q31	–	Q32	Q34	Q38	19
only Group		Q27					Q37		Q40	
Total		8I+7Q			8I+7Q		4Q		2I+5Q	38

* Some respondents did not identify themselves using religious or ethnic cultural grounds. Others identified themselves using both ethnic and religious criteria.

Overall, therefore, it could be said that over half of the respondents thought of themselves as identifying with aspects of both the Australian and Arabian groups. The fact that comparatively few chose a single identity confirms Smolicz's idea regarding the importance of dual identification for those of minority ethnic background in Australia (Smolicz, 1979, 1999).

The other noteworthy aspect of the identification responses, highlighted in Table C, is the similar pattern of responses across the two groups of respondents. Contrary to what might have been expected, the move away from Arab identification toward a single Australian one was no more evident in the Australian-born group than it was among those born in Arab countries. Indeed, a specifically Druze identity was more evident among those born in Australia.

Conclusions

In summary, the experience of immigration has had a huge psychological impact on most individuals and their families. This was evident in their spoken words, as well as in their memoirs and journals. The stress, depression, alienation and loneliness were all signs and results of issues deriving from migration and having to fit into a new culture, speak a completely different language and adopt alien values.

Importantly, Part 1 noted that those Arab immigrants who did not have a family learned English much quicker than those who had family and community support. Language proficiency also impacted on other factors that facilitated assimilation; some of those factors included occupation, social connections, and communication with the general 'mainstream' public. Such contacts, when the circumstances were favourable, resulted in better health and greater self-esteem for the individuals concerned.

On the other hand, it was clear from the participants' responses that successful adaptation to Australia was often accomplished with the help of other people from the same culture and community who also spoke the same language, shared the same values as well as similar memories of the past. Having relatives, friends or even socialising with people from their original background made life easier on the individual and less stressful. The immigrant participants had been able to overcome the challenges, the changes and the psychological issues by recruiting these others to help with their new life and adjust to a new culture. They did not live a culturally alienated life, because of the help they received. Furthermore, most of these individuals now had their own families, and in particular children, who were born and grew up in Australia.

Internal and external factors played a big part in regard to cultural change and adaptation. These factors were most evident in the patterns of behaviour and the steps that participants took, depending on their circumstances and status. It was also shown in the differing ways that the respondents expressed their personal sense of identification. Part 2 investigates the extent to which the respondents kept their Arab cultural traditions as an integral part of adapting to life in Australia.

Part 2

Maintenance of Arab Cultural Values in Australia

Introduction

One of the key findings of Part 1 was that to adapt, many Arabic respondents maintained some aspects of their homeland's culture alongside the mainstream Australian cultural values which they acquired. Part 2 of this book investigates in greater depth the extent to which the participants retained Arab cultural values in the Australian context. In particular, the intention to ascertain which areas of Arab culture they were most attached to and why is explored. In terms of humanistic sociology outlined in the introduction (Smolicz, 1979; 1999), the investigation sought to determine which Arab cultural values in the immigrant respondents' personal cultural systems were being activated in Australia and which Arab cultural values were being transmitted to the next generation and incorporated into the personal cultural systems of the Australian-born respondents.

Humanistic sociology envisages a group's culture as made up of the cultural meanings or values which are shaped by members of a given group in various aspects of life, such as politics, economics, law, religion, linguistics, family, friendship, food, festivities and music. Smolicz (1979, 1999) argued that in each ethnic group some values emerged as vital to the group's on-going existence and to its members' sense of belonging to that group. His research indicated that for some groups, for example the Polish, Latvian and Ukrainian, their language represented such a core value. In other groups such as the Jews or the Irish, religious beliefs and practices were the core values. In contrast, Italians in Australia tended to regard collectivist and religion-based family values as the core value most important to their survival.

Other researchers have pointed to the invariable importance of language in culture. The Cartesian theory of mind suggests that culture is transformed into an element and is represented by one's self. The conduit for this representation is language, which gives meaning to the culture. Cognitive rules are then provided by culture and these enable people within a culture to understand each other. This view emphasises that the most important key variable is that of language – it conditions the world of every day practice in which action and public talk are reproduced. When culture is looked at in this way, it assumes that language is not just a means to express our thoughts, but also a tool to construct and transform all human expression (Sunil & Henderikus, 2005).

Speaking In Arabic

A series of questions in both the questionnaire and the interview sought to probe the respondents' use of Arabic and its importance to them. All of the respondents could understand and speak Arabic although there was a considerable difference in the competence of the immigrant group compared to some in the Australian-born group. Respondents were asked whether they choose to speak Arabic; how comfortable they felt when speaking, whether speaking the language was a priority for them; how much influence family and friends had on the speaking of Arabic and its relation to their identity.

Choosing to speak Arabic was very important for the majority of respondents, as revealed in their comments. There were many reasons given. The most important, if not the most basic, was that many respondents stated that they found it easy to use.

I 1. It is my first language. I feel so at ease when I speak it. No hassle and no hard work.

I 7. The Arabic language comes naturally to me. I don't need to think hard to find the words.

I 14. I suppose it is easy for me and a preference when I have the choice.

I 15. I can't say that I feel that English comes out of my mouth as simple and clear as Arabic.

Q 17. I choose to speak Arabic because it is private to us and my kids feel special knowing another language.

Others indicated that they choose to speak Arabic because it had a degree of personal identification:

Q 19. When I speak it in front of my friends who are not of Arab background it gives me a specific identification with my origin and family, which protects my privacy.

The importance of choosing to speak Arabic was also fuelled by the pleasure of one's parents and partners who were from that culture. The language reinforced their sense of identity and transmitting their culture successfully to the next generation. The parents and partners could understand a person's comments more easily.

I 3. It is easier to speak to my parents that way. They feel more special.

Q 21. My parents seem to understand it better and faster.

Q 33. My husband accepts it with more ease and pleasure when I choose to speak to him in Arabic.

When respondents were asked if they found speaking Arabic comfortable, some individuals made some remarkable statements.

I 3. The comfort comes with not feeling stupid or being made fun of when speaking.

I 8. It is the easiest to express myself with. I know every letter, every word. I can truly say how I feel without feeling that I am missing out on the meaning of my sentence. It is the most comfortable and relaxing language to speak.

Respondent I 16 explained that having to learn the English language helped him understand and appreciate the comfort of his own language.

I 16. It is amazing how much we take advantage of what we have got. Having to learn English to work on a job that I did all my life, and could do with my

eyes closed day in day out, became a huge task because of the un-comfort caused by having to learn the new language.

Whether born here or not, all the respondents showed a preference for being comfortable in speaking Arabic for a number of various reasons.

When asked about the priority given to Arabic, a number stressed its important link to religious and other Arabic cultural values. They confirmed that Arabic was a positive component of primary learning in terms of Arab culture and religion.

I 6. The language is a necessity for the understanding of our culture and to allow us to understand our religion.

I 14. It was a priority to get the kids to learn the Arabic language to keep in touch with their religion and culture.

The importance of language lies in its connection to reinforcing one's native culture and religion. Some of the Australian-born respondents indicated this by the emphasis their parents put on them learning the Arabic language.

Q 26. Reading and speaking Arabic was a big deal to my parents. I could not comprehend why. I can understand it now and I am so glad that I do read it; it helped me in so many ways.

Q 32. I was so lucky that my parents pushed me to do so. The different language gave me the knowledge and cultural connection. Most importantly, when my grandmother died a few years ago, she left me some money and a letter in Arabic to read. I would have died if I couldn't read and enjoy her very special few words to me.

Respondent Q 32 did indicate the importance of written language as a vital connection to Arab culture.

Respondents Q 35 and Q 40, when asked how important they thought it was to learn how to read and write Arabic and if they thought it was a priority, commented differently.

Q 35. Yeah! It is important but not a must. I would be happy if my children learned the Arabic language as a second language but I wouldn't be disappointed if they did another language too. Knowing the language helps them understand better their culture.

Q 40. I wouldn't push my children or partner to learn. I would be very happy if they did by choice but life is too short and there are other more important things to achieve in life.

Both respondents believed that learning the Arabic language was important and had positive benefits but did not think that it was a priority.

In Arab culture, family and friends play an important role in individuals' lives and influence strongly what paths they take. When the respondents were asked if family or friends influenced them to learn the Arabic language, the answers were as follows.

I 4. Yeah, definitely, the language gets you closer in thoughts and makes the relationship between you and your family more secure.

I 12. I think it does have a big influence; it keeps your background alive within you knowing that you and your family and friends have something special in common.

I 16. I don't speak with my family in English at home, it is always in Arabic. The children understand it very well and answer in English most times but I know that they are able to speak it if they need to.

Q 18. My parents always made me speak to them in Arabic. I had no choice. It was difficult especially when you speak English all day long.

The above answers indicated the respondents' views that being able to speak Arabic made their relation stronger with their family and friends who originated from similar backgrounds.

Most respondents found language very enjoyable especially because they used it during times of socialising and sharing traditional festivities with others from the same background. It reflected positively on the individual, even though most of the second and third generation found it a little hard to speak. Nonetheless they could understand most of what was said to them.

I 12. I love speaking it; it brings joy to my life.

I 15. The tone of the Arabic language is very soothing and the joy experienced with it is related to the fun times we seem to be having when speaking it. It is usually when we are with friends of the same or similar backgrounds, or with immediate family.

Q 24. When mum picks up the phone and speaks Arabic I know that it must be family or friends. It is associated with closeness.

Q 37. It makes me feel so proud to communicate with my grandparents and family friends in Arabic. It is an honour to hear the family saying that I speak it very well.

Q 40. I show off in front of some cousins who were born here and can't speak the language properly. I love that feeling.

As suggested earlier, language is very important and it is integral to the transmission of culture and religion. The fact that the language was also enjoyable to speak, facilitated learning and encouraged the new generation in wanting to learn. It was noticeable that school-aged children felt special and proud when they spoke it, when others of their age did not understand them.

When asked about what other benefits could result from speaking the 'homeland' language, some Australian-born respondents commented.

Q 27. It is very beneficial especially when you are amongst your peers at school and you don't want them to understand what you are saying to your sister or brother.

Q 28. My friendship with my cousin is very strong and funny enough because most times we talk in English, unless we are making promises [when] we must speak in Arabic. I don't know why but it feels more sacred and true.

Q 38. Language is your key to privacy and closeness to family and friends. I had to speak it well because of the pressure I had on me as a teenager from my peers of Arab background. So I decided to speak it more at home to improve.

In all three cases, the respondents saw many benefits of speaking Arabic and were motivated by family and friends to continue speaking it. They all referred to it as private and special.

When asked what other things influenced their language learning, respondent Q 31 had a different perspective on the reason behind the learning.

Q 31. My family says that they don't care, but I know when they are speaking with other Arabs and they say something like: 'Unfortunately, my son/daughter doesn't read or write the language'; or also 'I wish we forced them when they were young to do so'. Hearing this used to hurt me, and I was scared to lose my

family so I put a bit more effort in speaking it to impress them at home and make up for not being able to write or read.

These comments well illustrate the fear of losing the connection between the individual and the family. Q 31 put more effort into his language learning and tried to impress his family that way.

While the relationship between language and the high or literary culture was clearly strong, it was also clear that there was a strong connection between language and customs in everyday life.

I 1. Well to me, language is both customs and culture. It is our history and past as well as our tradition passed on to us by our ancestors and parents.

I 9. I suppose it is both, language is way beyond our little circle of life; it is not only a community matter but a whole society and an entire nation.

Q 17. I am not sure but I think it is both.

When asked further questions on this topic, Q 33 agreed that the three were linked but insisted that culture was more important in relation to language:

Q 33. Well, you know, language and culture are a whole society, while customs refers only to what your parents passed on to you and it covers only your surrounding and little community or town. I am sure it is important but culture and language are more connected.

Interestingly enough, not many respondents made annotations on this section, except for similar comments about customs and culture in relation to language. The fact that the connection was seen as strong but no one seemed to agree on exactly what this association between the three meant, strengthens the argument of how important language is for the Arabs. Generally, it was agreed that speaking Arabic fostered a positive open environment where all members felt comfortable in communicating within their community, family and friends.

Upholding Religious Values and Practices

This book focuses specifically on Arab respondents who were either Muslim or Druze. The question explored in this section relates to the extent to which Islamic and Druze beliefs and practices were being maintained in the context of Australian society, where the predominant religious values were either Christian or secular. As a result there could be constraints on traditional religious practices from those of either Arab faith.

Religion is important in the Arab world in that it identifies one sub-group from another. While Arabic culture is not defined in terms of one religion only because, for example, there are Arab Christians and Arab Muslims, it is nonetheless conceded that religion and culture do influence each other to a great extent (AbuKhalil, 1993). In regard to the Muslim obligation to pray five times a day, it is impossible to do so in Australia when a person is working full-time. Furthermore, Australian workplaces by and large do not have the facilities to provide for such commitment which makes it much more difficult for the individual to comply. However, despite such drawbacks, most individuals still pray and use religious terminology to get through their daily routines.

Three respondents were able to confirm their full commitment to the demand to pray five times a day. Their relationship to their religion had been long established before they migrated to Australia, and this duty was maintained.

I 11. It is something I grew up doing every day and it became a must. I feel incomplete if I didn't do it. All it takes is a few minutes.

I 14. I feel the need to do this now. I grew up and learned to follow the religion this way. I miss the sounds of a mosque.

I 15. Praying reminds me of my grandparents. I used to kneel next to grandma and pray. To me, it is security. I love it.

These three respondents were all born overseas and came to Australia. I 11 and I 14 migrated as adults while I 15 migrated as a child. In contrast there were a few Muslim respondents who found it impossible to abide by the rules of prayer, due to work commitments and other inconveniences.

I 17. Overseas in Jordan, everything stops for the prayer. It is normal and convenient to do so.

I 19. I would love to be able to pray five times a day but I can't see it happening at work, half way through the meeting having to say, 'Sorry, it is praying time'.

Q 30. I wish I could. I loved it when I lived overseas for a while but, it is all in the soul. I can pray without having to stop everything and, if not at the times set for the prayer, I will pray whenever I can.

The respondents recognised that in a generally secular country such as Australia the facilities and opportunities to commit to prayer five times a day did not exist. However, they found other ways around it, without jeopardising their work duties.

Others commented similarly on the importance of praying but took a different approach by adapting the requirements of religion to their circumstances. The Druze respondents appeared to be particularly flexible in this regard.

Q 33. We don't have to pray like Muslims five times a day. We can pray whenever it is convenient. I often pray while driving to work or back from work.

Q 37. Very important to pray, of course. I feel naked if I didn't. I thank God so often for all that he has given me, my health, my kids, my family, my happiness and all those around me. I need to pray daily, of course.

Respondents Q 33 and Q 37, both Druze, emphasised the importance of waiting and having to pray every day but did not have any problems with timing and inconveniences. Being Druze, they could pray when they liked and where they liked.

Most respondents referred to using religious terminology numerous times each day without realising it. Two respondents were positive about using religious words that helped them throughout the day. They had grown up hearing them and believing them.

I 9. I say, "Bism Allah Al Rahman Al Rahim" (meaning in the name of Allah the merciful) many, many times a day. I grew up saying it and I believe that it helps direct me to the right path and makes my days easier.

I 16. It is all a habit now. I can't stop it and I don't want to. I think it is so good to be able to mention God's name all day asking for his mercy and blessings.

Although these respondents saw the use of religious words on a daily basis as positive, others were aware that the use of religious words would influence how others viewed them.

I 7. I have to be careful now. I say, "Allah wou Akbar" (God the great) hundreds of times loud without realising; it is the word I use whenever I am

excited or something goes wrong. Someone looked at me strangely when I said it at the supermarket once and now I am more aware of how and when to use it.

Q 19. People give you that funny look, not everyone, but there are those who wouldn't have a clue.

Q 26. I repeat what my parents said time after time, it is just a blessing but I have to be more careful with using them in public.

Q 30. I look around if I mention the word "Allah" now and it is sad to feel that way. But sometimes it is best not to identify yourself aloud. Who knows who is listening?

These respondents feared personal identification as a result of uttering religious words in public places. Such people were aware that they would be noticed by others and pointed out as being different from the mainstream. The comments above reinforce the notion that religious terminology was a vital part of the personal cultural systems of many Muslim/Druze respondents and a natural part of their everyday conversations.

When asked if they went to the Mosque or the Druze hall on a regular basis, many indicated that praying in those particular places was not mandatory but depended on personal values. People could pray and demonstrate their faith anywhere. During the interviews, individuals made the following comments.

I 1. I don't need to go to the Mosque or the Druze hall to pray. My respect for Allah and prayer commitments can be done anywhere.

I 2. It is all too hard to do that. I try to go once a month to the Mosque but we go on Eid (fete) as a family all the time. Still, it doesn't mean I don't pray at home.

I 9. We [Druze] don't need to go to a Mosque or to pray. It is done in our homes any time.

I 11 I pray mostly while driving - no need for a holy place to be faithful.

The questionnaire responses indicated similar feelings.

Q 17. We go as a family to the Mosque for functions and fetes a few times a year. We pray at home.

Q 26. For us [Druze] prayer is a private and an individual thing. It is your time with Allah and you can do that anywhere. We are not like the Christians; we don't go to the church and pray as a group nor like Muslims. We do not go to pray in Mosques.

Q 29. Going to Mosque is a little complicated; I have probably been 12 times altogether, which makes it once a year only, for Ramadan.

The responses are quite straightforward in indicating that it is not easy for some people to get to the Mosque. It is not necessary for others, particularly Druze, to actually be in the Mosque or any other specific place to pray.

The respondents were asked why they attended Mosques or Halls. Their answers all reflected the theme of supporting their community and family rather than fulfilling religious requirements. Some individuals suggested that they had to go because their ancestors had always done so; others went because they met friends, spoke Arabic language, and were reassured of the existence of their community.

I 12. Catching up with the family whenever we go to the Mosque is a very nice way of socialising. I find it amusing and educational.

I 16. Going there is fantastic, I get to see everyone. It is very enjoyable.

Q 27. It is very important to see the children mix and play together with their own community and their own cousins and friends. They all try to speak the Arabic language too.

Since all respondents went to the Mosque/Hall to enjoy themselves, their choice to continue going may have been influenced by the amount of personal and social satisfaction they got out of it. It was evident that the satisfaction variable was very high and their personal freedom to go also strengthened personal identification.

Respondents were asked during the interview and questionnaire processes what was the importance of teaching their children about the Islamic/Druze religion. They emphatically endorsed the need to transmit these religious values.

I 3. Definitely important, they [the children] need to know about those things; it is their faith and culture.

I 12. I would hate to keep religion as a secret or a forbidden truth from my kids. I wasn't allowed to ask any questions as a child about the Druze but I want my children to have the knowledge and be able to discuss religion openly in any discussion with other Druze and show enough understanding of what they believe in. it clarifies the way we do things as Arab Druze and a nation.

Q 18. Knowing your religion is like knowing who you are and what you belong to. The children were taught that at a young age. My young son says really funny and cute religious words; he yells for Allah's help when he falls or he is in trouble.

Q 35. Of course our children need to be able to communicate and understand others of the same religious background. It is very educational as long as you are not radical about the use and beliefs of the religion.

Respondent Q 35 emphasised the view that teaching religion to children was done for reasons of communicating with and understanding people of a similar religion and background, not just Muslim. There was some realisation that teaching religion provided children with knowledge, clarified their ways of thinking and justified the decisions related to culture and tradition.

Fasting and food restrictions emerged as themes that were closely connected to religion. Specifically, respondents stated that obeying rules about food demonstrated their religious commitment. It was not necessarily the case, however, that all Muslims and Druze stayed committed to such restrictions. Respondent I 3 mentioned in her response that eating during the month of Ramadan made her feel different from other students at her school.

I 3. I couldn't do it all the time, I felt different. Even my physical education teacher used to get mad at me and ask me to drink water.

When asked what the solution to fasting was, she explained that the confusion between her religion and other students' religion made life complicated.

I 3. Well, they wouldn't understand that I need to do this. Unfortunately, the days are a lot longer in Australia due to daylight saving most of the time during Ramadan, and being an athlete does not help. So I couldn't fast any more because I had to make a decision according to school and either I want to play sport or comply with my religious commitments.

This symbolises the dilemmas which can arise over accepting religious commitments in the Australian context. It demonstrates the necessity of fully understanding how such rules may or may not work in a wider cultural framework, and how to cope with the pressure of other people who are non-believers.

Q 18. Even in the Quran they tell you that there are special circumstances in which people should not be allowed to fast. It is not a punishment, it is self-discipline. No need to misuse it.

A few respondents wanted information about fasting to be available and help educate children about the correct ways on how to follow fasting, without abusing the body.

Q 23. I fast when possible, it is very rewarding but if I am not well or have lots on I cannot do it. Instead I give up a few things of my daily routines such as bread, sugar, coffee, but do not stop eating all together unless my body is in full shape.

Q 34. We only fast ten days before (Adha Eid) and it is simple enough to follow. My friend is Muslim and I fast on Ramadan with her too every year when I can. Few days during the month we are not allowed to fast, especially if not well, not healthy, pregnant, breast feeding or grieving. These are a few examples on days in which you shouldn't fast. Fasting is not a game like some people think; it needs to be done carefully and properly.

The above comments are particularly useful in teaching children how to relate religious commitments to an understanding and the need to consider all options, and when to do things and when not to do them.

A few respondents admitted that they did not fully abide by their religion's commands on food restrictions.

I 7. I eat everything, ham and bacon but I don't drink alcohol, not only for religious reasons, but I was never interested in it.

I 13. I don't believe in giving up food to be a better Druze. I eat whatever and drink responsibly.

Q 18. My grandparents would die if they knew that I drink alcohol. I am not an abuser; I may have a glass or two when socialising.

It is evident that the above three respondents did eat all kinds of food, so strict religious abstinence here was missing. Respondent I 7 did not drink alcohol not because of religious reasons but personal ones, while the other two respondents actually admitted that they drank but justified it on the grounds of doing so responsibly.

Other respondents spoke positively about upholding restrictions on food and alcohol.

I 1. No way, I will never drink alcohol.

I 4. Never had pork meat and never drank alcohol. I wouldn't like it if my kids did that also.

I 16. I have seen others including family members making fool of themselves after a few drinks, what for? What satisfaction could they achieve? It is also forbidden in my religion.

Such comments indicated the strong commitment to religious practices regarding food and drink, which were still being practiced by some Arab respondents in Australia.

The Arabic language plays a major role in fostering religious values. In the Arab world the Arabic language is the key to reading, understanding and participating in the Muslim/Druze faith. To participate in Islamic religious practices, it is necessary not only to speak and understand Arabic, but also to be able to read it in order to read the Quran. For the Druze, literacy in Arabic is vital for reading the Heckme.

I 5. Years ago I used to argue about having to keep up the Arabic language, especially reading and writing with my parents. I used to say why do I need it

here in Australia. Now I know there would have been no chance for me to read or write if I did not continue on with the weekend school. There will be no way that I could keep up with the religion reading if I didn't learn.

I 14. Language is very important to us to understand and appreciate the religion. Arabic language is a very rich language and there are so many words that you can never find a resemblance or a match for in the English language.

Q 25. Apart from the importance of reading the Quran, it is very important to understand the language to appreciate and fully comprehend the culture.

Q 27. It is a struggle to get the kids motivated, but it is also a goal that we pursue to make sure that they will be able to read and write perfectly so they can pray. I am sure they will appreciate it one day.

Q 31. By losing the language you will lose the value of your religion. How can you read and understand. It is not the same if someone needs to read to you all the time and even worse, if you couldn't speak the language too.

Religion, culture and language jointly form the basis of the Economic Co-operation Organization, which unites many Muslim countries that are non-Arab, for example, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Turkey (Huntington, 1993). This union of countries is based on religious and cultural foundations and the shared language, Arabic, which permits them all to read the Quran. Specifically, while each Muslim country may have their own national language they all read and write in the Arabic language in order to pray.

When asked whether religion was an everyday custom or high culture, most respondents did not have an answer. Three people saw religion as a fusion of the two, that is, inseparable.

I 9. To me, custom is in part derived from cultural backgrounds so the two are similar if not the same. Therefore, I think that religion is a mixture of both.

I 12. Aren't they equally related to religion? I believe that religion is both items together.

Two other respondents felt that religion was distinct from culture and custom.

I 3. Religion is a different thing all together. You don't need your cultural background and customs to follow up your religion.

I 19. Religion is a branch of its own tree; it functions on a separate level from the other two.

Respondent I 5 described culture and custom as forming distinct social elements.

I 5. Culture is very different from religion. Religion is a belief, while custom is a tradition passed on to us by our parents and ancestors.

A few respondents believed that a connection existed between custom and religion.

I 10. Religion is passed on to us through custom. You know your community, society, family and friends have great influence on your thinking.

Q 27. We are who we are through our customs, which are passed on to us from one generation to another. We inherit our religion and cannot change that. If you are born Druze you will die Druze. Druze is my religion while Lebanese is my culture.

Maintaining Family Values

The Arab community stresses the importance of family and friends. Being close to one's family and friends highlights a sense of security, belongingness and familiarity.

As discussed earlier, a large number of immigrants faced psychological challenges as a result of losing their connection with their family and friends. In this section, I look at issues concerning family cultural and traditional habits, integration and acceptance of a new culture.

Respondents were asked about the future of their parents, when they reached a certain age. Would they consider it acceptable to send them to a nursing home and have someone look after them?

I 3. I will never send my parents to a nursing home, in my country this is only for people who haven't got any family. This is disrespectful.

I 5. There will be no way on earth that I can send my parents to the old people's home. They have looked after me all my life and it is the least I can do for them.

I 8. My parents are my responsibility when they grow older. They looked after me and it will be my duty to look after them.

I 16. I hope that my wife will understand that this is against my culture and that we can both maintain a close family circle and have everyone well looked after.

Q 17. Of course, I will support my family, there will be no questions about it.

Q 24. I wish that my kids will do for me what I am doing with my own parents now. Most people in my culture expect financial support and respect when old.

Q 38. You mean take them out of our lives and dump them somewhere because they are hard work? No way!

Seven respondents commented positively that they have certain obligations and responsibilities and duties to uphold when their parents become old. They had been brought up to believe that their relationship with their parents would not end at a certain age. It was simply out of the question to take their parents out of their lives and leave them in a nursing home, as was usually practiced in Western countries.

While the above respondents seemed keen to keep the family together, those who were slightly older and sceptical of their future, worried about what tomorrow would bring and the harsh realities of looking after aged relatives.

I 2. I can't predict the future but who knows. Even though my children don't think they will ever leave us, they may marry someone who does not have the same values, then what?

I 11. I will ask them to send me back home if that was ever to happen. There will be enough family to look after me.

Q 19. Seen it happen to others. The kids say they had no choice because the poor man lost his memory.

Q 28. Some take advantage of the easy options and they get convinced that it is for their parents' best.

Respondent I 2 seemed sure about her children but her statement indicated that she had fears about her children's partners who could have completely different values and expectations. Respondents I 4, Q 19 and Q 28 also had some suspicions and recognised that the decisions their children would make in regard to arrangements for older family relatives could be decided for them by circumstances.

Respondents were then asked during the interview how important it was to them to have family and friends in the new country of migration. A few responses are as follows.

I 6. You can never feel at home anywhere unless you have family and friends. There will always be this strange feeling of emptiness that could only be filled with family and friends.

I 8. Your family and friends are your personal identification. You will feel more comfortable with them around you. You will have support and can speak your language; you can celebrate your fetes and do things the traditional way. It keeps the soul alive.

I 12. Having family and friends keeps alive your language, religion and tradition.

The questionnaire responses from the Australian-born respondents were similarly positive to Arab family traditions.

Q 17. I am so grateful for having a family around and lots of friends. What meaning would life have if you had to live alone?

Q 21. Sitting with family and friends and talking about our past and the stories our families told are irreplaceable. It adds meaning to my life.

Q 29. It is true what they say you can't choose your family but you can choose your friends. I love my family and my friends. We don't have a big family here and most of my friends don't have a similar background to mine. But, we have built a strong relationship and they love me for who I am and trust me like I trust them. So what I am saying is you can make your own friends anywhere and start a life that you can enjoy. I wouldn't wish for better friends.

In light of these and comments made by others, it is evident that family and friends are vital in giving meaning and satisfaction to life. Respondent Q 29 did not have the opportunity to have a big family in Australia but had built a strong relationship with other groups and nationalities and made friends that way. According to respondent Q 29 one could fulfill one's needs through friends anywhere. It was as satisfactory as having a relationship with people from one's own culture. Furthermore, Q 32 saw no problem in mixing family and friends.

Q 32. I have lots of family and heaps of friends. Most of my friends are Aussie. I still do traditional things with my family and do Aussie things with my friends. It is normal to me and I don't think anything of it.

This statement could explain the reason behind the new generation accepting the change and living an Arab-Australian way of life, based on both Arab family values and close friendships with mainstream Australians.

Value of Traditional Meals

Arab families place a huge emphasis on their food and the way their meals are presented and served. It is part of the tradition to keep up cooking and serving a nutritious meal once or twice a day. It is also of great importance for the whole family to sit down at the dinner table every night and have their meal together. The time spent together at the dinner table is to share their day's adventure and work (schooling, working, visiting people, etc.). It was clear that the traditional values of family meals were being maintained.

I 1. I love cooking and I make lots of different dishes. My children use to complain when they were little about having to eat always Lebanese food and why can't they have what their friends from school are having. I use to allow that occasionally while now they ask me for traditional meals all the time. They say they miss that.

I 13. "Can I have McDonalds tonight?" I use to get asked every night the same questions. But now the kids invite their friends' home for some traditional healthy food. That is what they say.

Q 33. Even though I was born here and grew up here eating and enjoying most traditional Syrian food was so special and meant lots to me.

Q 35. How can you replace the taste of spices and herbs used in our meals with anything else? Impossible! Our taste buds are so used to certain foods.

Respondents I 1 and I 3 insisted on giving their children traditional food when they asked for other things until they were old enough and understood what was best for them. Now they have learned to appreciate and understand the importance of traditional meals and the values instilled in home cooking. Respondents Q 33 and Q 35 recalled growing up in Australia and reflected on how traditional meals differed from others in having better tastes and spices.

Having family and friends over for dinner emerged as a theme closely connected with traditional meals.

I 16. Socialising and hospitality are two important aspects for us. Having people over our place is fun.

Q 23. I am proud of our cuisine and being a good cook. I show off our traditional meals to friends and colleagues.

Q 25. My friends say: Wow, you are so lucky you get to eat all the good stuff while we have to go and buy all the time.

Q 27. I use to get embarrassed if a friend from school came over and mum made some traditional food for dinner. Funny enough, my friends used to like it and ask me if they can come again.

Q 31. Hospitality is a tradition by itself to us. Inviting people for a meal to our house is a way of honoring our family and friends. It is a necessity especially during Eid and holidays.

The connection between traditional meals and hospitality in the home is at odds with the modern Australian and generally Western habit of going to restaurants and take-away places. Eating habits and nutrition in households of non-migrant origin are in decline, but the continuity of eating habits for most individuals in this book illustrates the ongoing importance of Arab traditions of cooking and shared meals.

Importance of Ramadan and Adha

Ramadan and Adha are the two most important days in the life of a Muslim or a Druze. The Druze do not celebrate Ramadan, unlike the Muslims, who celebrate both days. The literature review made clear the origins of these two days and explained why they are important celebrations, and in the Arabian countries, public holidays. Respondents were asked whether they thought Eid had the same display of affection and meaning here in Australia as back home and whether they felt deprived of the celebration.

I 5. I have to admit that Eid does not feel the same here for us. We try to enjoy it as much as possible and catch up with all family members and friends. But as you can imagine, times like these are the times that you feel you are robbed of people you love and can't be with. We make do, the best we can for us and our children.

I 15. Lucky that our parents give us a few days off school for Ramadan. It isn't fair that we don't feel it much here in Australia. In Iraq, even though it was

an Islamic country they used to allow a few days off for Christmas. Ramadan is Christmas for us.

Q 23. Can't do much apart from fasting and dinner for Eid because of work commitments and the difference in culture and the common celebrations makes it tiring more than enjoyable.

Q 23. The work and effort put towards Eid is amazing. It is like Christmas to us. The women cook and prepare days in advance, the kids have new clothes. We give and receive presents and flowers. I was blessed to experience the true Eid overseas with my family a few years ago. Wow, what can I say? It was the best time ever.

Despite the difficulties of celebrating these religious festivals, as minority groups in a predominantly Christian Australian context, nearly all respondents indicated that they continued to celebrate these Arabian festivals.

Marriage Values

In some parts of the Arab world, arranged marriages are considered normal. The interview respondents were asked if they still expected to choose their child's future partner.

I 1. Of course I want my son and daughter to be happy, but they have to do the right thing; they must choose the right person that fits with our standards and values.

I 4. Keeping the family together is very important, and that can only happen if everyone is living in harmony with both sides of the family (husband and wife).

I 11. We will choose for them but we will surely ask their opinion.

I 12. Young people are prone to mistakes; we want to see them happy with someone from a good family, same religion and respect our values and traditions.

I 15. Of course we want the child to be happy and have a successful marriage, but we also want him/her to consult us, there are conditions and rules in life, not just love and marriage.

These few responses from people who migrated to Australia indicated that despite living in a new culture, where marriage was the decision of those to be wed, marriage was still regarded as very much a 'collective' act - of perpetuating the family, culture and religion. Marrying a person from a different culture, religion or background was a major issue for a few respondents.

I 14. All my cousins got married this way and they seem happy but I don't know if I can. I want someone that I fall in love with and I choose, not a gift or a favour.

Respondent I 14 did not approve of having to accept a bride who had been suggested to him by family or family friends. He would like to make the choice of his future partner and not have it imposed on him.

Q 22. I find it stupid and humiliating when I discover that some people are still getting married that way. What century do they live in?

Q 35. It is not right to marry someone without falling in love or knowing that person very well. It will not work. The only reason it used to work is everyone did it and no one knew any different but that does not justify having to live a miserable life to please your parents or grandparents.

Most male respondents born in Australia did not agree with the suggestion that they must accept a bride, as they all thought this was a personal matter. To live with someone for life was their responsibility and did not require pressure from one's family.

Additionally, younger parents from an Arab background tended to be less conservative in their outlook. They thought that their children should have the right to choose whom they wanted to live with. It was not the parents who were going to put up with someone every day of their life.

I 2. How could you pick a bride for your kids. Who is getting married, you or them?

I 8. No one has the right to choose for anybody their lifetime partner. This is not acceptable.

I 10. There is no way I will interfere in my son's/ daughter's marriage. It is 100 per cent their choice and I wish them all the best of luck. My only concern would be that I hope that whoever they choose will accept our tradition and love us for who we are.

Q 40. Children need to choose; it is their life not ours.

While not wanting to interfere in their children's decisions regarding marriage, a number of parents were concerned that cultural differences were respected and accepted.

19. Concerned about their happiness in the future if they don't make the right decision. Imagine my son gets married to someone who would soon like to take the children to church. How can you explain to her that we don't go to church and our religion is different?

Q 23. Very important to be from the same culture at least, so they can always relate and communicate and it is easier to understand terminology for decisions that they make in life especially when they start their own family. Cultural difference can become a problem; it can tear families apart.

Cultural differences were seen to be the cause of marital problems, especially when couples started their own families. Some respondents showed concerns about what religion the children would have to follow and how this would affect the parents' relationship with their own families too. Other respondents viewed the whole matter as the result of lack of education.

I 2. We live in 2002; these things are ancient. It shouldn't be allowed, people need to stand up for themselves and speak their minds and have the right to choose at least their lifetime partner without interference.

I 3. I still hear of this a lot and it is a little disappointing. It is different if people are introducing individuals to each others to get to know one another and maybe get along, but not organise your entire life for you. This is sick.

I 16. I hear of all that still happening but not in our culture or family. There should be compulsory education to stop people from having to do that.

Many respondents articulated the view that they did not care too much about their children's religious or cultural backgrounds. What was most important was that they respected each other and their families, and from this could live happy and faithful lives together.

Identification and Arab Core Values

In the discussion that follows the respondents choice of identification (discussed in Part 1) is linked to their comments about the particular Arab cultural values they activated. This provided evidence of which Arab cultural values were regarded by the respondents as central or core to their sense of identity.

Arab Identity

Among the respondents who identified themselves as Arabs, language and religion were most frequently mentioned.

I 11. When I speak the Arabic language and say my prayers this simply identifies me and makes me the person I am. I don't need to expand on that point.

I 4. The connection between culture, language and religion is vital. If you can't read and speak the Arabic language, you can't obtain knowledge about your religion. Our culture is our history in which religion is included. I will have to say the three are very important.

I 15. No matter how much I change and how long I live away from my country, some things will never change. My language is very hard to forget and as a matter of fact I still struggle to speak proper English. But the connection between my culture and my religion is very big and know that they go alongside one another.

I 6. The language, the religion, the food and the culture all take part in forming the individual I am, as well as the members of my family and associates in the Arab community.

Q 19. The values of culture and language means a lot to me and I find them very much attached while, on the other hand, I don't know much about the religion in depth, but I pray and try to do the right things.

Q 25. The rich language, culture and religion identify us. The 3 are connected together definitely and they go thousands of years back.

Q 26. My personal view of myself is my language, culture and religion. They tend to easily identify me, especially my strong accent.

Q 35. Our history makes us what we are. Our language, our religion and our culture; all these are very important values and mores and they are the mould of each one of us.

Druze Identity

The comments of those who claimed Druze identity were similar, and perhaps even stronger.

Q 30. My religion does not allow me to marry an outsider or I will lose my "Druzness", especially if you are a female, your children will never be Druze. The religion, culture and language are all connected and make me the individual I am.

Q 31. Culture, language and religion identify each country. They are the foundation of each nationality. They are for sure connected together in most societies. Religion is not important everywhere depending on the place itself.

Q 32. My nationality, religion and Arab culture are a definition for the person I am.

Q 28. The Arabs' history covers all that is to know behind the language, culture and religion for both Muslim and Druze. It is all connected together and it forms the nation of the Arabs.

Q 35. The Druze religion itself is a whole culture and the history behind it shows the importance of the traditional ways. By identifying myself as a Druze it makes me proud because we are very few and very private.

Q 37. My family's religion and culture placed a big influence on me. I do lots of things the same way they do without ever realising it. I think that culture, language, and religion go hand-in-hand because to me they are connected. They seem to complete one another.

Q 38. My religion plays definitely a big part in my culture and beliefs.

These responses often equated Druze religious practices with cultural beliefs and the strong relationship between them was seen as self-evident. A few distinguished between their on-going religious identity and culture which could be changed.

I 12. Culture, language and religion are three important things to me. Still, I don't think that you need to have one to have the other. I can still pray my prayers in English and my culture has been altered to fit the society I live in. So, anything can be adjustable to suit your lifestyle and needs in life.

Q 40. Druze is my religion, so I identify myself by it. But I don't think that culture is my identity, it is attached to my religion. Living here in Australia gave me a new culture; this change will not affect my religion.

Islamic Identity

Some respondents whose primary identification was with Islamic religion, gave the following explanations.

I.7 "Muslima" was always repeated in my family to me and that word did not only cover my religion but also my culture, tradition, language, belief and identity.

Q 21. Identity is not only your nationality it is your culture and religion. These two are very powerful but they can also be adjustable to suit your life changes

Q 23. I still believe that religion and culture have lots to do with one another but they are two different things.

I 10 The love and protection I was given as a child and as an adult did not only secure my personality but secured my culture, religion and language in me. My security comes through them.

Australian Identity

The few respondents who identified themselves as being Australian only emphasised in their replies to the questionnaires and during the interviews the connection between culture and religion. They highlighted the importance of having these three elements to retain meaning in life, but made a clear distinction between these aspects of life and their identity as Australian, and in one case, their use of the English language.

I 13. I identify myself as an Australian who has mixed culture and different religion. Also, my English accent speaks for itself. The culture and religion are inseparable.

Q 34. The religious beliefs and cultural facts and values that we have don't affect my life style as an Australian.

Arab-Australian Identity

As indicated in Part 1, there were quite a number of respondents who referred to themselves as Arab-Australian. Although they valued their parents' origin of birth and their culture, language and religion, they felt that adaptation in the new country required a few adjustments to be made.

I 1. The culture that I have now is a combination of Lebanese and Australian. In Lebanon, whenever I visit people they say that I have changed and my Australian friends also keep saying to me that they like my Lebanese culture. So I feel that I have the two combined and I know that this is the only way to be able to survive in a strange culture and not lose your own. Therefore, most Lebanese and others have altered so many things and created new ways of life. My religion is very strong and I don't pray as often as I should but my faith is never any less or any different. I don't speak Arabic as much with my children now, and even if I did they reply back in English. I speak Anglo-Arab; that is what I say to my family, one word of Arabic and two in English and the other way around. I know that my religion, my language and my culture are very important to me.

I 2. All the adjustments made to my lifestyle to fit between Australia and my own traditions and beliefs seem tremendous, but I don't feel the difference any more. The connection between my religion and my culture is very big and the three together make me and my family who we are.

I 16. Personally, when I identify myself as an Aussie, I say that I have an Aussie-Leb culture. It is funny.

Q 17. Being an Australian, but having parents from Arab background, I seem to have my parents' culture and can understand well everything they say to me in Arabic. Still, I always answer back speaking to them in Arabic. Unfortunately, my kids can only answer in English but they understand Arabic well. Religion is a part of our culture, I believe..

Q 22. Having the three elements together - language, culture and religion - creates a specific identity. Even though I was born in Australia and call myself Aussie, things I share at home, thoughts, prayers or food are a little different to the Australian who comes from an Australian background.

Q 27. The Iranian background that I have left traces in me. Apart from physical looks, the way I am with my family, my children and the traditions and core values mean a lot to me.

Q 29. My Australian nationality and Anglo-Leb culture suits me fine.

Q 35. I tell my family that by living an honest life and doing the right things no matter what culture or nationality you have must be the right choice. The culture I knew through my family is a 'combo' of their home culture and the culture of Australia to where they have migrated years ago.

Q 37. When you have certain beliefs and religion these two determine the choices and options that you have in life.

I 14. It is impossible to forget your origin or your past. I identify myself as Arab-Australian always. I have the two cultures in me; they are both equally powerful. However, my Arabic language seems to have the silent and private part of me, while the English is my everyday language. The Arab culture is beautiful and has so much history and tradition attached to it. I think it is a little difficult to separate culture from religion and language.

Q 24. Belonging to the Australian community as well as the Lebanese community makes you realise and appreciate the rich culture that you can make

out of the two. However, religion is another issue all together that you can't mix with other things.

17. Our lifestyle has a specific way. We have our celebrations and traditions. We have certain dishes for certain fetes and occasions. It all means so much and connects us to a culture beyond what we have now. We must keep both cultures for us to stay who we are.

These comments reveal that people who migrated to Australia, as well as those who were born here to families of Arab background, perceived their parents' culture, religion and language as very valuable and very important in the way they lived their lives. They were also of the same opinion that the three constituents (language, religion and culture) worked strongly together and were connected in more ways than one. Only a few respondents did not believe that there was any connection between language, religion and culture. The respondents also made it obvious that in order to live happily in Australia after migration, they needed to adjust by integrating the new culture with the old one.

Conclusions

The evidence from earlier research (Smolicz, 1999) points to the fact that most individuals from minority groups in Australia are likely to adapt to the new culture and the language of the majority. Although their Arab culture and religious practices were very distinct, the group of participants in the study were not homogenous. It was clear that most had achieved a slow and balanced form of adaptation to Australia through developing their own personal combination of the two cultures. The greatest difficulty had been experienced by the first generation - those people who migrated to Australia and had to endure a long slow painful process of change in forming their own family networks. For those respondents born in Australia, the greater challenge was to maintain the Arab cultural values of their home, in the face of the mainstream Anglo-Australian cultural values which they invariably learned through constant exposure in Australian schools and in the wider society.

The data indicated that most Arab participants retained their traditions and culture, the latter being articulated principally in terms of language and religion, as well as family life. In some instances, these cultural values were activated on few, if any occasions. Nonetheless, none had become Christian and all used Arabic, to some extent, on occasions where this was required or appropriate. Every respondent in the study recognised a connection between cultural and religious values; indeed they were perceived as being the same. The participants expressed the view that the Arab community valued their language as a tool for people to communicate with and to identify and share with each other on a personal level. This connection explains why most individuals referred to culture, language and religion as virtually interchangeable, vital and important.

These Arab families in Australia still placed great importance on these traditional cultural values, because they recognised that such values perpetuated the community's identity. Because of the greater assimilation to mainstream cultural values that tended to occur with the second and third generation of migrants, families feared losing their children to Australian culture. That is why the older generation emphasised so much the importance of retaining the 'original' Arab language, religion, social connections and family traditions very strongly.

The result was that all the participants in this book revealed a duality in their personal cultural systems, in that they included both Arab and mainstream Anglo-Australian values, combined in a variety of ways. For some Arab cultural values predominated;

for others, particularly those born in Australia and married to non-Arab-Australians, Anglo-Australian values appeared to be more commonly activated. In the case of the majority, however, there was evidence of some degree of balance with their personal cultural systems of Arab and Anglo-Australian values. Most often this was in the form of specifically Arab religious, linguistic and family values, in the more private domains of living and Anglo-Australian values in the public domain of the English language and political, economic and legal spheres of life.

Part 3

Responses of the Australian Host Society and Educational Values: The Respondents' Experiences

Introduction

The third part of this book focuses more on mainstream Anglo-Australian society and the way it had responded to the presence of Arab peoples in the Australian community over the years. The extent to which immigrants and their families adjust successfully and adapt their cultural values to life in the new country depends a great deal on the attitudes of welcome and acceptance, or suspicion and rejection which they encounter in the host society (Smolicz, 1979). It should be noted, however, that the investigation of the responses of mainstream Australian society in this section was done through the eyes of the 40 respondents who participated in the study – 16 immigrants from a number of Arab countries who were interviewed about their experiences and 24 young people, born in Australia to parents who had migrated from Arab countries, who completed a questionnaire survey. The Concrete Fact Profile of these respondents, given in Table B (see p.19) reveals that they were linked in their origins to six different Arab countries and that they were split equally on gender.

The aim of this part is threefold:

- to ascertain the extent to which Anglo-Australian responses to Arab immigrants and their Australian-born children had changed since the advent of terrorist attacks, beginning with September 11, 2001;
- to understand the nature of any negative experiences they reported in interactions with other Australians;
- to ascertain their views on education, in relation to their experience of schools and the education system in Australia; especially in regard to the education of women, and its relevance for enhancing other Australians' understanding of Arab peoples and their cultures.

As the discussion of Arab education in the introduction indicated, there has been much misunderstanding of Arab educational values. It was considered important to understand what the respondents' views were on these educational issues, as they related to the experiences they had encountered in Australia.

In order to provide a basis for communication and living together in a multicultural society, Secombe (1999) has referred to Kloskowska's concept of cultural valency. This involved not just knowledge of a language and culture, but positive attitude or intimate feelings of shared connections that individuals could develop to their own and any other culture they encountered in the course of their lives. Such a concept could be useful in developing mainstream education so that people brought up in the majority cultural system could be educated about the different cultures that they would almost inevitably interact with in the course of their lives.

In recording the opinions of all participants about educational values, an inevitable comparison was made between Arab educational values and the taken for granted meanings and practices associated with education among the mainstream Anglo-Celtic majority in Australia. The respondents' comments on educational values were much influenced by the public reaction to the event of 11 September, 2001. They incorporated comments on the beliefs, stereotypes, and conflicts represented in the media. The wide range of educational issues explored by this group reflected the contemporary situation of Arab families living in South Australia. Their assessment of the importance of education revealed the genuine and strong feelings that have surfaced among Arab-Australians concerning the perceived damage done to Islamic and Arab peoples because of their beliefs.

Responses to the Arrival of Arab Immigrants

When the immigrant respondents were asked how they were received by the host society when they arrived, there was a clear difference between those who had arrived after the 9/11 terrorist raids and those who had come earlier. A number of those who came in the early period spoke of the level of acceptance and support they found in the general community.

I 1. Well, when I first came here 21 years ago I was amazed with the kindness of people to me and the support I have received from the English teachers. It was hard but not impossible to adjust.

I 3. I didn't know anyone here except for my husband and kids. It was very tough especially when it comes to the children's safety and medical health, I used to get so frustrated with the language but have been offered so much help and support.

I 5. Running away from the war was a great relief. I met with other family members which makes my life so easy. The amount of sympathy and concern I have also received from the Australian people that I have met throughout my English classes and then work was great.

I 15. I came here as a bride, my husband had a big family so I didn't feel very isolated. English classes were fun and many other immigrants from different backgrounds to mine were involved. I had fun and I was treated very well.

A number expressed their gratitude for the support they had received from family and friends.

I 13. Having family and friends made me feel at home when I first arrived. Of course, by having contacts and people from your community to surround you with their support seemed to make life more bearable.

I 2. I thought that I was well prepared emotionally for this big move, still I found it extremely hard to adjust. Then, I have realised by meeting others from different cultures as well as similar cultures to mine how much people struggle and suffer before they reach the settling state. I was blessed to have some loved ones here around me who prepared me for this journey.

Others had been surprised and delighted to receive help from members of the Australian community, especially those who had themselves been immigrants.

I 4. My neighbours were so helpful. The husband said, "He migrated before me and he knows what it is like". The whole family sort of adopted our family and it helped us a lot. We felt loved and we felt some sort of social commitment that made us belong to something.

I 7. I met Helena while learning English, we used to talk and cry together. She knew everything about my family and I knew everything about hers. When my sister came to visit few years later with her husband, Helena was so happy - it was like her own sister came.

I 11. Having others around you who went through the same thing eases your pain. You know for real that they sympathise with you. I feel better when I talk to them and I know that they understand.

I 15. I find that I depend on my friends a lot and the rest of the people from my own community. Immigrants of all backgrounds cling together for support; it is not that we have similar culture or spoke similar language, not at all. It is that we share the same losses and emptiness.

Q 23. Only people of other nationalities who also have family that experienced migration can understand the difficulties that people tend to go through. My German friend tells me how badly his parents were treated in some suburbs in South Australia during the war.

The desolation of those who had had no one to turn to is expressed by one person.

I 14. If only I knew someone when I came here. The difference that would have made to my life would be enormous.

The above generally positive comments were in sharp contrast to the experiences of those who came just before or after 9/11.

I 10. I don't think it was a good year for any Arab to migrate to the Western world after September 11th and the hatred spread around. It wasn't very pleasant. I wanted to quickly get rid of my accent so I don't get called names and get blamed for what happened.

I 11. Wearing the veil was scary. I couldn't take it off now after all those years, but I had to, especially after the little incident on the bus when this young man accused me of being a terrorist and started looking through my shopping bags and told me that all of us Muslims should be shot.

I 13. In some ways I wish that I had arrived here under different circumstances. I was a bit disappointed with the assumptions that people made about me, just because of my name and religion. As I said I was disappointed but I did not blame them, because this is all they know and all they were fed by the media.

One respondent commented on the differences in treatment she noticed after terrorism had become a community concern.

I 16. The idea [of Australia] I had was pretty similar to the one I have seen. I was struggling a little because of what I left behind me from family to friends to home but I was made feel welcome here. The only time problems started

occurring was after the terrorism and the effect of the media on most of the community.

The Experience of Ignorance in Australian Society

The ignorance of so many people in Australian society concerning Arabic peoples and cultures, particularly of their religious beliefs and practices, was often mentioned throughout the interviews and in the questionnaire comments. In some cases it was expressed as surprise at how little people in the community generally understood anything about Arab cultures.

I 3. My friends don't even know who the Druze are. Any time I say that I am Druze they think that I am saying Jews. Then I explain that it is not the same and they look concerned because I say that it is a stream of Islam.

I 13. When I first told people at work, after 6 years of being there, that I was Muslim, they were so surprised and made comments such as "You don't look like them". Well, I didn't know that I had to have a certain look about me.

I 4. Not knowing much about us and our culture must make it impossible to understand why we do things the way we do. Why do we pray, cover our hair, not drink alcohol. All these things can be related to the difference in culture.

I 2. You sort of feel choked to find out that most people you work with don't have a clue about you or your background. I know that our religion is secretive but at least people should know that it exists.

Those respondents born in Australia made similar remarks.

Q 35. At a party with friends someone said to me: "You can't be an Arab, you are Lebanese". I don't know what that means.

I 16. They don't know anything about us, this does not help in creating harmonious assimilation.

Q 26. It is disturbing to see how little people know about us, the true us, and not what we are made to be.

Other comments made clear that the lack of knowledge of Arab people was accompanied with negative stereotyping.

I 9. It is sad to see how people look at you the minute you say that you are Muslim. You know, it is like you poured cold water on them.

Some Australian-born respondents reported the same negative experience, particularly in relation to job opportunities.

Q 28. It is scary to have to tell people that you meet for the first time that you are an Arab, especially if you are applying for work. It took me a while to get a job and it was because of my background. I was told on several occasions from my friends while joking that someone with my qualifications would do a lot better if he wasn't Muslim.

Q 34. My second name is Mohamed, and when people read that they form an opinion immediately. I can see it in their looks.

In a number of instances, however, the respondents indicated that they knew Australians who lacked any proper understanding of Arabic cultures, but, instead of indulging in negative stereotyping, were interested to learn more. Most often these were people, such as work colleagues or neighbours, with whom the respondents had on-going contact.

I 16. None of my friends knew anything about Muslims until recently in the last few years; they became interested.

I 6. All that my friends know is that we cover our heads and we are strict. Some said they like our cuisine.

Those born here appeared to find it easier to share their Arabic cultural traditions with others.

Q 31. Some people crave to know more about our traditions and culture and I am so sure that they will love it, the same way they love our food. I talk to a lot of people and I can see the mentality of some; they want to learn and know more of the true us.

Q 18. I talked about Ramadan and the reasons behind it at work and the reaction to fasting was amazing. There are 3 of my colleagues who tried fasting with me but could not do the whole thing; they had to include water in their daily intake.

Changed Responses after 9/11

Almost all the respondents considered that the events of September 11, 2001 and the subsequent Bali bombings had changed the way they, as Arabs, were perceived and treated in the Australian community. Perceptions were especially negative in relation to visual markers, such as Muslim women or girls wearing scarves, or men with beards.

I 6. Sometimes because we have got the scarf on, it directs [attention] straight to us, as if we were behind the terrible thing that happened.

I 12. I couldn't believe it, but my own neighbours of 9 years stopped talking to me. It is like I was there organising whatever happened. This is so sad. I wanted to shake him and say, "I haven't changed, it is only me". I was really hurt and told my wife that we need to see about moving and we did.

I 15. I get asked all sorts of things about terrorists, and sometimes people would say, "Well, we can't understand their actions so maybe you can explain that to us". How should I know? It is like saying I am one of them.

I 4. How could I be a threat to them when I am scared of going outside my home or saying my full name?

I 16. The silly things that get mentioned sometimes and the fear that people did go through as a result of what happened could never be forgiven but maybe we should stop drilling the same story and get on with our lives. Maybe educating people about Arabs and Islam instead of hyping them up with false accusations and generalisations all the time might make it easier to understand. Not all Arabs are terrorists and it isn't fair on them to be labelled that way.

I 12. I wish I could make them believe that we were hurt and disappointed, too, with the criminal act that happened. It does not give anyone the right to judge on innocent people and blame them for things they haven't done. This makes the community exactly the same as those who killed thousands of people in the towers in the States.

It is noteworthy that the respondents who were born in Australia were also most forthcoming in discussing the changed way they had been treated since the terrorist attacks.

Q 24. It is hard to get a job these days because of my background. I know someone who had to change his name to be able to relax and not worry all the time.

Q 26. I got teased at work and jokingly people use to say check her bag when I get to work in the morning. I don't find this funny. It is humiliating.

Q 31. Looking at my passport overseas, I had to be in line for a long period and got checked thoroughly as if I was a criminal. I can understand that people need to be cautious but you don't need to be cruel and humiliate others in the process of searching or checking, just because of their background or religion.

Q 23. Since that horrible day we can't enjoy a normal life. I can't blame the people here. They don't know any better, they live in a closed world and hear whatever is fed to them through the media.

Q 40. One day my daughter came home upset and in tears from school because her best friend told her that she can't talk to her anymore because her parents told her that all Muslims are bad and maybe she should make new friends. This is a sick world we are facing.

Q 34. It was shocking during Ramadan. We had to get up in the early hours of the morning and prepare our breakfast before the sun rise and so many mornings you can see heads over the fence looking in case we are up to no good. This was very obvious and at the end we had to tell our neighbours how it works for us during the fasting season. They were fine with that and had a laugh.

What is distinctive about this last statement is the reported resolution to the stand-off with Australian neighbours. This Australian-born respondent's family had the confidence to raise the matter directly with their neighbours and were met with appreciation, increased understanding and humour. In the end, all were able to enjoy a laugh at the incongruity of the misunderstanding. This is a pattern of informal education that is worth noting.

The Role of the Media

The majority of the participants blamed the media for inciting fear and suspicion, by creating and reinforcing negative stereotypes of Arab and Muslim peoples. They reported instances of deliberate excision and discriminatory reporting, based on stereotypes of Arabs.

I 6. The media is the problem. They make us the bad people on the news all the time.

I 11. It is terrible how they build on things that they want the community to always remember and take in consideration so they hyped them up quietly against the Muslims. Remember that incident with the rape and the Muslim group of boys who were involved. That was a big thing about the way Muslims think of Australian girls and the big lies that came out of this case was so obvious. You get at least once a week a priest or religious person from schools here in Australia that rape kids or take indecent actions with school girls. They don't go on reporting how the Christian community needs to be educated and they don't go on about the subject for weeks.

I 8. When the Twin Towers were bombed and we had nothing else on television for days and maybe weeks but the same scene of the towers replayed over and over again and then a few months later all the killing that America did in Iraq and all the kids and women that were slaughtered as a result of what is done in the name of peace was never reported or even discussed once. This was not the first time and it won't be the last. Look what is happening recently in Lebanon with Israel. Let's not go there this hurts a lot, but how do you expect the people here to know and understand what is happening, when all they are getting is false accusation and one side of the story.

The disappointment evident in the above comments refers to the way that the media was seen to be "brainwashing" society through the news, current affairs shows and

documentaries. Australian society was showing signs of being passive and not questioning what it was fed through the mainstream media channels. For example, respondent I 8 was concerned about how Americanised the Australian media had become. The emphasis was on marketing in certain ways what people were allowed to see and understand. The world was being understood only through the filter of Western values and assumptions.

The statements made in the interviews and the questionnaires responses revealed how deeply the local Muslim and Druze communities distrusted the Australian media and were frustrated by how little Australian society knew about other cultures or what really went on in the wider world around them.

Once again, the respondents born in Australia expressed their views very strongly.

Q 24. Maybe the media should concentrate a little more on the good things instead of negative and Americanised broadcasting to the world. People can only know what they see and have been taught. This is unfortunate.

Q 39. You know the media, every time someone does something if he or she are Muslim they say and a Muslim did this or an Arab did this, while at any other time they don't say a Christian did this or a Buddhist did this, but a man did such and such. Why should we accept this and be the ones that pay for the crimes of others.

Q 26. They say Australia is not a racist country but they keep reinforcing the image of how bad the Arabs are and people are changing. You can see it, they have no choice but to take sides and become racist.

Q 34. If the media stops criticising and blaming the Arabs as a nation for every incident that takes place in this world, things may improve and everyone may be capable of living together in harmony once again.

The understanding of many Australians like many people in Western countries in the wake of 9/11, has been influenced by two factors: firstly, the one-sided story that is perpetuated by Western media conglomerates about what Muslims and Arabs are; and secondly, the tendency of those from Arab culture to be conservative in how they manifest themselves to the outside world and unintentionally do not do full justice to the truth about Arab cultures and peoples.

Since the treatment of Muslims in most of the Australian press is so negative, it is worth discussing an article in an Adelaide newspaper (Blair, 2006) which focused on giving 'a fair go' to all Australians no matter what background they came from. The article was about Muslims and how people misunderstood their culture and underestimated their abilities. It gave the example of the Prime Minister John Howard, talking very slowly and carefully to a Muslim woman, wearing a scarf, because he assumed she was new to Australia; she was, in fact, born in Australia.

The same article described how the world looked at Muslims as "the boogymen" and assumed that all Muslim men were authoritarian in nature, and sought to suppress Arab women by making them wear the veil. The author claimed that these assumptions were not true and gave people the false impression that Arab culture was somehow fanatical. Blair (2006) also mentioned the story of two Australian women on the Gold Coast who would not use a lift because there were Muslim women wearing head scarves in it, and they were terrified of being blown up. Blair argued that these myths and fears would be eliminated by educating people about how other cultures work and thus bringing about better (or restored) relations in a successful multicultural country such as Australia. This issue will be considered in a later section.

A Challenge to Australian Identity

It was the Australian-born group of respondents who were most angered by racist remarks and incidents because they saw this as a challenge to their dual identity. They objected to the way local politicians and opinion makers used terrorist events to construct all Arabs and Muslims in Australia as criminals and a threat to others. Since they were born in Australia, they had been proud to think of themselves as Australians of Arabic background, but now they found their Australian identity being questioned. They had been forced to think twice about being Australian because people generally perceived them as disloyal and having improper ties to a foreign culture.

Q 17. What is the point of being born here if you are still getting teased and called a terrorist?

Q 26. This person at work said once to me, "But you are not a true Australian", and I asked him, "What is a true Australian, mate?"

Q 33. Some things can be upsetting such as the wog in you comes out so often and some comments can be rough but I have learned to ignore them, otherwise you will spend your life stressing and holding grudges.

Q 17. What difference would it make if your grandparents were from a certain background-this is who I belong to and they are my kin. If you were born here in Australia, what right does anyone have to tell you that you are not Australian?

Q 35. I find it hard to deny my background and family culture, but why do I have to do so?

Q 39. Having the background and the languages behind me makes me who I am and belong to. I am proud of who I am. I say that I am Australian and Lebanese.

The respondents demonstrated their sense of having a connection with both communities but in the context of 9/11, they had experienced a sense of being 'caught' between two cultures. They themselves related positively to being both Arab and Australian and regarded the culturally diverse nature of their lives as a positive thing because it gave them a sense of belonging and security.

Arab Women and Education

In the popular press, there is often mention of the Arab woman, or sometimes the Muslim woman, who is taken to represent the East and stereotypically represented as old fashioned, inferior, oppressed, weird and veiled (Maryams, 1995). Even though there is a variety of Arab cultures and traditions from which women come, Western feminists have seemingly labelled them all as mysterious and uneducated (Fernea & Bezirgan, 1977). Such an approach ignores the specific historical and cultural contexts in which Arab women have been brought up, and indeed the avenues they have had and continue to have in regard to education opportunities.

One such portrayal argued that most Arab and Muslim women lived in societies where religious law permeated the whole of Muslim life (Mincec, cited in Maryams, 1995). She presented Muslim women as the silent victims in society.

While women elsewhere gradually liberated themselves to some extent from the total supremacy of men, most women in the Muslim world continued to be totally subordinate. They live under a system which has barely changed despite the undeniable evolution of their societies.

In Mince's representation of the Arab woman, the only way for her to be liberated was to be stripped of all her culture, laws, texts and practices. This would enable her to be made equal and identical to Western women. The Arabian/Muslim woman would then have her spirit or soul set free and be saved from oppression and subordination. When the respondents were asked about this issue, they were also asked to consider their own personal experiences and whether such a claim was valid. Both men and women responded to this issue.

Some took issue with the meaning of liberation.

I 1. I don't find myself less equal to the Western woman. I have the same rights and enjoy the same liberation.

Q 31. What is liberated? This could mean different things to different people as a matter of fact each individual may look at it differently. No one should judge and generalise on a whole nation before taking in perspective the whole view of family and social values.

Others questioned the right of someone from another culture to judge them as oppressed victims.

I 9. To me, wearing the veil does not mean oppression nor subordination. I look at it as tradition or even fashion. Nothing to be ashamed of.

I 14. When other people describe us as silent and victims, [it] gets me really mad, because they think they know us better than we know ourselves. They start assessing our behaviour in relation to their culture and their values. This does not work. We have different priorities and views to life.

Q 26. There is no way any of us would look at themselves as victims because of our religion, or our race. I know a few families here in Australia who are not Muslims nor Druze and not Arab all together but their children suffer from [too much] freedom. They wish that they can have the control on their kids that some of us do.

Another professed her firm belief in the individual's personal autonomy.

Q 17. My belief is you make yourself what you become. If you have strong personality you can prove yourself and stand up for your beliefs and rights. Religion or nationality doesn't make you anything you don't want to be. Don't let anyone boss you around and you won't be oppressed. I believe strongly in family influence to the way you see yourself, so having the confidence in yourself you can achieve anything you like.

I personally thank my parents so much for telling me that nothing is impossible and I can reach my goals depending on how hard I try. I do follow the same policy with my children. Therefore, I disagree with whoever tries to say that an Arab woman is not as liberated as the Western woman.

It is noteworthy that some of the most forthright statements above come from respondents who had been born in Australia. All these provide evidence of strongly held personal views, which acknowledged the influence of their families.

Through such comments, the respondents made it clear that the image of the Arab woman, often portrayed in the Western world, seemed very unfair and untrue in their own experience. They also emphasised that most Arab women felt quite independent and free to choose what they wanted to do and how they wanted things to be done. In addition, they stressed the fact that Arab women did not feel oppressed in any way about their lifestyle and the way they viewed themselves.

When the respondents were asked about the importance of education to them, in the light of the stereotype that the Arab woman was uneducated, both men and women made comments, such as the following.

I 6. This is ridiculous and very untrue. Most women hold an education in the Arab world.

I 15. It is preached by the Quran that women and men equally need to seek knowledge to fulfill their religious requirements. That alone contradicts what she is saying.

Q 18. I know many Australian Catholic women that have very little education and they don't look oppressed or lack any liberty. Don't tell me that it is the religion or the nationality that does this to the individual. It is unfortunate that women all over the world still hold less power than men.

Q 21. It is the responsibility of each individual to set their family on the right road in order to know what is right from wrong. I am certain that education is reflected through a common knowledge passed on to you from your family.

All the respondents spoke about Arab women's rights and freedom in a positive light. Furthermore, the respondents highlighted that the Quran and the Druze sacred book Heckme (see p. 25) validate education for both men and women. These comments about education came from a strong sense of belief and faith.

Educational differences

Education in Australia was an area which evoked mixed feelings from the respondents. A number recognised that Arab cultures put much greater stress on the education responsibilities of the family, far more so than they observed among mainstream Australian families. Sometimes this was expressed in the form of regret that working constraints made it difficult to fulfill the family's educational role.

I 14. If it wasn't for having family around that can mind the children after school it will be a problem. The lifestyle here is very different, family values are not the same.

I 12. Unfortunately, financial commitments don't allow parents to spend more time with their children, so they don't have the full opportunity of following the Arab customs.

Q 23. I wish my partner didn't have to work and can only mind the kids.

A number of the male respondents (including some born in Australia) were adamant that educational standards in Lebanon and Egypt, for example, were superior to Australia's.

I 1. The quality of education is way better in Lebanon, and each student must work extra hard to be able to pass their subjects.

Q 22. In Australia all the students seem to pass - no fails and no repetition at schools. It is ridiculous.

Q 37. The system here is very weak. How can someone keep going up in grades when they don't pass and yet all the new immigrants have to go to university here and adjust their qualifications to fit the standard! Amazing.

It appeared that some respondents demonstrated their anger at having to justify their education and qualifications when they arrived in Australia, by arguing that the local education system was quite weak in terms of rigor and discipline compared to overseas.

Two other respondents commented that Arab and Australian education did share some equivalent standards.

I 6. I find education similar to back home but slightly more flexible.

I 9. I think that at university level, the Eastern and Western worlds have similar education, but not during school years.

Overall, the statements suggested that although respondents did not feel that the school system was the same as the ones at home and the students here seemed to go up in levels no matter what their grades were, they still believed that University level education was equivalent to the one they knew overseas.

The perceived lack of discipline in Australian schools was also a concern, particularly to male respondents. A number born in Australia also expressed this view.

I 10. My wife seems to believe that our children are doing well. I don't know, I don't think that they are putting enough effort and time in their work. When I told the teacher that she said that we shouldn't push too much or they might become stressed.

Q 25. The school system here is different, very different. There is a lack of discipline and the children seem to get away with lots before they get in trouble.

Q 31. You can't even raise your voice at school any more or they will say (you are harassing), and if you give too much home work (you are not being fair). The kids spend three quarters of their education time seeing counsellors or psychologists. We are spoiling the kids; they don't know what responsibility is anymore, everything is too hard.

Q 38. The expectation that we demand is far from what the kids are getting. My wife thinks that you shouldn't be rough on them otherwise they will feel different from all the others here in Australia. She is right but you can't keep pampering them [or] they will get nowhere in life.

The female respondents, on the other hand, tended to support the more relaxed approach to learning adopted in Australian schools.

I 3. I prefer the education here, it is less demanding and you can work at ease. No need to perform or impress.

Q 36. The schooling is fairer on the kids and having less pressure makes it more pleasant for them.

These comments reflected the women's different expectations and perceptions of their children's schooling. Women in particular seem to appreciate education in Australia due to having less discipline, compared to how they would be educated in the Arab world. Therefore, it seems that women tended to come to terms with accepting the new educational culture before men did.

The Importance of Educating Others

What is the best response to the host's society, stereotyping and racism towards Arab peoples and their cultures? The respondents maintained that education was important in facilitating the adaptation of the host and immigrant to each other's culture. However, understanding the culture and religion of Arab immigrants should go beyond knowledge about dress code and related 'surface' issues. According to McHugh (1979), such multicultural education for others was most effective if and when it was taught directly through literature that did not portray an Anglo-Saxon point of view.

The respondents had several opportunities in the interviews and questionnaires to express their view on educating others in Australian society.

Q 40. Education is a necessity to everyone in order to understand one another and appreciate different cultures and values. I wish something gets done soon about this.

Q 36. They only know what they hear. This is not good enough.

Q 21. We have lots to show and teach about our culture and traditions. We just need the opportunities and approval to do so and not only to our children of the same background but also to others who don't know anything about us.

Q 31. Let the new generation grow up seeing good things about the Arabic culture, not just what the media wants them to see.

Q 40. I think not just schools need to promote learning about us but also the private sector and universities. I find this a very serious issue. Stereotyping is deadly and people need to open their eyes and minds to save our world.

Q 35. Lots can be done, the culture interests many people I know.

Q 33. I think that understanding our culture may help identify our personalities.

Asked what shape the education should take, some focused on language.

I 4. If they offered Arabic at schools, they will make life a lot easier.

I 9. Arabic language should be offered at schools the same as other languages. Some would argue that what would people need to learn Arabic for; well, apart from cultural education there are so many fantastic Arabian countries that many Australians travel to such as Egypt; and now also the amount of people working in Dubai and Saudi Arabia is rising too.

Q 32. So many ask me why can't we have Arabic at school like Spanish, Japanese and Chinese?

Others thought it was more important for the focus of education for others to be on Arab culture.

I 9. It is not just about the language or the religion, it is our culture that needs to be taught and shared with others to enable a complete understanding and appreciation of the meanings behind it.

I 14. Wouldn't be so important if we all knew a bit about the other's culture and tried to understand their beliefs. I am not saying adopt it and live it but show respect and understand why things are sometimes done they are done.

Another spoke of introducing both Arabic language and culture into learning, as a way of countering stereotyping.

Q 21. I think if I was a teacher I will bring Arabic language to schools and talk about the fascinating Arab culture and show the world the positive sides of being an Arab instead of the stereotyping the whole world seem to hold on to.

A few recognised the importance of more informal education agencies. The critical factor was having Arab people and culture portrayed positively.

I 3. Throughout school programs, personal higher education or even television programs instead of all the junks played on television.

Q 21. It is so simple to do so. It can be done the same way that stereotyping has been done, only this time make it positive.

Q 28. More positive attitude towards Arabs and educational programs.

In addition, the educative impact of day to day interaction between the respondents and their friends, work colleagues and neighbours has already been illustrated in Q 18 (p. 165) and Q 34 (p. 168). It is significant that each of these was an Australian-born respondent who had greater familiarity with mainstream Australian culture than their parents did.

The majority of respondents bemoaned the lack of Arabic culture being taught in the education system. It is an issue that poses an important question for racism: How do people foster positive connections with Muslims/Druze when they do not know anything about them? Cultural knowledge is vital to the process of understanding and appreciating other people and it is the most appropriate way to avoid stereotyping.

Conclusions

Racism, based on terrorism, has emerged in the wake of 9/11 and the people who took part in this book have been greatly affected by it. The negative attitudes of some people towards Muslims, of any nationality in general and Arabs in particular, became very noticeable to the respondents, in the form of hostile words and actions, as well as silent fear, suspicion and withdrawal. The negative image of the Arab and Islamic world and the stereotyping of all its people as backward and violent terrorists were seen as the creation of the media, often stirred up by politicians trading on the general ignorance of many Australians and trying to interpret events to their own particular advantage.

Education was needed to address Western educated people's depiction of Arab women's lifestyles as subjugated and their dress code as a symbol of oppression, and submissive behaviour. The women respondents, both immigrants and those born here, seemed to be very happy with their way of life, traditions and values and did not for a minute consider themselves to be uneducated. The Western perception is that the Quran and Heckme are tools of gender control, but the comments above indicated that this was far from the truth; education was available to everyone, it played an important role in society and it was mostly free. According to the respondents who had lived in Arab societies and experienced that kind of life, they did have choices, and those who did, were happy to wear the veil.

Both the immigrant respondents and those born in Australia had experienced negativity toward Arabs since 9/11. For the Australian-born, these experiences of discrimination and hostility were particularly galling and they expressed their views on the media and the need for education to reverse the negative attitudes in the Australian community. They argued that cultural prejudice would only stop when leaders recognised cultural differences and governments had the courage to build up the foundations of multicultural education and bring down the social barriers.

The respondents pointed out that education was vital to facilitating the understanding that Australians and immigrants should feel for each other. The growth of cross-cultural understanding, which had flourished relatively well in Australia during the 1970s and 1980s, had been undermined through the supposed 'war on terror' and the belief that ethnic minorities such as Arabs and Muslims were now 'alien' in terms of their beliefs, traditions, customs and culture. Such a situation can only be redressed if Australia's education system includes teaching the history and culture of 'mainstream' and 'ethnic' minorities, so that all can understand what are the overarching values of Australian society and what are the core values of the different minority groups (Smolicz, 1979).

Conclusions

Introduction

Migration is a fact of human life and has been occurring for thousands of years. Throughout their long history the Arabs have migrated to different parts of the world seeking a better life, because of the difficult immediate circumstances in their homelands. Some people left their countries to escape wars and political conflicts; some left to better themselves financially or pursue opportunities for higher education, others left cultural conflicts that simply ended in the loss of culture, language and values. The data recorded in the study are only a few examples of Arab immigrant experiences in leaving their homeland, and the social and cultural consequences for the first generation settling into a new country, Australia, and for the succeeding generations in growing up there.

Investigations into how individuals make the transition from one culture to another make up a large part of the literature on migration issues. During the 1950s and 1960s, it was accepted in most Western societies that migrants were expected to adjust as quickly as possible to the new culture, learn the new language and adopt the mores and values of the new society in order to fit in. In Australia there has recently been a return to this kind of thinking in both the Liberal and Labor parties, following the 1970s and 1980s multicultural policies of accepting other cultures for what they were and including them in the cultural life of the nation (Smolicz, 1999).

Earlier studies often focused on the personal and psychological aspects of immigrants' assimilation into a host country, pointing to the extremity of the change which the individual had to go through. The issues identified as causing immigrants stress and depression were language difficulties, career change or loss of a job, or financial hardships (Taft, 1977), family and marital status, problems with separation from family, loss of emotional and social support (Warheit et al., 1985) and racism (Palmer, 1986). The experiences of the respondents in this book reflected all these factors.

Apart from feeling depressed over the loss of family, possessions, and loved ones back home, the immigrants had to familiarise themselves with a new culture that was completely alien. It involved a transition from a deeply religious, family-oriented and collective Arab culture to an Australian one in which individual rights, secularism and the pursuit of wealth or material possessions over community interests predominated. As an example of the differences, take the expression of feelings. In Arab culture, it is not common for people to complain openly to others and share their true feelings. Women feel that it is not fair to show unhappiness in front of their partners or children, and men do not like to show their emotions and feelings, as this is considered weak. Hence the immigrants regarded their emotions as private matters that needed to be dealt with silently and privately. On the other hand, the next generation, those who had been born in Australia, seemed to look at cultural

differences from another point of view. The younger generation in Arab immigrant families did not wholly accept all the behavioural taboos of their parents' home country, but neither did they imbibe all the individualistic cultural assumptions and actions of mainstream Australia.

On the most personal and intimate level, the study has shown that for many immigrants the past was their memories and what they had to leave behind. The stories they shared were imbued with Arabic cultural meaning. For them the present was the here and now of Australia but all the respondents hoped that sometime in the future they would return home for a visit. The results presented in this book suggested that it took a long time for each individual to assimilate, adjust and accept the new culture. In addition, their children who were born and grew up in Australia believed that they belonged somewhere else, as well as here, because they had learned to develop deep ties to their homeland and its ethnic history and their extended family living there.

I have experienced immigration myself and therefore can deeply relate to what some interviewees went through or are still going through. The reason why I included only 40 individuals in my research and focused on the 16 who were born in Arab countries and had experienced depression, stress and alienation, was to concentrate in depth on their feelings and share their experiences and losses. Working with a larger group would have meant being only able to focus on themes that affected people generally. I felt that the immigration process that each individual experienced was similar and yet different. The similarities were in their expression of the personal depression and feelings of isolation from the surrounding community, and in particular the grieving that they went through before their adjustment to and acceptance of change. The differences that emerged related rather to the varying forms of cultural adaptation they achieved based on their level of education and the socio-economic status they expected in the new country.

The research presented here was divided into three distinct parts. The first concentrated on psychological issues such as depression, stress and alienation and how these were overcome. The second part investigated cultural and religious aspects and the process of incorporating Arab values into the new environment, along with their learning of a new language and culture. The third part looked at education and its importance in facilitating a greater understanding of immigrants and hosts for each other. The response of the Australian host society towards those of Arabic background has been most affected by the huge change in domestic and international politics as a result of September 11, 2001. The media in Australia and elsewhere have been accused of being divisive in cross-cultural relations and this has been accelerated by the globalisation of the media industry in which negative images and cultural stereotypes can influence people's perceptions more widely and more quickly.

Limitations of the Study

At this point, it is important to acknowledge the limitations of the study presented in this book. The research was a small-scale qualitative investigation involving only 40 self-selected participants who lived in Adelaide. In their origins they were linked to five different Arab nations and spanned two generations – firstly, those who emigrated and secondly, children born in Australia. The intention was to gain an in-depth understanding of the particular experiences of each when they settled into or lived in Australian society. Identifying the common patterns to be found among the

participants, as revealed in the analysis of their questionnaire and interview responses, was integral to the book.

However, it is important to recognise that the findings generated here are not able to be generalised to all Arab immigrants and their children, either in Australia or other parts of the world. Insights and understanding of the specific respondents' in their given social and cultural context are appropriate outcomes; generalisability in the forms of predictions or probabilities to a wider population is not.

Patterns of Adaptation

The research indicated that the immigrants tended to integrate the old with the new to form a comfortable medium in which they could live their lives and not feel torn between two cultures - the Arab and the mainstream Australian. For their part, Australian-born Arabs adopted the two different cultures in ways that would ensure that they were acceptable to both their ethnic community and the wider Australian society. They integrated the Arab cultural values that their parents or grandparents passed on to them, but also adopted cultural values and beliefs from mainstream Australia.

It is useful to use the humanistic sociological framework of cultural values in the key areas of life, such as politics, law, religion, linguistics, education, and family, to summarise the patterns of adaptation revealed here. Religion was clearly the area of culture least affected in the respondents' adaptation to Australian society. All retained the Arabic religious values (either Islamic or Druze) which they had brought from their homeland, or, in the case of those born in Australia, had learned from their parents. Although all the respondents expressed a personal identification as Islamic or Druze, the extent to which they actually practiced their religion varied greatly. Some were scrupulous in religious observance, abiding by dietary laws, wearing the veil, attending mosque, or in the case of the Druze, fulfilling the duty of private prayer. For others, attendance at a mosque or the Druze hall was important as much for social and cultural, as for religious reasons. Some individuals suggested they went there because their ancestors had always done so, while others attended them in order to meet friends, speak the language, and seek reassurance for the existence of their community and the opportunity to be part of it.

For a few, the practice of their religious values was limited to participation in the main religious festivals of the community. Many expressed regret that these religious celebrations, in the minority context of Australia, lacked the warmth and impact generated by the extended family in a society where the majority were all celebrating, too. Yet, it was unthinkable for them not to continue these celebrations within the family and ethnic community context in Australia.

It is worth stressing that none had become converts to Christianity, the religious heritage of the Anglo-Australian majority group. This fact can be seen as an indication of the extent to which individual religious freedom has become taken for granted in Australia. However, the respondents' discussions of the way they had been treated by people in Australian society since September 11, 2001, suggested that under the influence of an inflammatory media, some Australians had begun to call for limits to this religious freedom, and to place Muslims outside the boundary line of acceptability. In response to this negative pressure, none of the respondents had renounced their religious values, but there had been a tendency for many to withdraw more into the privacy of their homes and ethnic communities and to minimise any public display of their religious values and, in some cases, any markers of their religious identification.

A contrasting pattern of cultural adaptation was evident in relation to language. All the immigrants were forced to add the new language, English, to their linguistic repertoire. Many commented on the great struggle they had to learn English, even though they accepted that it was essential for interaction with the wider Australian community – going shopping, getting a job, accessing community services, communicating with neighbours, fellow workers and non-Arab acquaintances. But in no case did the acquisition of English come at the expense of Arabic, which they continued to use as the language of the home, in ethnic community contexts, and for the practice of their religion.

In everyday spoken language, there were frequent examples of the melding of the two languages – where an Arabic sentence included a few English words (with the Arab grammatical endings added); or where a sentence in English included Arab words (used in correct grammatical order). For the most part, however, English and Arabic remained as separate systems of linguistic values, used with different groups of speakers, in different linguistic domains, or contexts. This was a pattern identified by Smolicz (1979) as a dual system type of adaptation.

In the case of Australian-born respondents, English was usually the better developed linguistic system, as a consequence of their Australian schooling and greater participation in mainstream Australian community life. For them, Arabic was the language which was more problematic and difficult to master. Some had effectively learned Arabic at home, supplemented by attendance of Arabic ethnic schools or Arabic language classes after normal school hours. For others, their Arabic remained under-developed, used to speak with grandparents and other family members; most often they understood Arabic quite well, when others were speaking it, but many lacked literacy skills in their ethnic language.

When primary social values of family and close friends are considered, almost all the respondents remained exclusively Arabic. The exceptions were a few respondents born in Australia who had spouses or partners of Anglo-Australian or other minority ethnic background. Where there was no extended family or no ethnic community members within reach, the closest relationships were usually with those of other Arab backgrounds. A few formed close friendships with people from different minority ethnic backgrounds.

In contrast, at the level of secondary social values, such as work colleagues, and members of the general public, all the respondents found themselves interacting with people from the Anglo-Australian mainstream or other minority ethnic backgrounds. It was evident that communication in English with people at this level had proved very difficult for many of the immigrant group in their early years of adaptation. There were also indications that the Australian-born group felt much more comfortable and competent in interacting with people in the Anglo-Australian mainstream.

Politics represented an area of life where mainstream Anglo-Australian values prevailed, without much discussion or comment. Whether they were permanent residents, naturalised Australian citizens or Australian born, they were required to be involved in democratic voting at each state and commonwealth election in Australia. If they were wage earners they had to pay taxes to the Australian government. However, the four respondents who commented on this area of life were all happy to accept Australian political values and to leave behind the conflicts and difficulties of political life in their home countries.

In relation to educational values, it was clear that at the informal level of the home and the community, the mosque and the Druze hall, Arabic cultural values prevailed.

The immigrant generations were most anxious to ensure that Arab religious, linguistic and family values were transmitted to the younger generation in Australia and sought to exploit these informal learning contexts to the full. Some of the younger generation resented what they saw as undue pressure at the time, but often subsequently regretted that they had not made the most of these opportunities.

All the respondents had had some exposure, however, to Australian patterns of education. Many of the immigrant group expressed appreciation of the support and help they received as adults in their English language classes. The Australian-born respondents, for the most part, had been exposed to at least ten and up to twelve years of Australian schooling, in which the Anglo–Australian view of curriculum and teaching approaches prevailed. In this, Australian schools continued to act as effective agencies of assimilation to mainstream Australian culture (Smolicz, 1979). It was noteworthy therefore, that a number of the Australian–born respondents, as well as some of the immigrant interviewees, wanted Australian schools to provide opportunities for Arabic to be taught as a subject in the regular curriculum, as other minority languages like Greek, Italian and Spanish, were.

The need to include Arabic values in the mainstream Anglo–Australian school system was also strongly expressed by almost all respondents as the best way to counter the hostility and stereotyping which they had experienced since 9/11. Educating those of other groups about Arab culture, religion and language, in a positive and interesting way, was endorsed as the most constructive approach to be adopted.

The discussion of patterns of cultural adaptation revealed among the respondents of the study suggests that almost all demonstrated some degree of bivalency (Secombe, 1998). This ranged from the adaptation of the immigrant group, which was weighted towards Arab values, to the greater familiarity and commitment to Australian mainstream values demonstrated among the Australian-born respondents. In the case of a few of the Australian–born, their activation of Arab values appeared minimal, although their personal commitment to the importance of maintaining their home religious values and language remained strong. Most respondents could be placed on a continuum between these two poles of adaptation. The continuum of self identification from Arab to Australian can be seen to parallel this cultural adaptation continuum.

Overall the high levels of Arabic values, revealed in the primary social relations of the family, in religion and in language, can be regarded as evidence that these functioned as core values in the lives of these respondents. The continued affirmation and activation of these values ensured the survival and vigour of the various Arab communities in the Australian context.

Implications and Recommendations for Future Research

The findings of the study have implications for *educational space*. What this means is that they revealed a knowledge gap about how Arab culture, values and religion were articulated in the Australian context. When studying Arab immigrants, it is necessary to take into consideration the stages and changes they have gone through, for example, loss of culture, criticism of their religion, loss of family and friends, jobs. It is important to understand that individuals react differently to change; they tend to grieve differently, accept and adjust differently. It is a long and hard process.

Educational training programs must be established to help others understand the basics of true Arab culture and enlighten people about what the Quran and the Hekme

stand for. Helping people to understand diversity and cross-cultural issues will facilitate the acceptance of Arab immigrants into a host country such as Australia.

The study presented in this book was small and limited in scope, and there is need for other investigations based on other Australian states with larger samples. However, it is hoped that this book and the research it is based on can open the way for future scholars to explore the ways in which the true feelings of second and third generation people from Muslim, as distinct from, Druze background, are formed and articulated. In addition, a comparative approach to assessing Arab adaptation in relation to other ethnic minorities or groups in Australia would also prove valuable.

I believe it is time for researchers to concentrate on understanding cultural transitions and the impact they have on individuals, of both immigrant and host communities, particularly in relation to religious differences across the Christian-Islam divide. Furthermore, I believe it is essential that researchers investigate the influence that the media has on viewers and listeners and how it shapes their understanding of cultural others and attitudes towards patterns of cultural adaptation. Research should expand into the areas of depression and alienation that immigrant families often feel, and in particular, strive to find any differences in how they are expressed and dealt with across the generations. In this way the lives of future immigrants to Australia will be improved and nurtured.

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Adaptation of Arab Immigrants to Australia outlines the psychological problems that were overcome, and the social and cultural adaptations which were made, by Arab immigrants in the process of settling to Australia. This book looks at psychological issues that emerged out of migration and adaptation to Australia. It concentrates on socio-cultural factors, especially the maintenance of traditional Arab religious practices, family values, language and personal identity. It evaluates the respondents' perceptions of the ways the Anglo Australian host society had responded to Arab immigrants and their children and highlights the importance of other Australians having the opportunity to learn about Arab peoples and their culture, as a means of increasing understanding and minimising suspicion and discrimination.



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