**ethnic
communities'
council of
victoria**

KALEIDOSCOPIC KULTURES

Exploring the Self-Identity
of Young People in a
Multicultural and Globalised Society

Ethnic Communities' Council of Victoria (ECCV) Inc. was established in 1974 as a voluntary community based organisation.

35 years later, ECCV is a broadly based, statewide, peak advocacy body representing ethnic and multicultural communities in Victoria.

ECCV's role includes supporting, consulting, liaising with and providing information to Victoria's ethnic communities.

ECCV delivers policy projects for key partners in areas like multicultural policy, aged care programs and skilled migration strategies.

Table of Contents

Foreword

Growing up is never easy. Adolescence is a period often mired with the challenges of individualisation and independence, coinciding with the strong desire to be accepted and 'fit in'. Today's generations of youth are no exception. They are living on the cusp of a global post-modern era in which contact with people from many different cultures is a part of everyday life. They are coming of age in a very different world to the one of generations past, with their cultural identities shaped by a myriad of factors that affect the ways they perceive and define their place in their culturally diverse world.

For many young people from ethnic minority backgrounds, it seems the process of finding their own identity and place in the world is even more complicated. While growing up in a fast-changing world is certainly exciting, this particular cohort must confront the differences between their cultural past and present, as well as come to terms with ensuing tensions and discrepancies.

This thought-provoking paper presents a broad overview of the issue of cultural identity in a globalised world, with a focus on young people from ethnic minority groups. The key theories of ethnic identity formation are discussed and the main factors that shape cultural identity development are presented within an ecological systems framework.

Importantly, the purpose of this paper is not to present a solution, but rather to provide a synthesis of existing literature to stimulate discussion on the subject. Indeed, if a single conclusion can be drawn, it is that future generations need to be better supported in the exploration and expression of their cultural identities in ways that are meaningful to them. While parents, teachers, community leaders and authority figures are naturally going to want to be involved in this negotiation, the analysis confirms that solutions are only possible when young people are genuinely included in the collective construction of social meanings and policies.

Comfort can be drawn too from findings that the process of adjusting to a new culture is not necessarily a period of angst and confusion. Too often the resilience of young people and their ability to construct positive creative and alternative identities is underrated, adding weight to the need for their involvement in determining the policies that shape this aspect of their lives.

Particular appreciation must go to ECCV Policy Officer, Vivian Tee, whose energy, insight, and painstaking research was instrumental in the development of this document. Her work not only highlights the importance of understanding the nature of self-identity, but its place as the key mechanism through which individuals connect with, and make sense of, themselves and their world. It is a sentiment that underpins the activities of ECCV's own Youth Committee as it seeks to empower young people from every belief and background.

It gives me great pleasure to commend this research paper. As Victoria enters the second decade of the new millennium, I am sure its observations will resonate loudly with anyone involved in the challenges of youth and the politics of identity at a personal, communal and societal level.

Sam Afra JP
Chairperson
Ethnic Communities' Council of Victoria

'Contrary to the idea of identity as being a rather fixed and straight-forward
concept, it is much more reminiscent of an evolving jigsaw puzzle
or kaleidoscope where each of the individual pieces has the capacity
and tendency to change, thereby rendering the overall assembly
of pieces just as inconstant and idiosyncratic to the individual.'

(Robson, 2008 : 7)

Executive Summary

Self-identity, particularly in young people, is affected by the confluence of individual and environmental factors. Yet in spite of an extensive array of research and various posited models of ethnic identity formation, a general understanding of minority young people's cultural identities remains quite limited, fragmented and often contradictory.

At the most basic level, the self-identity of young people is too often treated as a static construct, when in truth self-identity in a diverse and complex society can be conceptualised as a reflection of several elements, both internal and external to the individual, that are expressed as a multifaceted, frequently changing manifestation. As the title of this paper suggests, a useful comparison is a kaleidoscope comprised of many mobile, malleable constituent parts that are presented in varying combinations in response to the environmental context.

Likewise, current theories of identity *development* appear to be inadequate to deal with the complex nature of cultural identity in the present milieu. They fail to recognise the agency, sophistication and validity of multiple identities that are often contradictory and ambiguous, but nevertheless functionally effective and adaptable. In general, these theories propose fixed developmental pathways, specific resolution strategies, and a singular, unified and stable self-identity that conforms to essentialised categories of ethnicity.

With identity shown to be a significant factor in personal resilience, it is vital that there is a renewed understanding of identity that takes into account the changed social milieu and against which the compatibility of social policies and practices can be reviewed in order to provide optimal supports to young people to develop and express healthy self-identities. To assist in this endeavour, this paper makes use of the five environmental systems within the Urie Bronfenbrenner's model (Ross & Buehler 2004, Paquette & Ryan 2001). These environmental systems are as follows:

microsystem — the immediate environment with which the individual has direct contact, including family, friends / peers, school, direct services and the local neighbourhood.

mesosystem — the connections between structures in the microsystem (e.g. the connection between the family and school environments, or family and friends).

exosystem — the indirect impact upon the individual that arises from interactions, whether active or otherwise, with structures in the microsystem (e.g. the income-earning structures and other structures that affect the resources available to the family).

macrosystem — the broader, overarching structures such as ideologies, values, culture, policies, history, social expectations and customs, and the global context.

chronosystem — the dimension of time and sociohistoric context through which the importance of experiences within the life course are considered.

Bronfenbrenner's model presumes that the development of children and adolescents is affected by various layers, or environmental systems, that interact to influence the individual. These provide an ideal structure for examining the issue of cultural identity formation in young people and facilitating an understanding of young people within their complex and multi-layered social context. The advantages also extend beyond the academic sphere to encompass all aspects of social policy as the following table indicates.

Overall, studies have indicated that an 'integrated' identity represents the most beneficial response to multiple cultural influences. However, work needs to be done to address the little information and consensus about the nature and functioning of an integrated identity and inform a much-needed review and reshaping of the environments that influence young people's development.

Design of the 'right environment' requires:

▶   a holistic understanding of young people's ethnic identity formation within a range of settings,

▶   the relationships between those settings,

▶   the ways in which conditions in particular settings can counteract negative effects from other settings,

▶   and the ways in which young people are both affected by and affect their environments.

However, research has often revealed conflicting and uncertain findings that, overall, make it difficult to form definitive conclusions on the impacts of social forces on identity. Accordingly, it would be more beneficial to concentrate on the meanings that young people attach to their experiences, influences and ethnic identities, giving primacy to their perspectives, interpretations and lived experiences.

Unfortunately, such a synthesis is not possible at present as there are few available examples of research that focus on deep qualitative and narrative data. This paper will therefore draw on the available literature which reflects a combination of research approaches and theoretical frameworks of identity to present an overview of the key factors that influence the ethnic self-identity of minority young people.

Key factors influencing cultural self-identity

	MICROSYSTEM			
Factor	*Personal factors*	*Family*	*Friends and peers*	*Schools*
BARRIERS to cultural identity exploration	▶ Stronger need for belonging and acceptance ▶ Lower tolerance for ambiguity ▶ Greater motivation to integrate ▶ Language barriers	▶ Strained and conflictual relationships ▶ Changes in family roles ▶ Discrepant values and expectations ▶ Language barriers ▶ Parents experiencing own settlement difficulties	▶ Cultural devaluation, rejection and exclusion by peers ▶ Language barriers	▶ Racism and exclusion by peers and school staff ▶ Majority culture and role models dominant
ENABLERS of cultural identity exploration	▶ Stronger inclination to explore ▶ Higher importance of ethnicity to self-concept ▶ Openness to change ▶ Positive perceptions of ethnic group membership ▶ Distinctive visible features ▶ Bilingualism	▶ Warm family environment that supports individual autonomy and viewpoints ▶ Parents maintain links with ethnic culture ▶ Family is a source of information about ethnic culture	▶ Sense of belonging to and acceptance by peer group ▶ Peers provide information about new culture ▶ Friendships with peers from same and other ethnic groups (including majority group)	▶ Cultural diversity in school environment ▶ Opportunities to interact with and form relationships with peers from various cultural backgrounds ▶ Exposure to same-ethnicity positive role models ▶ Exploration and celebration of bi / multi-culturalism
IMPLICATIONS for policy and practice	▶ Person-centred practices that recognise individual personality differences ▶ Opportunities to acquire language proficiency (ethnic languages and English) ▶ Public valuing of different cultures and bilingualism	▶ Importance of working with the family unit and family-centred practices ▶ Specific supports for families with adolescent children	▶ Opportunities for meaningful interactions with a range of peers, including those from the same and majority ethnic groups ▶ Importance of eliminating racism ▶ Assistance to acquire English language proficiency	▶ Localised school culture in which school leaders, staff, curriculum, values and students explore and respect cultural differences and bi / multicultural self-identities and competence ▶ Appropriate and adequate resourcing for schools

Key factors influencing cultural self-identity (cont.)

	MICROSYSTEM		
Factor	*Local ethnic community*	*Local neighbourhood*	*Services and programs*
BARRIERS to cultural identity exploration	▶ Judgement and pressures to conform to expected behaviours, attitudes and values ▶ Static sense of ethnicity and culture, often defined and preserved by older generations	▶ Culturally homogenous local area	▶ Inaccessible or inappropriate services / programs ▶ Shortage of programs and services, particularly in regional and rural areas ▶ Low awareness of services and programs
ENABLERS of cultural identity exploration	▶ Provides a link with cultural roots and a resource for learning about and engaging with heritage ▶ Cohesive community and organised institutional supports ▶ Access to same-ethnic individuals, groups and cultural activities ▶ Exposure to same-ethnicity positive role models	▶ Culturally diverse local area	▶ Cultural competency and capacity to respond to complex issues ▶ Recognition and receptivity to multiple and complex identities ▶ Early identification of those at-risk of serious problems relating to identity
IMPLICATIONS for policy and practice	▶ Non-judgemental recognition of and opportunity for individual self-identity and expression ▶ Opportunities to engage with ethnic cultural institutions ▶ Equal participation of young people in constructing sense of ethnicity and culture	▶ Planning to promote local area diversity	▶ Greater availability of specialised programs and services in non-metropolitan areas ▶ Effective promotion of services and programs ▶ Training, resources and assistance for services and staff to develop cultural competency and skills to respond to complex issues ▶ Greater awareness and understanding of multiple identities ▶ Development of indicators to identify at-risk individuals ▶ Holistic approaches

Key factors influencing cultural self-identity (cont.)

Factor	MESOSYSTEM	EXOSYSTEM	
	Connections across the microsystem	*Technological developments and globalisation*	*Media, arts and popular culture*
BARRIERS to cultural identity exploration	▶ Competing pressures and expectations in different settings	▶ Faster and further transmission and perpetuation of negative portrayals of minority groups and young people	▶ Stereotypical and negative portrayals of minority groups and young people
ENABLERS of cultural identity exploration	▶ Parental involvement in schools and community activities	▶ Exposure to broader range of cultural influences ▶ Easier connections with people in the diasporic community and 'homeland'	▶ Access to information to assist in settlement ▶ Portrayal of positive ethnic role models ▶ Direct involvement of young people in creative arts and media can promote identity exploration and increase the 'voice' of young people
IMPLICATIONS for policy and practice	▶ Cross-setting linkages to enhance mutual understanding and consistency ▶ Policies to eliminate devaluing of cultures and pigeon-holing of individuals into rigid, ethnicity-based categories	▶ Changing nature of intercultural interactions and contacts	▶ Access for young people to the skills and opportunities to produce public expressions of ethnicity, culture and identity ▶ Alternative media approaches to represent the complexities of everyday multiculturalism and diverse perspectives

Key factors influencing cultural self-identity (cont.)

Factor	MACROSYSTEM			CHRONOSYSTEM
Factor	*Social categories and attitudes*	*Social policies*	*Inclusive meaning-making*	*Age of arrival and length of residence*
BARRIERS to cultural identity exploration	▶ Stereotypical and essentialised notions of ethnicity ▶ Racism, discrimination and stigmatisation of ethnicity-related attributes	▶ Exclusion of majority group in the practice of multiculturalism ▶ Dominance of majority group culture ▶ Portrayal of community harmony without due recognition of social frictions and difficulties ▶ Simplistic view of co-existing cultures and discrete, homogenous ethnicities	▶ Unequal power in the construction and ownership of social meanings ▶ Tokenistic and inaccessible or inappropriate engagement practices	▶ Migration at a later age
ENABLERS of cultural identity exploration	▶ Safe and supportive environments free from negative attitudes and interethnic conflicts	▶ Multicultural policies respect identification with and expression of diverse cultures, ethnicities and identities	▶ Involvement in the political and collective construction and control of social meanings around cultural diversity and identity ▶ Ability to express views and define self in meaningful ways and through meaningful language	▶ Migration at a younger age ▶ Longer period of residence in host country
IMPLICATIONS for policy and practice	▶ Elimination of racism, discrimination and negative stereotypes ▶ Recognition of cultures as dynamic and fluid and of intra-ethnic heterogeneity ▶ Respect for individualised identities that do not necessarily conform to fixed categories	▶ Recognition of the progress achieved through multicultural policies ▶ Open and inclusive discussions of contemporary cultural diversity to evaluate and reconsider existing approaches and ideologies	▶ Focus in research, policy and practice on everyday multiculturalism and lived experiences ▶ Respect for the individual views of young people ▶ Opportunities for equal involvement in meaning-making and public discourse	▶ Additional and specific settlement and adjustment supports for post-pubescent immigrants

Kaleidoscope — 'a tube-shaped optical instrument that is rotated to produce a succession of symmetrical designs by means of mirrors reflecting the constantly changing patterns made by bits of coloured glass.'

(The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language)

1. Introduction

Self-identity endeavours to answer the perennial questions of 'who am I?' and 'where do I belong?' and is directed at the subjective construction and experience of ones own identity. Conceptions and expressions of the intangible 'self' are invariably shaped by a multiplicity of influences: personality traits, experiences, interpersonal relationships, physical surroundings, abstract values and beliefs, contemporary cultures, political and social institutions, historical events, future outlooks, global and local influences, and generational differences. In particular, ethnic self-identity is strongly affected by variables that are both internal and external to the individual and reflects a complex dialogue between one's construction of self and the parameters imposed by others.

Today's society is a vastly different landscape to that of the early post-war era and the progressive 1970s and 80s in many ways. The considerable and pervasive technological and social changes over the past two to three decades have significantly transformed the influences that shape the lifestyles, perceptions and identities of new generations. It is within these conditions of rapid changes, impermanence, unpredictability and increasing cross-boundary connectivity and flows that young people must develop an understanding of themselves, their multi-layered environment and their place within an ever-dynamic world.

Any analysis of identity is bound to be complicated, imprecise and challenging (Robson, 2008). Previous studies have focused on different aspects of self-identity, but have continued to yield inconclusive results about the nature of the interactions between these factors and the degree to which they influence identity. While identity guides the individual's mediation of his or her internal and external environments, it is, at the same time, shaped and affected by these environments.

1.1. Demographic Snapshot of Young Ethnic Australians

Australia is a land of immigrants and will continue to be so over the near future as natural growth rates decline and population growth becomes increasingly dependent on immigration. The nation-building narrative is anchored upon immigration, with each successive migration wave bringing new challenges and changes. Nowhere is this more evident than among the younger members of the ethnic communities.

Of the eight Australian states and territories, Victoria has the third highest proportion of overseas-born young people. According to the 2006 Census data (refer to **Appendix 1),** 17% of Victorians aged 12 to 25 years are born overseas. Aside from Oceania (which includes Australia and New Zealand), the main regions of birth are Asia (9%) and Europe (3%). Although the large majority of young Victorians were born in Australia or arrived prior to 1981, recent trends indicate that there will be growing numbers of young immigrants over future years (see **Figure 1**). 6% of young people in Victoria (or 56,085 people) arrived during the five-year period from 2001 to 2005, a significant rise from earlier periods.

Figure 1. Period of Arrival in Australia of Young Victorians Aged 12 to 25 Years
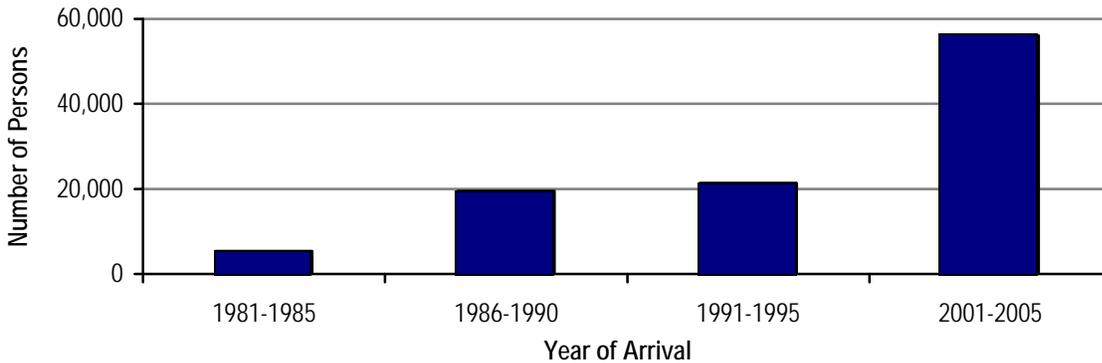
Furthermore, a high 71% of young Victorians have a non-Australian ancestry and 30% are of mixed (two or more) ancestries. The most common ancestries are European (45% of first responses), Oceanic / Australian (30%) and Asian (12%).

Young people in Victoria also speak a wide range of languages. Around one-quarter speak a language other than English (LOTE) at home, with Asian (13%) and European languages (6%) being the most common. Of those speaking a LOTE at home, nearly all speak English 'very well' or 'well'. However, around 10,000 young Victorians have low to nil proficiency in spoken English.

The religious affiliation of young Victorians also represents a relatively broad diversity. Although the small majority are of Christian faith (54%) and one-quarter do not subscribe to any of the recognised religions, notable proportions are Buddhist (3%) or Muslim (3%), and a relatively small percentage are affiliated with Hinduism, Judaism or other religions.

In addition to the young immigrants coming to Australia as dependants under the Skilled and Family Migration programs, young people are also arriving under the Humanitarian Program as refugees or humanitarian entrants. In the 2006-07 financial year, Victoria welcomed 1,110 refugee / humanitarian settlers aged 12 to 25 years (DEECD 2008). Three-quarters of this group were from Sudan, Burma, Afghanistan or Iraq (DEECD 2008). Young arrivals under the Humanitarian Program may arrive with family members or as unaccompanied minors without secure family or community networks.

Cultural diversity is set to become an increasingly routine part of Australian life (Gould 2005), catalysed by the greater global mobility of people and increasing exchanges with new regions such as Africa and the Middle East; growing overseas demand for Victoria's higher educational services leading to rising numbers of international students; continuing family and skilled migration and resettlement of refugees from regions experiencing new or ongoing internal conflicts; more temporary migrant workers and tourists; and increasing rates of interethnic marriages.

Marriages between people of different ethnic backgrounds have increased substantially over the past 25 years and Australia now has one of the highest levels of intermarriages in the world (Harris 2008). This will contribute to the development of a more fluid, complex and plural society that exhibits the unprecedented level of cultural diversity that Vertovec (2007: 1025, cited in Harris, 2008) terms 'super-diversity'.

Clearly, young people are not a homogenous group and reflect considerable diversity in their personal characteristics, past experiences, reasons for coming to Australia, their ethnic and cultural backgrounds, their experiences in Australia, the characteristics of their local neighbourhoods and ethnic communities, and a host of other differences. Therefore, the discussion in this section will represent broad generalisations that will, of course, vary between individuals and groups. Similarly, there appears to be a lack of consistency in the definition of many of the conceptual terms used in identity and cultural studies. With this is mind, a Definition of Terms is provided as they are applied in this paper.

1.2. Intra-generational Differences Among Young Ethnic Australians

As Vasta (1995) notes, there is far greater heterogeneity among the youth population today compared with the early post-war period. In its youth policy, *Future Directions*, the Victorian Government acknowledges the increasing variation in the composition, circumstances and opportunities of young people: 'Young Victorians today are also more diverse and do not share equally in opportunities and achievements' (State Government of Victoria, 2006: 11). This intragenerational diversity encompasses not only ethnic, religious, racial and language differences, but also differences in class, gender, sexuality, ability, household and family composition, education and locality (Harris 2008).

Bearing in mind this heterogeneity, it is useful to identify a few basic sub-categories of young people in relation to ethnic and cultural identity:

▶ **First and second-generation youth**

There is generally a difference in the ethnic identities of first-generations compared with second- and subsequent generations. Those who are foreign-born are less likely to use a national label (e.g. 'Australian') to describe their cultural identities (Kiang 2008, Ang et al, 2002). However, identity shifts are not just intergenerational but can also occur within the same generation: the sample of second-generation Italian-Australian young people in Vasta's (1995) study exhibited a rejection of their Italian culture and language during adolescence, but a return to and high involvement with their heritage later in life.

▶ **Young people with mixed ethnicity**

With the increasing diversity and rates of interethnic marriages in Australia, the backgrounds of individuals encompass more multiple and complex blends of ethnic heritages. Theories of ethnic identity formation have been largely based on a bicultural approach which requires the bridging of two worlds. Far less understood is identity navigation among individuals who have two or more cultural heritages. Research from the United States on identity formation in multiracial individuals suggests that people with two or more ethnic or racial backgrounds face particularly complex identity issues (Phinney, 2008; Gibbs, 2008; Mio et al, 2006). Often, the individual identifies with a new racial / ethnic group that is distinct from the groups that constitute his / her heritage and is usually able to feel positive about his / her mixed heritage (Tizard & Phoenix, 1995, cited in Jaffe, 1998; Ross & Buehler, 2004).

▶ **Refugee young people**

Identity development in young refugees is compounded by their traumatic refugee experiences and extreme settlement difficulties. Forced to leave their original country, many feel that they do not 'fit in' or are not accepted anywhere and some may even have lost proof of their identity (Kilbride et al 2001).

They may also encounter discrimination arising from the stigmas often associated with the 'refugee' label, and their parents may be dealing with their own traumas and, subsequently, have lower capacity to support the adolescent (Bevan, 2000).

▶ **Majority group young people**

Many 'Anglo-Australian' young people do not consider their own ethnicity to be important to them as it is usually not salient (Ross & Buehler, 2004). While ethnic identity may not be of high relevance to many young people, the broader concept of cultural identity does affect members of majority and minority groups (Jensen, 2008). This is particularly the case in a globalised environment in which intercultural exchanges and contacts occur with greater frequency: 'the exposure to a mix of cultural values and practices that results from the nation's growing diversity is likely to lead to exploration about how other cultures can impact one's own identity, even for the dominant group' (Phinney, 2008: 62). For this reason, it is important to explore how cultural identity is constructed and defined by all young people, not only those from minority groups.

2. Identity Development

'Typically, youth is a time in which identities are forming, changing and adapting
to situations and individual preferences.
This process is always complex, often contradictory and characteristically entails
the development of a deep seated understanding of the nature of ourselves,
others and the world around us … Research findings suggest that Australian youth,
as they come to grips with an increasingly globalised and media saturated world,
experience identity in a more fluid, contextual and negotiated way.'

(Hopkins, 2008: 2)

2.1. Adolescence as a Period of Identity Formation

Adolescence is widely recognised as a key period of change and development that marks the transition from childhood to adulthood (Wong, 2000) or the shift from dependence to independence (O'Sullivan, 2006). During this period of growing autonomy and individuation, relationships with those outside the family, particularly with peers, become more important to the young person (DHS, 2008). In fact, some researchers (e.g. Kiang & Fuligini, 2009) contend that identity development may be even more important during young adulthood when the individual has left the familiar environment of the family home, school, peer group and local community.

With greater exposure to the wider social world, combined with the cognitive development that occurs during adolescence, issues of identity (the question of 'who am I?') become more salient to the individualising young person. In fact, Rosenthal (1987: 156) proposed that 'achieving a sense of identity is one of the most important psychological tasks for the adolescent.' This task of identity formation is influenced by internal biological and psychological factors as well as surrounding external influences that extend well beyond the immediate environment of family, friends, school and local neighbourhood (Dolby, 2001).

This is also a time of significant physical and cognitive change as the ability to think in abstract and conceptual ways develops (Rosenthal, 1987). The task of 'growing up' is compounded by heightened emotions, changes in the social expectations of the individual's roles and behaviours and an increasing emphasis on peer conformity and desire for acceptance (DHS, 2008).

It is important to note however, that the concept of adolescence as a period of greater independence and role exploration cannot be assumed equally throughout all cultures. What is deemed to be acceptable and expected during this stage in life can vary widely between different cultures (Bevan, 2000) as some migrant communities in Australia may have expectations for the transition to adulthood that emphasise different aspects and accomplishments (O'Sullivan, 2006).

Nevertheless, it is clear that 'identity is very important to young people, particularly in relation to participating in community and cultural activities and being independent' (State Government of Victoria, 2006: 13). Identity forms the core of the 'self' and is a crucial determinant of whether people engage in social participation opportunities and the manner in which they engage. It influences interpersonal interactions, self-esteem and self-confidence and, as a result, has a significant affect on wellbeing and life outcomes. In broadening their social roles and environments, young adults may encounter new challenges and conflicts regarding their identity which may trigger continued exploration or re-examination of their self-identity (Mann, 2006).

2.2. Impacts of Migration and Minority Group Status on Identity

The move to a new country, especially one with a vastly different culture to the culture of origin, is usually a highly stressful and demanding experience for young people, their families and the family unit. It is often a period of intense learning of new languages, norms and systems, accompanied by changes to ones position in society, family dynamics and lifestyle. Adjustment difficulties have been associated with anxiety, low self-esteem, identity confusion and substance abuse (Sonderegger & Barrett, 2004).

Young people must make sense of and, to some extent, consolidate their past and present lives, and construct a self-identity that draws together these aspects to inform their sense of 'future self'. They must also form new social networks and negotiate discrepancies between the expectations of their culture of origin and the dominant culture of their new country. At times, these expectations may come into conflict, the pressures from both sides may be intense, and the young person must find his / her own way of managing arising tensions during a transition phase in life that is already marked by turmoil and confusion.

Dolby (2001) and Bevan (2000) list some of the circumstances that can affect the migration and settlement experiences of young people from non-English-speaking backgrounds (NESB). These factors can significantly influence the settlement and identity formation of young people. Just as there is large variation in their migration circumstances, the ways in which minority youth cope with their migration experience will also vary in a multitude of different ways and, consequently, each develops a unique ethnic self-identity.

These factors include :

▶ **Family composition**

Some young people come to Australia with their immediate family or other members of their extended family, while others arrive as unaccompanied minors or independently.

▶ **Support networks**

Some join existing community, familial or other social networks in Australia while others find themselves isolated and alone in their new country. The existing community may be large, cohesive and well-established or small, emerging and fragmented. The quality of these support networks both prior and subsequent to the migration is also important — for example, pre-migration conflicts within the family unit could diminish the value of this support network and even have detrimental effects on settlement.

▶ **Choice in, and reasons for, migration**

Young people may have been part of the decision-making process or made the choice to migrate themselves, or may have had no choice in the matter (this includes refugees who have been forced to leave their country and the children of parents who insist their children study overseas).

▶ **Social background**

Educated families with recognised qualifications and skills may find it easier to obtain employment and may also be more familiar with western customs and technologies.

▶ **English language skills**

Some arrive with complete fluency and literacy in English, while others have little or no comprehension of English.

▶ **Education and lifestyle**

Migrants from rural backgrounds or less developed countries may have had little exposure to western technologies and lifestyles, and young migrants vary in their level of education and educational experiences.

▶ **Age on arrival**

Migrants who arrive in early childhood may find it easier to adjust to and acquire the skills necessary to navigate their new environment, while those arriving during or after adolescence tend to have more difficulties with settlement. Research has shown that adolescents who migrate after 12 years of age are likely to experience extra stresses than those who arrived prior to puberty, due to the combined strains of the migration / settlement process and the complex task of identity formation (Bachay, 1998).

▶ **Migratory routes**

Some young people may have moved a number of times and lived in different counties, or they may have migrated to Australia, returned to their homeland and subsequently returned to Australia.

▶ **Reception by others**

The level of negative reactions (racism, exclusion and discrimination) and positive reactions (acceptance, welcome and support) the young person perceives from others in the community will affect his / her sense of 'fitting in' and formation of self-identity. Particularly significant is the exposure of the young person to others outside the family and ethnic community and to wider cultural transmitters (such as media and public messages).

Identity development is a challenging task for any young person, but literature suggests that it is more problematic for ethnic minority young people than for those in the majority group (Mio et al 200; Cahill & Ewen, 1987). Minority young people are often subjected to a tension between two or more seemingly irreconcilable cultures (Kilbride et a,l 2001). This problem has been described in numerous other ways, commonly as 'straddling two worlds', 'caught between two cultures' or 'cultural schism'. The different cultures may impose conflicting values and norms, with competing demands on the young person's loyalty and resources (Francis & Cornfoot, 2007).

The end result is a 'difficult tug-of-war' where the young person is pulled in one direction by the desire to 'fit in' with their peer group and, in the other direction, by parental expectations for particular behaviours and attitudes. Added to this is the tension created by the strong desire to belong, coupled with the desire to develop an authentic and individual self-identity.   While the pre- and post-migration experiences and circumstances of young migrants are highly variable and are inevitably coloured by the individual's own unique personality and cognitions, multicultural young people face the daunting challenge of achieving 'confident integration of an identity which is harmonious within oneself, within one's family and cultural heritage, and also within the new host society' (Bashir 2000, cited in Francis & Cornfoot, 2007: 24).

> Many minority young people express a feeling of ambiguity and confusion, and a sense of not belonging to any specific group. Shi and Lu's (2007: 325) study recorded remarks such as:
>
> '[In America] I'm a Chinese, in China I'm an American. So I can never be a 100% of anything', and 'Sometimes I think I belong to both groups. Some other times I think I belong to neither group because it seems like both groups don't really seem to be completely my type ... I think I'm neither because sometimes I think I'm in the middle because no culture really wants me.'

'Good mental health depends on a young person's sense of worth
and their ability to belong to a family and a group with a cultural heritage
that is accepted and celebrated as equal.'

(Multicultural Mental Health Australia, 2007)

2.3. Negotiating a Dual Cultural Environment

Minority young people adopt a myriad of strategies to deal with their dual cultural environment. Some assimilate and fully align with the culture of the majority group, others use their ethnic group as their main identity reference (Rosenthal, 1987). However, a large proportion develop a dual identification that positions the individual as a member of both cultural 'worlds'. Recent research has revealed that most minority young people effectively manage to straddle their two cultures, usually by developing a *bicultural identity* that values and meshes aspects of both cultures (Guerra & White, 1995).

The ability to integrate two cultural systems and flexibly match one's behaviour to the given context often leads to improved outcomes for minority young people, both in terms of their ability to effectively function in the ethnic and mainstream environments (Kiang & Fuligini, 2009) and in their development of more sophisticated cognitive and social skills (Harper et al, 1990, cited in Jaffe, 1998). Furthermore, bicultural individuals can draw on a larger 'toolkit' of different identities and roles so that, when one identity is under threat (e.g. their ethnic identity), they can present another identity (e.g. their 'Australian or 'mixed' identity). This can buffer the individual against negative events such as racism (Pittinsky et al, 1999).

Nevertheless, a minority of young people do experience maladjustment and extremely negative outcomes in their struggle to cope with their cultural schism (Dolby, 2001; Guerra & White, 1995). These cases merit particular attention, and a better understanding of the complex nature, strategies and factors impacting on ethnic identity development could assist in early detection and prevention.

2.4. Identity in the Age of Globalisation

Today's younger generations are growing up in a 'global village' (Cahill, 1995: 42), a society marked by an accelerating rate of cross-border exchanges of human, material and intellectual capital. These changes have been catalysed by rapidly evolving technologies, mounting international political and economic interdependence, an extended breadth and depth of transactions and interactions, and a seeming convergence of popular culture and lifestyles. Greater international connectivity and flow has contributed to marked changes in the ways people relate to each other and their environment, and in their conceptions of themselves and their place in an increasingly complex and volatile world.

In order to cope with a world of heightened pluralism, contradictions, abundance and change, young people have had to take on new and adaptive 'ways of being' able to accommodate the greater impermanence, ambiguity and diversity of modern society. They also have access to a wider array of choices and influences and this can make the task of forming concise, clearly-definable and static self-identities even more difficult. In their research on a diverse sample of Australians, Ang and his colleagues (2002) discovered that cultural diversity is a ubiquitous part of daily life: 'In practice, most Australians, from whatever background, live and breathe cultural diversity, actively engaging with goods and activities from many different cultures. Cultural mixing and matching is almost universal' (Ang et al, 2002: 4).

This 'mixing and matching' was most evident in the 16 to 24 year age group which suggests that the younger generations are far more comfortable engaging in intercultural relationships than older generations. In fact, the researchers found that younger people have much higher levels of intercultural contact than older Australians — 57% of the 16 to 24 year age cohort in the national sample, compared with only 30% of those aged 55 years and over, stated that they have 'a lot' of social contact with people from different cultures (Ang et al, 2002).

In this pick-and-mix lifestyle, young people 'borrow' bits and pieces from other cultures to create a truly multicultural youth subculture (Heaven & Tubridy, 2003) and more fluid local identities. By integrating elements from other cultures into their everyday world, young people are inventing new hybrid identities that are more aligned with their culturally diverse and fluid context. Thus, it appears that neither traditional national identities (typified by the romanticised notions of Australian culture) nor essentialised forms of ethnic identities remain relevant to the daily experiences of young people. Current popular conceptions of bicultural identity and ethnic identity do not sufficiently acknowledge the broader global scope of influences on identity, nor that globalisation can also impact on the cultural identities of young people from the majority group and those who have little direct intercultural contact.

Surrounded by a transformed social landscape in which diversity and change are intrinsic features, it is inevitable that the current younger generations will have different perceptions of, and approaches to, navigating their social world to past generations of youth. Demographer Bernard Salt describes the seemingly transitory approach of Generation Y which is in contrast with the preference of previous generations for constancy:

'The model for Ys is to spend their 20s completing tertiary education;
forming, dismantling and reforming relationships; working at one job
and then tossing that in for another; living at home with mum and dad
and then moving in with a lover and then moving back home eight months later;
dropping everything here and tripping off to London.
These values which, a generation ago, would have been viewed as shallow
and self-serving, are now close to mainstream.'

(Salt, 2006: 78)

Generation Y is also creating a fresh approach to the concept of identity: 'For young people today, identity is not really about being neither "here nor there" or belonging to some kind of an "imagined community" but instead … [about] establishing and maintaining a place for oneself within a diverse personal network … far more so than being about belonging to any particular, ascribed nameable identity group' (Hopkins, cited in Centre for Multicultural Youth Issues, 2008).   Young people are coming of age in a world that is clearly more multicultural, unsettled and complex than that of their predecessors.

2.5. The Emergence of Multiple Identities

While the concept of multiple cultural identities in individuals is not new, the notion that differentiated ethnic identities can co-exist in functional, complex and adaptive ways is only recently gaining prominence and value. This research is now challenging the notion of a unified, singular self (Pittinsky et al, 1999).

Many earlier theories of ethnic identity were based on the assumption that the presence of more than one ethnic identity represented a fragmented and confused identity that was associated with maladjustment and poorer wellbeing. Instead, identity is now widely regarded as being highly complex and context-driven, with the multiple 'selves' co-occurring within the individual and emerging according to the context. Within this conception of self-identity, the individual is regarded as a more active agent that engages in a process of strategically selecting and employing components from his / her identity 'toolkit' as appropriate to the perceived situation. This differs from earlier theories which viewed identity more-or-less as a singular entity that provided an unchanging self across all situations, and thus denied the individual any agency or choice in skilfully negotiating different circumstances and situations.

Rather than regarding ethnic identity as fixed — something people 'inherit' through genes or the family and culture they were born into — and defined by a set of absolute characteristics, ethnic identity is now seen as a subjective construct that is open to constant revision and that comprise potentially conflicting and contradictory elements from a number of cultures.

These multiple identities are used in different ways in different contexts (Adibi, 2003). In Adibi's study with young Iranian-Australians, many of the participants used different strategies to manage their two worlds to ensure that the 'outside world' did not infringe on their 'parent's world' and vice versa. They had developed their own ways of resolving the dichotomies to effectively move between their two worlds without necessarily integrating the conflicting aspects of their identity into a unified identity. This is an example of a type of biculturalism that seeks to encompass aspects of both cultures.

Hyphenated Identities

Many researchers have studied the phenomenon of 'hyphenated identities' (e.g. 'Vietnamese-Australian' or 'Italian-Australian') which serve as common descriptors of bicultural identities. The first part of the hyphenated identity is an ethnic or cultural marker that connotes one's background, and the second part signifies the country of residence or citizenship (Noble & Tabar, 2002). However, as Noble, Poynting and Tabar (1999) discovered in their study of Lebanese-Australian boys, these hyphenated identities do not represent a hybridisation of two separate cultures in which two discrete elements are simply brought together in their pure form to produce a whole. The process is far more complex and often involves an ambiguous combination and fusion of both cultures, incorporating some distinct elements from each culture and some elements newly created from cultural fusion or reconciliation. The product of the process of hybridisation is generally a totally new, often indefinable, culture.

> As one interviewee in Shi and Babrow's (2007: 328) study of Chinese-Americans stated, 'I think belonging to the American culture and Chinese culture creates a new culture. I'm both. Chinese-American culture is definitely a lot different from Chinese culture or American culture.'

Such crossing over, co-existence, blending or other mix of different cultures and the ambiguity associated with the lack of clear categories and descriptors appears to be something that contemporary minority youth often accept and assume without significant problems. As another interviewee in Shi and Babrow's study (2007: 332) put it, 'I do not try to identify myself with either one or the other. I take myself as I am. Neither Chinese nor Caucasian can fully explain who I am. When you don't identify yourself either way, you're able to accept the ambiguity equally.'

Everyday Cosmopolitanism

In 2002, the SBS Board commissioned a major research to examine the trends in Australian multiculturalism. This study, which drew on a sample of Australians from a range of age groups and backgrounds, found that many NESB participants do not feel a complete sense of belonging to Australia — only 30% of the second-generation NESB respondents described their identity as 'Australian' (Ang et al, 2002). Despite this surprisingly low figure, the researchers uncovered a degree of cultural mixing through which individuals are combining aspects of both their ancestral and 'mainstream' cultures and exhibiting an 'everyday cosmopolitanism' (Ang et al, 2002: 25).

This seeming contradiction suggested an active presence of different identities within the individual — some identities represent hybrid amalgamations of the two cultures and other identities are more reflective of the ancestral culture. The researchers surmised that these 'hybrid lives' are, to a degree, independent from the identities articulated by the individual, as many respondents identified themselves according to their ancestral ethnicity (e.g. as 'Greek' or 'Vietnamese') while still exhibiting behaviours and attitudes reflective of hybrid identities.

In a subsequent study, Ang and his colleagues (2006) focused on young Australians aged 16 to 40 years. The research revealed that young Australians of all backgrounds are more comfortable with cultural diversity and engage with their multicultural world in much more interactive ways than older generations. Young people also appear to have less absolutist conceptions of ethnic categories and more fluid identities that are highly dependent on the context and situation.

In the practice of 'everyday cosmopolitanism', they engage with people and objects from other cultures and often integrate these cultural identifiers into their own lives. This finding does not negate the continuing problems associated with racism, discrimination and exclusion, and the inherent tension between intolerance and community harmony. However, it does suggest that young people are learning to navigate these tensions through connecting aspects of cultural diversity in practical and complex ways.

The complexity of cultural self-identity in today's super-diverse and globalised environment extends beyond the various forms of biculturalism to reflect a multiculturalism. Young people growing up in a world saturated with cultural diversity and popular culture do not limit their identities to aspects of their own ethnic backgrounds and the dominant culture of the majority group.

As Noble and his colleagues (1999) found, hybridity and multiple identities can include elements from other cultures. For example, one of the young men in Noble et al's (1999) study has a Syrian Muslim background but readily applies the cultural label 'Lebanese' to his self-identity as it promotes a sense of affiliation with his Lebanese-Australian friends. Warikoo (2007) examined 'racial authenticity' amongst second-generation youth in New York and London and found that many South Asian students prefer hip-hop-Hindi music that blends both black popular culture with ethnic Indian music.

This challenge to earlier, more simplistic notions of fixed, singular identities that can be succinctly defined and categorised raises the question of how a seemingly post-modern conception of identity can be expressed, analysed and understood. Nayak (2003, cited in Harris, 2008: 188) recommends the 'need to engage more closely with lived experience and the changing cultural and material geographies of young lives'.

This relatively new focus on 'everyday multiculturalism' (Harris, 2008) draws attention to the practical impacts of multiculturalism and globalisation on people's routine lives and the ways in which people negotiate contradictions, conflicts and ambiguity. This is a powerful approach as it places the individual at the centre of the investigation and takes into account individual differences, the dynamic nature of identity and individual agency and ability (Harris 2008). Noble et al's study (1999, see **Model 1**) is a good example of an 'everyday multiculturalism' approach to considering multiple identities and provides new insights into the strategic and context-responsive nature of identity.

The use of the term 'multiple identities' does not suggest that the identity of young people is necessarily fragmented and that the different identities are incompatible and constantly in conflict. Nor are the different identities necessarily compatible and integrated. Rather, there is an ambivalent relationship between the various identities that interact with each other in various ways, at times in conflict. Wenger (1998) refers to the intersection of different identities as a 'nexus' that may involve tensions that are not always resolved. Perhaps the most effective description of this peculiar notion of identity as being multiple but functional is the description by Hermans and Kempen (1998, cited in Jensen 2008: 14): 'self or identity can be conceived of as a dynamic multiplicity of different and even contrasting positions or voices that allow mutual dialogical relationships.'

Model 1. Strategic Essentialism and Strategic Hybridity

Noble, Poynting and Tabar's study in 1999 explored the constructions of ethnic identity by second-generation Arabic-speaking young men in south-western Sydney. The research employed a qualitative approach and focused on the dynamics of identity formation in different contexts.

Their analysis of the seven interviews highlighted the fluid, context-specific nature of ethnic identity and the highly complex ways in which young people construct and use their multiple identities. Amongst this particular sample, ethnic identity was found to incorporate a mix of both essentialised and hybridised ethnic identities. These seemingly contradictory types of identities were used by the individuals in highly strategic ways.

The boys interviewed identified themselves as hyphenated 'Lebanese-Australian', an apparently straightforward duality. However, the identities constructed and articulated were far more complex than a simply duality of two cultures. For example:

▶ **Ethnic labels**

Different situations bring about different levels of identification. For example, depending on the situation, the young men may identify themselves as 'Lebanese-Australian', 'Lebanese Muslim', 'Lebanese', 'wogs' (when they identify with Greeks or Italians) or even as 'Asian' (when they identify with students in opposition to 'Australian' students).

▶ **Essentialised elements**

The youths demonstrated characteristics of essentialism (eg they equated 'Lebanese-ness' with qualities such as honour, respect, morality and the idea of family and, at the same time, identified the lack of these characteristics among Anglo-Australians). This essentialism was strategic as it provided practical benefits, such as a sense of cultural pride, belonging, unity, security and strength, and was often used to counteract the racism and discrimination they experienced and over which they had little control. For example, one young man made concerted efforts to learn a traditional Lebanese dance after being involved in an intense conflict that he perceived as a threat to his Lebanese background. The young men also spoke or borrowed from the Arabic language to achieve particular outcomes (e.g. to swear in class or when they did not want another person present to hear what they were saying).

▶ **Hybridised elements**

The young men identified with many things they explicitly labeled as 'Australian' (e.g. the beach, sport, etc) and regarded Australia as the place they preferred to live. In strategic situations, they would consciously employ 'Australian' practices and attitudes. For example, they would speak English rather than Arabic at home when they did not want their parents to understand what they were saying, or would set their parents' restrictions on their freedom in opposition to the 'Australian' values of independence.

This study brought to light the different relationships that the young men had to their cultural worlds and the flexible and strategic ways they used or subsumed these differences depending on the context.

As the researchers state, this pivotal research 'offers a fundamental challenge to multiculturalism and its conception of ethnicity as understood and practised in the Australian context. There is essentially a heterogeneous and hybrid identity, which runs against a basic assumption of multiculturalism that every ethnic community in the Australian society possesses a neatly bounded and homogenous cultural identity' (Noble & Tabar, 2002: 143).

2.6. Staged Approaches of Ethnic Identity

Research on identity construction, including the development of ethnic identity, has largely focused on adolescents and young adults, driven by the recognition of this life stage as the most crucial for identity formation. Some of the most notable models include:

▶   **Erikson's stage theory of personality development** (see **Model 2**)

involves eight stages of human development and identifies the crucial task of adolescence as the establishment of a stable core identity, achieved primarily through experimentation with roles and commitment to key identity domains (Umana-Taylor, 2005, Ross & Buelher, 2004). On completion of this stage, the individual will have reconciled his / her diffuse identity and can then progress to the next developmental stage (Cahill & Ewen, 1987).

▶   **Marcia's Four Identity Statuses** (see **Model 3**)

builds on Erikson's theory and proposes four progressive steps in resolving identity crises: diffused identity, foreclosure, moratorium and achieved identity. The ultimate outcome of the process is an 'achieved identity' at which point the individual has carefully assessed alternative identities and consciously chosen the identity to which he / she will commit. According to Marcia, an achieved identity is associated with self-acceptance, a realistic and stable self-definition, and commitment to core values and ideologies (Ross & Buehler, 2004).

▶   **Phinney Models of Identity** (see **Model 4**)

introduces a dimensional approach which stipulates four dimensions affecting ethnic identity: two cognitive dimensions (self-identification and ethnic identity achievement), a behavioural component (ethnic behaviours and practices) and an affective component (affirmation and belonging). Phinney and her colleagues (1990, cited in Bevan, 2000) also suggested that a number of different responses to ethnic identity conflicts are possible (alienation/marginalisation, assimilation, withdrawal / separation and integration / biculturalism) and that achieved identity results from a three-stage process similar to the process proposed by Marcia. A later study (Phinney, Chavira & Williamson, 1992, cited in Ross & Buehler, 2004) indicated that, of the four possible responses, integration is the most adaptive option while assimilation is associated with lower self-esteem and marginality leads to the poorest psychological outcomes.

Although Erikson's, Marcia's and Phinney's models focus and elaborate on different aspects of identity formation, they all sponsor a staged approach to ethnic identity formation which assumes that development follows a set linear and sequential pathway. Overall, the models predict that an adaptive pathway for ethnic identity development begins with an emerging consciousness of one's identity, followed by a crisis period of active searching and experimentation, and results in a reconciled identity characterised by an integration of cultures and greater clarity and commitment.

Generally, these models regard an integrated, bicultural identity as the 'healthiest' outcome, and the final achieved identity as relatively immutable over time. Although Erikson does acknowledge that identity formation is a lifelong event as identity can be redefined, to some extent, during later periods of life (Mann, 2006), he does not elaborate on post-adolescent identity.

'In short, these models posit identity as still photographs,
a self-image that persists within the moving picture that is its context.
Although change occurs in the form of development from one configuration
to another, identity at each stage is conceptualised as a relatively fixed figure
within a moving ground.'

(Shi & Babrow, 2007: 318)

Fluid Identities

The prescriptive nature of these stage models contradicts the more recent shift towards dynamic and multiple identities that can alter with time and circumstances (Yeh & Hwang, 2000). They also give preference to a particular outcome (usually an integrated identity), consequently devaluing other strategies that people may use to cope with cultural differences (Mio et al, 2006). Additionally, they are primarily concerned with incidents of cultural *duality* in which an individual from an ethnic minority must cope with the conflicts between his / her ethnic culture and the dominant culture. In a world marked by super-diversity and globalisation, such models would appear outdated in their limited interpretations and explanations of ethnic identity formation.

Moreover, there is a growing awareness that context is critical to identity development and identity expression. A focus on the context broadens theories of identity beyond the individual and his / her immediate environment to consider situational factors and wider cultural influences and relationships. For example, McDermott (1991, cited in Bevan, 2000) concluded that young people experience higher stress in acculturating when there are greater disparities between their two cultures. Drawing on social categorisation theories, some researchers have analysed the ways in which in-group and out-group membership and attitudes affect self-identity (see, for example, Hogg & Abrams 1988, cited in Pittinsky et al, 1999; Giles & Johnson, 1981, cited in Rosenthal, 1987).

In general, there is a growing shift away from rigid, prescriptive models of ethnic identity formation that seek to explain processes and ideal outcomes, towards an exploration of the various dimensions of and influences on identity, and a mounting interest in the different ways in which identity is expressed and negotiated in the 'real world'. This conceptual shift has brought about a greater recognition that multiple identities are 'normal' and that identity can be both fragmented but unitary, and incompatible but congruent. More complex and nuanced models of identity development include:

▶ **Roccas and Brewer's concept of 'social identity complexity'** (2002) (see **Model 5**)

specifies four distinct ways in which individuals represent the relationships between the social groups to which they belong. They apply these four modes of identity representation to cultural identity formation and show how group identification affects ethnic identity strategies. In particular, Roccas and Brewer's theory defines integration as a 'form of biculturalism [that] acknowledges multiple cultural identities simultaneously' (Roccas & Brewer, 2002: 93). This is, perhaps, the most comprehensive available model of identity development that provides a theoretical framework for multiple ethnic identities. Roccas and Brewer also state that individuals use different identity representations at different times, depending on the period in life, situation or mental state. Their model offers a more thorough understanding by recognising the interplay of cognition, intergroup social processes and wider situational factors on identity.

► **Wenger's social theory of learning (1998)** (see **Model 6**)

explores the ways that meaning is constructed, owned and used. This theory acknowledges the multi-layered complexity of identity and the active involvement of individuals in creating, defining and participating in the ongoing process of constructing their individual and communal identities. Hence, identity is represented as a social process that takes place in the context of structural power, participation / exclusion, local and global settings, membership of many social groups, socio-historical continuity and the lived experience.

Wenger's conception of identity also goes beyond a preoccupation with sequential process and preferred outcomes, to focus on the complex interplay of various dimensions and the continuous practice of identity. Importantly, it regards identity as a lived experience that is interesting in the ways it is actualised and experienced in the 'real world', rather than merely as abstract categories, roles and labels.

Wenger's theory is reflective of the growing appreciation of the practical intricacies through which self-identity is formed and presented. As Yip and Fuligini (2002: 1568) put it, in order to better understand the 'real-life ways' in which ethnicity affects young people, we need to examine 'both the ways in which adolescents construct their experiences through ethnic identity, as well as ways in which others respond to their ethnicity.' In other words, we need to understand how young people utilise their multiple identities in their daily lives and how this affects, and is affected by, their social environment.

This progression of change in ethnic identity theory also reflects Hall's (cited in Yon, 2000) distinction of the three conceptualisations of the subject in identity formation.

► **the 'enlightenment' model**

in which identity develops in a linear fashion through the unfolding of the 'essential self' or inner core;

► **the 'sociological model'**

which sees identity as the interaction between the individual and his / her social world, with a singular identity providing a sense of coherence and unity;

► **the 'post-modern model'**

regards the sense of coherence and unity as a fantasy, instead regarding identity as multiple, fragmented, competing and, therefore, unresolved.

In the post-modern subject, the sense of coherence does not stem from a united and stable identity, but from the ongoing practice of constructing oneself within one's narrative. According to Hall, it is this narrative, not the constantly changing identity that anchors the individual in his / her social world.

Model 2. Erikson's Theory of Personality Development

Erikson distinguished eight stages of human development, each associated with a particular psychosocial task to master and a resulting conflict to resolve (Ross & Buehler, 2004). During adolescence, the primary conflict is between identity and diffusion. Although Erikson acknowledges that identity formation is a lifelong process, he asserts that the identity crisis is most pronounced during adolescence. During this life stage, the individual enjoys a period of 'psychosocial moratorium' during which he / she can experiment with social roles and actively 'search' for his / her identity.

The aim of identity development is to integrate 'what individuals know of themselves and their world into a stable continuum of past knowledge, present experiences, and future goals in order to elaborate a cohesive sense of personal feeling of self' (Mann, 2006: 212). Integral to developing a reconciled identity are the critical activities of exploration and commitment as it is only through active exploration that the individual can resolve identity conflicts (Umana-Taylor, 2005).

Model 3. Marcia's Four Identity Statuses

Marcia's model stipulates a four-stage pathway for the formation of a reconciled identity. A mature identity can only be achieved through the individual experiencing and resolving an identity crisis and committing to a vocation or ideology (Umana-Taylor, 2005).

To achieve a mature identity, the individual must move through four stages (Umana-Taylor, 2005):

▶ **Diffused identity**
   The pre-crisis period in early adolescence during which the individual receives increasing pressures from parents, school and peers and eventually begins to grapple with his / her identity.

▶ **Foreclosure**
   The individual takes on the 'ready-made' expectations and identities imposed by parents and significant others, and unable to distinguish between own and others' goals.

▶ **Moratorium**
   The period in which the adolescent explores alternative identities before committing to one. The individual may seek or encounter conflicting opinions and may often experience confusion, discontent and instability during this period.

▶ **Achieved identity**
   Following the experience of a moratorium and careful evaluation of alternatives, the individual resolves his / her identity crisis and commits to an identity.

Model 4. Phinney Models of Identity

Based on Erikson's and Marcia's models, Phinney proposed a similar three-stage process through which ethnic identity develops: unexamined ethnic identity, ethnic identity search and achieved ethnic identity (French et al, 2006).

Phinney also defined four dimensions of ethnic identity:

▶ **Self-identification**
the ethnic labels the individual gives him / herself

▶ **Ethnic behaviours and practices**
the individual's engagement in the social activities and traditions of his / her ethnic group

▶ **Affirmation and belonging**
the positive feelings and attachments to one's ethnic group

▶ **Ethnic identity achievement**
a sense of clarity about what it means to be a member of one's ethnic group.

In 1990, Phinney and her colleagues proposed four alternative strategies to cope with ethnic conflict (Bevan, 2000):

▶ **Alienation / marginalisation**
the individual has a negative perception of his / her ethnic group and becomes alienated from his / her own culture but does not adapt to the majority culture

▶ **Assimilation**
the individual attempts to become part of the majority culture and has weak ties with his / her ethnic group

▶ **Withdrawal / separation**
the individual emphasises his / her ethnic group membership and withdraws from the majority group

▶ **Integration / biculturalism**
the individual retains his / her ethnic culture and also adapts to the majority culture.

Phinney and Devich-Navarro (1997, cited in Ross & Buehler, 2004) later identified two sub-types of biculturalism and also added a fifth coping strategy, fusion:

▶ **Blended biculturalism**
the individual acts in ways that are congruent with both cultures as he / she has found commonalities between the two cultures

▶ **Alternative biculturalism**
the individual vacillates between the two cultures, behaving in different ways as proscribed by the salient culture

▶ **Fusion**
the individual merges his / her ethnic culture with the majority culture.

Model 5. Roccas & Brewer Social Identity Complexity Model

Roccas and Brewer (2002) developed a new theoretical construct that is concerned with the subjective representation of one's different group memberships. Each person belongs to many different social groups (e.g. based on age, gender, location of residence, occupation, ethnicity, nationality, etc) and therefore has multiple social identities. The ways in which the individual understands the relationships between these multiple groups will affect the complexity of his / her self-identity as well as his / her attitudes towards other groups. Roccas and Brewer proposed four alternative ways in which the relationships of multiple in-groups can be subjectively represented:

► **Intersection**
This is the simplest representation as it reduces multiple group identities to a single identity. In this instance, the individual defines his / her primary social identity in terms of the conjunction of different groups. This is represented by hyphenated identities (eg 'Spanish-Australian') and is akin to Phinney and Devich-Navarro's (1997, cited in Ross & Buehler 2004) strategies of blended biculturalism and fusion.

► **Dominance**
The individual adopts the identity of one primary group and subordinates all other group identities. This has similarities to Phinney's strategies of assimilation and withdrawal.

► **Compartmentalisation**
If more than one group identity is important to the individual as a source of social identity, the individual may activate and express each group identity in isolation. The social identity that is activated depends on the context and situation (eg speaking different languages at home and at school). This representation is associated with both competence in the two cultures and cultural conflict, and resembles Phinney and Devich-Navarro's (1997, cited in Ross & Buehler, 2004) notion of alternating biculturalism.

► **Merger**
All groups of which one is a member are simultaneously recognised, resulting in an inclusive and multi-layered identity. This is the most complex representation as it allows for both differentiation and integration within the same social identity. Roccas and Brewer present it as a form of intercultural identity which allows the individual to hold different cultural identities and for social identity to transcend simple categorical divisions.

Model 6. Wenger Social Theory of Learning

Central to Wenger's 1998 theory is the idea that identity is affected by our ability to shape the meanings of our experience of membership in social communities. Identity is constructed through negotiated experience through which people define who they are by the ways they experience themselves through their interactions with their social world and through their participation in their various communities. Wenger refers to identity as the 'nexus of multi-membership' as identity is defined by the ways in which multiple identities (arising from membership of various social groups) intersect and are combined and reconciled.

Meaning-making is a key component in identity development. Meaning is constructed through one's interpretation of his / her experiences and the different meanings that arise from the multiple identities must be negotiated and reconciled. Thus, this experience of multi-membership and reconciliation of the nexus creates a highly unique and personal identity.

The process of identity formation involves a dual process of identification (we can identify with experiences, symbols, values, objects, people, etc) and negotiability. Negotiability refers to the ability, facility and legitimacy to shape social meanings. It reflects structural forms of power and legitimacy that affect both the capacity of the individual to shape the meanings that a community produces and also to share in the ownership and control of those meanings. As Wenger (1998: 200) states, 'the social nature of meaning includes its contestable character as an inherent feature.'

'If you watch a toddler playing in a park with a carer, they go play,
in a playground a little bit maybe, but come back, touch their parent
and go back … And this is identity.
Identity is not something that we want to sit in and let it suffocate us.
It is something we just like to touch; it is there for us and the
purpose of a secure identity is to allow us to move on in the world.'

(Hage, 2008)

3. Influences on Self-Identity

Self-identity is not only comprised of multiple dimensions, identities and strategies, but is also shaped by a multitude of influences that interact in various ways (Tuan, 1999). Personal characteristics, such as personality, physical characteristics, cognitive ability, past experiences and perceptions, combine with a plethora of factors that are external to the individual.

Critically, these factors affect the choices available to the individual to form their identity and the coping strategies used to manage discrepancies. An understanding of contextual self-identity formation is vital to informing policies and practices to provide optimal environments for young people to freely explore and express their identities. One young interviewee in Shi and Babrow's (2007: 332) study described the 'right environment' to help him identify, synthesise and accept himself as one in which 'you don't have to wear that mask.'

3.1. Microsystemic Influences

Despite the increased mobility of people, ideas and cultures in the current age of globalisation, young people's daily experiences are largely restricted to their local neighbourhoods and immediate social institutions and networks (Harris, 2008). Young people often encounter limited transport opportunities, parental constraints on movement and compulsory presence in specific spaces such as schools. As Nayak (2003, cited in Harris, 2008: 192) states, 'in a changing world, young people's identities continue to be defined through the material cultures of daily life [including] neighbourhood networks, the institution of schooling, familial relations, local labour markets and place and locality.'

On the one hand, young people have greater freedoms and interactions with more distant people and places through the Internet and other modes of popular culture; on the other hand, they continue to be firmly bound to local settings. Broad consultations with young Victorians in 2006 revealed that young people have 'deepening community connections' (State Government of Victoria, 2006: 11), confirming the decisive influence that microsystemic structures continue to have on young people.

3.1.1. Personal Factors

Individual personality traits and physical attributes form an underlying basis for social forces and events to build upon and interact with in the generation of self-identity. Some of the personality traits, cognitive factors and physical features that can affect the formation and negotiation of ethnic self-identity are:

▶ **Inclination to explore**
Some people may be more temperamentally inclined to explore their identity and to learn about their past and other cultures (Phinney, 2008).

▶ **Centrality of ethnicity to the self**
The importance of ethnicity to the individual will have a strong bearing on his / her interest in exploring ethnic identity and on his / her construction and use of self-labels (Kiang, 2008).

▶ **Need to belong**
Some people feel a stronger need to belong to and be accepted by a group (Phinney, 2008).

▶ **Tolerance for ambiguity**
People with a lower tolerance for ambiguity are more likely to seek simpler representations of their multiple identities. Tolerance for ambiguity reflects a combination of personality constructs including the need for closure, need for structure and uncertainty orientation (Roccas & Brewer, 2002).

▶ **Personal values**
Certain values may promote a tendency towards multiple, complex identities (rather than more simplified representations of identity). Such values include an openness to change which facilitates learning, exploration and independent decisions; and universalism which emphasises a concern with the welfare of others and tolerance of all people (Roccas & Brewer, 2002).

▶ **Motivation for integration**
Some individuals feel that it is important for 'newcomers' and other community members to subscribe to the dominant standards and practices and will be more motivated to take steps to adjust to or accommodate majority norms (Nesdale & Mak, 2000).

▶ **Perceptions of ethnic group membership**
The individual's assessment of the benefits and detriments associated with membership of his / her ethnic group can be affected by various factors (such as social attitudes, relative social and economic disadvantages, etc).

▶ **Distinctive visible features**
Aspects of appearance (such as skin colour, shape of eyes and clothing) can set the individual apart from other groups (particularly the majority group) and increase the salience of ethnicity as well as shape the attitudes and reactions of others.

'Young people's experience of the present is very much mediated by their past …
The past mingles with the present too in terms of the meanings and interpretations
young people give to life events as they unfurl.'

(Brough et al, 2003: 14)

Experiences are particularly specific to the individual, both in terms of the content of events and the meanings the perceiver attaches to those events. Of particular importance are the circumstances surrounding the young person's move to Australia — for some, the move to a new country is seen as an adventure while others may resent or be ambivalent towards the relocation (Kilbride et al, 2001). These feelings can affect the individual's attitudes towards the new country and thereby affect identity development.

For example, young people who have been forced to flee their homeland, or whose parents came to Australia as refugees, may still feel a deep attachment to their country of origin. Alternatively, they may strongly resist identifying with their country of origin because of feelings of anger or traumatic recollections. Some young people may have had a number of international relocations and may, therefore, bring with them a few sets of cultural influences and identities which will play a role in their identity formation (Sims et al, 2008).

3.1.2. Language

Language is an integral dimension of culture and closely interrelated with ethnicity (Kvernmo, 1998). It can be an important feature of group membership — as a major tool for distinguishing a group (particularly for 'invisible' ethnic minorities), a means of facilitating cohesion within the group, a signifier of group membership, a communication tool that allows for cultural continuity and shared meanings, and a key means of individual internalisation of culture (Kvernmo, 1998). As Bouzo (2007: 62) puts it, 'The link between languages and ethnicity plays a strong symbolic role in maintaining culture since so much of a group's culture is constituted verbally in its songs, prayers, laws and proverbs, its history, philosophy and teachings.'

One of the biggest problems that recent arrivals from non-English speaking backgrounds must confront is English language proficiency. Without the ability to communicate effectively with peers and others in the wider community, young people are 'locked into their own speech community' (Cahill & Ewen, 1987: 46) and may find it harder to adapt to and feel included in their new society. Language differences can also contribute to intergenerational conflicts which, as will be discussed in the next sub-section of this paper, can substantially affect ethnic identity development.

In her study of young Americans with Chinese ancestry, Kiang (2008) found English language proficiency to be significantly associated with ethnic self-labelling. Those who had higher English proficiency were more likely to choose a hyphenated label (e.g. 'Chinese-American') rather than a heritage / national label. Kiang (2008) surmised that a mastery of English helps to validate the young person's identification as 'American'. In an earlier Australian study, Rosenthal and Hrynevich (1985, cited in Rosenthal, 1987) found that both the Greek-Australian and Italian-Australian samples regarded language as a characteristic that distinguished them from other groups.

The relationship between ethnicity and language is complex and reciprocal. Being bilingual (fluent in both the ethnic and dominant languages) has an influence on ethnic identity, but one's ethnic identity also influences the development of bilinguality (Hamers and Blanc, 1993, cited in Kvernmo, 1998). Ones ability to share in the culture of, and communicate and feel affinity with the ethnic group may promote a stronger identification with the ethnic group. Correspondingly, a strong sense of ethnic identity is likely to motivate the individual to learn or maintain the ethnic language. Bilinguality supports bicultural identity development as it facilitates the young person's competence and comfort in both cultures (Kvernmo, 1998).

A number of researchers have made some key observations relating to the role of community-based services in language and identity:

▶ In the late 1980s, Cahill and his colleagues (Cahill & Ewen 1987; Cahill 1985, cited in Adibi 2003) noted the importance of opportunities and encouragement in the Australian school system for migrant students to remain or become proficient in their ethnic language.

▶ Community language schools are, often, a crucial resource for connecting young people (particularly of second- and subsequent generations) to their ancestral culture and for perpetuating bilingualism (Bouzo, 2007).

▶ Findings of a Canadian study (Kilbride et al, 2003) suggested that school-based English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) programs can have both positive and negative effects on the settlement of young migrants. While they can provide vital assistance in English proficiency, they can also separate participants from other students and serve to reinforce their difference and isolation.

As language is such a conspicuous marker of ethnic difference, it can strengthen in-group cohesion and sense of belonging but, at the same time, accentuate differences between groups. A recent examination of public attitudes revealed that young Australians were, on the whole, reasonably comfortable with and valued multiculturalism (Ang et al, 2006). However, they were clearly uncomfortable with multilingualism, and this unease was evident even among young people from non-English-speaking backgrounds. While there was a general acceptance, and even appreciation, of most public aspects of cultural diversity, research participants commonly viewed language integration as an imperative.

3.1.3. Family

'Socialisation within the family
provides the initial foundation for ethnic identity.'

(Bernal et al 1993, cited in Phinney, 2008: 9).

The family is the primary transmitter of culture for children during the early stages of socialisation and identity formation, and continues to play a significant role during adolescent exploration of ethnic identity (Kiang & Fuligini, 2009). For minority youth, parents are the key source of information about their cultural background, history and traditions (Phinney, 2008).

However, various studies have shown that the *quality* of the family environment is an important determinant in young people's level of ethnic identity exploration and their evaluations of ethnic group membership. Grotevant and Cooper (1998) found that adolescents who came from family environments that supported the development and expression of their individual viewpoints exhibited higher levels of ethnic exploration. Similarly Rosenthal and Feldman (1992), through their study of Chinese youth in the United States and Australia, concluded that young people develop more positive feelings about their cultural heritage if they have a warm family environment that allows them the flexibility and opportunity to develop autonomy.

Parents also provide role models for their children. When adolescents have a positive evaluation of their parents, they are more likely to model their parents, including identifying with their parent's ethnic culture (Jaffe 1998, Rosenthal & Feldman, 1992). In a study of ethnic identity development among Italian-Australian youth, Rosenthal and Cichello (1986) found that young people were more likely to form a positive ethnic identity when they believed that their parents were maintaining links with their ethnic culture (for example, participating in local ethnic groups and activities).

In these ways, the family environment can provide an important stable base for the young person to contend with identity-related issues and this can, to some extent, act as a protective factor to ameliorate the negative effects of discrimination, racism and other challenges to ethnic identity and sense of belonging (Bevan, 2000).

However, the family context can also hamper positive self-identity development and be an additional stressor during the turbulent adolescent period. According to Kahn and Fau (1995, cited in Bevan, 2000), young people will be more vulnerable in their development of a healthy self-identity if their parents are confused about their own ethnic identity and, therefore, less able to provide an enabling environment or positive role models.

An analysis of the contacts made to Kids Help Line from 1995 to 1999 revealed that family relationship problems generated the most calls to the helpline. Family problems accounted for a higher proportion of calls from NESB youth (23% of calls during the reference period) compared with those received from non-NESB callers. Furthermore, contacts from NESB callers were more likely to be related to intergenerational conflicts (usually stemming from cultural differences) rather than marital conflicts between parents (Kids Help Line 2000).

These results suggest that intergenerational conflict is more commonly experienced by ethnic minority families than families from the majority group. Bevan (2000) suggests that it would be more appropriate to describe these conflicts between minority young people and their parents as intercultural rather than intergenerational as they are more reflective of differences in cultural values and settlement than of differences between generations.

> Relationship strain in ethnic minority families may occur for a number of reasons that have been well-documented in various studies (Francis & Cornfoot, 2007; Brough et al, 2003, Kilbride et al, 2001; Bevan, 2000; Kids Help Line, 2000; Guerra & White, 1995; Rosenthal, 1987):
>
> ▶ Changes in family structure, dynamics and roles (particularly where young people take on leadership roles in the family as they acculturate faster to their new society)
>
> ▶ Differences in values and expectations (particularly relating to activities outside the home, intimate relationships, independence, responsibilities and academic achievement)
>
> ▶ Differences in gender roles and expectations
>
> ▶ Differing degrees of 'westernisation' and maintenance of cultural traditions and values
>
> ▶ Language barriers

In discussing intercultural / generational relationships, it is also important to consider the wider disruptions to the family that often result from the migration process. Families may have had to leave members behind, they may have lost the supports of extended family and community, young people may arrive alone or with family members other than parents (e.g. siblings, uncles, etc) (Francis & Cornfoot, 2007), and parents themselves will usually be struggling with their own settlement and acculturation difficulties.

Supports for the whole family unit, which includes sensitivity to family and cultural differences, are essential in nurturing family environments that are conducive to identity exploration. There is a growing recognition of the importance of working with the family unit to enhance the capacity of families to provide adequate supports for adolescents and to facilitate ongoing positive family connections.

Recommendation :

Families with older children require specific supports, but there remains a shortage of appropriate programs, particularly for families from ethnic minority groups (O'Sullivan, 2006). Such programs could seek to assist parents in overcoming settlement issues and developing appropriate parenting practices, and to support both parents and their children to develop effective communication, conflict management and mutual understanding.

3.1.4. Friends and Peers

Like family, friends are an important source of support and information for young people in identity development. For minority youth, peers can provide both supports (a sense of belonging and source of information about the new culture) and problems (cultural devaluation, rejection and exclusion). Peer relationship can be particularly complex for older adolescent migrants and refugees (Kilbride et al, 2001), but are a critical factor in the young person's sense of belonging, self-esteem and adjustment to the new culture (Spira et al, 2002, Kilbride et al, 2001).

A close relationship exists between friendships and ethnic self-identity. Some young people seek out relationships with other minority youth with whom they share commonalities and within which they feel valued and accepted, while others may opt to form friendships with majority group peers to strengthen their cultural integration (Kilbride et al, 2001). Success in forming friendships and the attitudes of friends can also affect the individual's perceptions of self.

Recommendation :

Minority young people should have opportunities to form relationships with peers from the same ethnic background and also those from the wider community. They need to be able to make a real choice in their social relationships, choices that are not constrained by a lack of confidence, social contact opportunities, cross-cultural understanding and communication/language skills, or by a fear of racism or harm to self-esteem.

Such opportunities can be promoted through inclusive public events, carefully designed programs and services that engage young people in common activities, school or community-based 'buddy' systems, programs in schools and the wider community to reduce racism and promote cross-cultural understanding, assistance with acquiring functional English language, and approaches to strengthen supportive family environments.

3.1.5. Schools

Schools provide one of the first gateways to the formation of peer relationships and are also one of the first environments in which young people encounter discrimination, rejection (Kilbride et al, 2001) and pressures to assimilate, or conversely, acceptance and belonging. In the context of compulsory schooling, young people are more-or-less forced to repeatedly negotiate their cultural identity within the school context. Although racism and peer group conflicts can negatively impact on one's sense of self, schools are also sites of learning and exposure to different cultures. This is particularly the case for schools that have diverse student populations in which young people can form close relationships with peers from a range of cultural backgrounds.

Mansouri and Wood (2008) concluded that the level of cultural diversity within the school has a significant impact on ethnic self-identity. Minority young people who attend 'low-ethnic population schools' are less likely to address ethnic identity issues and have less access to school-based activities that discuss intercultural or multicultural issues. Additionally, the prevalence of racism appears to vary with the level of cultural heterogeneity amongst students. Although schools may not be able to completely eliminate racism, they should be willing to confront, discuss and address it so that such negative experiences do not further compound the difficulties that minority students face in forming positive ethnic identities.

A critical factor affecting ethnic identity development among students is the localised culture of the school which is partly determined by the school's leaders and staff, curriculum and resources, teacher training, school values, demographic composition of students and families, and relationships between the school, families and wider community. The evaluation of a school-based program (Spira et al, 2002) involving young female Mexican-American students concluded that a supportive environment could be created in schools through providing a range of complementary initiatives that encourage exploration, discussion and celebration of biculturalism (see, for example, the Advisory Group Program[1]). This is an example of the deliberate construction of a school environment which, through transmitting a consistent and coherent message via the school's culture, curriculum and staff, can encourage bicultural competence and positive identity development in minority students.

3.1.6. Local Ethnic Community

Frequently the local ethnic community is also the key link for immigrants to their cultural roots and an important resource for young people to learn about and engage in their ancestral culture. Access to other individuals, groups and activities from one's ethnic background can therefore influence the level to which young people are able to explore their ethnic identities (Lee, 2003, cited in Kiang and Fuligini, 2009; Saylor & Aries, 1999).

> In their comparison of young Greek-Australians and Italian-Australians, Rosenthal and Hrynevich (1985, cited in Rosenthal 1987) discovered that the Greek-Australian youth sampled expressed greater pride in and valuing of their ethnic heritage compared to their Italian-Australian counterparts.
>
> They concluded that this difference in ethnic group attachment was associated with the characteristics of the respective communities: the Greek community exhibited greater cohesion and highly organised institutional supports (e.g. churches, language schools, etc) which strongly supported the maintenance of ethnic identity and made it more difficult for the Greek-Australian youth to deny their Greek identity (Rosenthal et al, 1989).

While the local ethnic community can be a positive resource for minority young people, it can also inhibit choices in identity development. Nesdale and Mak (2000) suggest that involvement in the ethnic community is associated with lower identification with the host community, although Saylor and Aries (1999) found that involvement in ethnic organisations does not negatively impact on involvement in broader activities. This difference could be attributed to the opportunities available to the two study samples for involvement in wider community activities — Saylor and Aries' sample of college students may have had easier access to activities outside their ethnic community, while access may have been more limited and variable amongst Nesdale and Mak's diverse sample.

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[1] The Advisory Group Program involved weekly meetings of small groups of minority students to discuss a variety of issues, ranging from roles in the family to relationships with school peers. For further details, see Spira, Grossman & Wolff-Bensdorf 2002.

The local ethnic community can also exacerbate the identity confusion that some minority young people experience. For example, as Tuan (1999: 115) puts it, minority young people can 'get it from the other end as well.' They may encounter judgment from others in their ethnic community for being 'too Australian' and may not feel fully accepted by their own ethnic community.

Mansouri and Wood's (2008) research on Arab and Muslim youth in Australia revealed a dissonance between the views of the Islamic leadership in Australia and those of the young Muslims. While the young Muslims may have a strong sense of self as Muslim, members of the older generation may have a different conception of what 'being Muslim' entails and so may not recognise the ethnic identity claim of the young people. This highlights one way in which unequal distribution of power in meaning-making, often evident between different generations within the same ethnic community, can significantly affect ethnic self-identity.

On the one hand, the presence of strong ethnic community institutions is evidently essential in enabling minority young people, should they choose, to develop and maintain links with their ancestral culture. However, it is also vital that young people have equal opportunities to engage with the broader community outside their ethnic group. In this way, minority young people can have fuller choice in their exploration of their ethnic identity.

3.1.7. Local Neighbourhood

As young people are particularly rooted to their local environments of home, school, family and other networks and events in their local community, the immediate neighbourhood setting is an important influence in the self-identity development of young people. The diversity of ethnicities and cultural influences in the surrounding community is one important factor. Ethnic differences are accentuated in a culturally diverse setting which increases the salience of ethnic identity (Phinney, 2008). Young people who live in a neighbourhood or attend a school with a higher variation of ethnicities would encounter more cultural differences and, consequently, are likely to have greater awareness of their own ethnic identities. By contrast, those who occupy more homogenous spaces may explore their cultural identities at a later stage in life, or not at all.

Studies of young Asian-Americans in the United States have shown that exposure to cultural differences can affect ethnic self-labels. For example, Asian-Americans living in ethnically isolated enclaves had relatively little interaction with people from other ethnicities and tended to exhibit stronger ethnic identities (e.g. to identify as 'Chinese') (Masuoka, 2006, cited in Kiang, 2008). In communities where there is slightly greater ethnic diversity, young people from Chinese backgrounds may identify pan-ethnically with people from other Asian backgrounds (e.g. as 'Asian' or 'Asian-American') (Qian, 2004, cited in Kiang, 2008). Finally, those living in more diverse communities use a wider combination of ethnic labels (e.g. 'American', 'Chinese-American', 'Asian-American', etc).

Victoria is a diverse society, but the degree of cultural diversity can vary considerably between localities and settings. Regular and direct exposure to cultural differences affects the ways in which young people experience multiculturalism and, therefore, the ways in which they develop their own cultural identities.

3.1.8. Services and Programs

In a qualitative analysis of young refugees in Australia, many of those interviewed expressed their inability to discuss their problems with others. This highlights the importance of specific services for minority young people to assist and support them in issues relating to their self-identity and wellbeing.

> One young Chinese woman stated, 'My mum was aware of my problem, but I didn't want to show her too much ... I didn't want to burden her even more. One of my teachers noticed and asked me, but I didn't tell her. To me teacher is someone who teaches, and it didn't occur to me that I could speak to a teacher ... I didn't confide in my friend because I couldn't express them in English well at that time, so I didn't know who to tell' (Brough et al, 2003: 8).

Clearly, services need to be easily accessible to minority young people (particularly in terms of awareness, transport, operating times, costs, etc), and sufficiently resourced, including skilled and culturally competent staff who are able to deal with the complex issues presented. Spira and her colleagues (2002) recommend that services ensure young people can articulate multiple, complex and often confusing identities as recognition and validation of multiple identities enhances the space in which self-identity and meanings can be explored.

Early identification of those who are at-risk of poor outcomes relating to identity development is also important to enable early intervention and prevention or attenuation of later problems. This requires a greater understanding of the complex nature of and influences on the cultural self-identities of current cohorts of youth. However, Kilbride et al (2001) also warns that targeting 'at-risk' groups can be detrimental if it results in further isolation and labelling of already vulnerable individuals.

Recommendation :

Early intervention and at-risk approaches can be incorporated into a broader, holistic approach that considers the wider systemic reasons for maladaptive cultural identity development. While there will continue to be a need for targeted individualised forms of support and programs, this should be situated within a strategic framework that takes into account the social, economic, physical environment, political and cultural dimensions.

Service planning also needs to consider the geographical distribution of services and ensure equity in access based on demand and need. At present there is a shortage of services and programs specifically designed for minority young people, particularly in regional and rural areas (DHS, 2008).

3.2. Mesosystemic Influences

3.2.1. Connections Across the Microsystem

In the course of their daily lives, minority young people often navigate different contexts that can affect the salience and adaptive relevance of particular identities. Depending on the commonality between the different environments, the young person may need to adopt culture-switching strategies to adjust to the requirements of each environment (Bouzo, 2007). Grotevant and Cooper (1998: 31) concluded that the 'barriers and bridges' across different microsystemic settings — the family, peers, schools and other social and community networks — can have significant impacts on young people's identity development and expression.

The pressures on, and expectations of, minority youth frequently differ between cultural spaces (typically the family environment and ethnic community settings such as language schools or religious activities) and more public spaces (such as schools, local neighbourhoods and wider community settings). In commenting on their sample of Chinese-American youth, Shi and Lu (2007: 328) explained that 'cultural spaces, such as homes and Chinese schools, serve as contested zones to compete with the dominant ideology and social pressure of speaking the dominant language.' This study showed that support and encouragement from parents, teachers, friends and the larger society for the maintenance of ethnic languages provided stronger motivation for the young Chinese-Americans to learn and use the Chinese language.

Similarly, Vasta (1995) discovered that second-generation children frequently resisted speaking and learning their ethnic language because of the negative reactions they experienced from the school and public spheres. In this way, young people can be caught in a 'three-way tug-of-war' (Vasta, 1995: 57) between peer and public pressures to assimilate, pressures from their parents and ethnic community to maintain their ethnicities, and their own decisions and preferences regarding their ethnic self-identity.

Much has been written about, and attempts are presently being made to improve, connections between the family and school environments. These are, in most cases, the two key institutions for young people and have the strongest influence on identity development. Hence, the confluence of these two settings presents a good starting point for developing consistent supportive environments for young people to safely experiment with their developing identities.

Recommendation :

School cultures that encourage the discussion and celebration of bicultural and multicultural identities can promote the integration of family and school settings. Better connections between the school and family environments can enhance the interchange of ideas and understanding, resulting in more complementary, mutually reinforcing contexts that minimise the need for young people to 'culture-shift'. Inclusive cross-setting approaches 'bring parents, educators, and adolescents together to empower adolescents to function successfully in the milieu of the dominant culture while remaining grounded in their home culture and thus buffered by a strong sense of positive identity' (Wakefield & Hudley, 2007: 152).

Other strategies include ensuring that parents understand the school system and their child's schooling, and encouraging parents to be involved in the school community through avenues such as attending events and parent-teacher meetings, volunteering at the school, participating on school committees, and a range of other innovative opportunities. Such approaches should also be extended to wider settings, including services, leisure activities and local neighbourhoods so that young people can cultivate and express their self-identity in safe and coherent environments.

3.2.2. Cultural Dissonance

Related to cross-setting congruity is the correspondence between the ethnic and dominant cultures. Although the literature commonly points to a correlation between the degree of problems and 'cultural distance' (Jensen, 2008), the relationship is far more complex than may seem.

Nesdale and Mak's (2000) study sample comprised adult immigrants from a number of countries with differing levels of cultural similarities to Australia. Surprisingly, they found that, although New Zealanders have a relatively high degree of cultural similarity with Australians, they did not have a correspondingly high level of identification with Australian culture. In fact, together with respondents from Hong Kong and Vietnam, they had the lowest level of Australian identification. Nesdale and Mak (2000) theorised that, when groups are less distinct, group members may seek to increase the distinction and, thereby, develop stronger ethnic identification. However, the researchers did not investigate differences in the social and psychological outcomes between the sampled groups.

When cultural dissonance is associated with attributes that have neutral or positive value, navigating the two cultures is likely to be less problematic. However, when the differences relate to characteristics that are often devalued (e.g. through racism, oppression or regarded as 'inferior'), the degree of dissonance could pose a gap that the individual feels a strong need to bridge.

3.3. Exosystemic Influences

3.3.1. Technological Developments and Globalisation

'Young people today are a technological generation,
with technology being a part of their lives from birth …
Access to new technologies has created an entirely
new means of social and civic interaction.'

(State Government of Victoria, 2006: 13)

Not only has technology changed the ways young people interact with each other and the world around them, but technology and globalisation have also dramatically altered the ways in which identity is created, modified and experienced. Prior to the advent of the internet and the extensive transfer of people, goods and culture, identity was largely constructed according to clearly defined categories associated with nationality, religion, age, language, race, gender, roles and occupation (Lo Bianco, 2005 and Taylor, 1994, both cited in Bouzo, 2007).

The development and popularity of online gaming and social networking sites has offered new opportunities for anonymity and the creation of virtual identities. Virtual identities provide a channel for expressing hidden aspects of the self, creating 'fantasised selves' or projecting a representation of desired 'future selves'. Young people can experiment with new and differently configured aspects of identity, protected by a degree of anonymity. However, there is always a danger that the individual may become enmeshed in the virtual world and disconnected from the 'real' community (State Government of Victoria, 2006).

Communication technology development has also transformed connections within diasporic communities (Hopkins 2007). The expansion of relatively cheap and common forms of electronic communication (email; SMS; internet telephony, messaging or blogging services; and cheaper international telephone call costs) make it easier for individuals to form new and maintain existing links with kin and ethnic group members across vast geographic distances. The ease of access of young people to connections with others in the diasporic community, the 'homeland' and new corners of the globe has an effect on their exploration and formation of identity.

The globalised world has made the exotic more mainstream as elements of cultures from afar are imported through movies and television, music and art, dress styles and food, languages and traditions, ideas and histories. Young people have access to a more extensive palate of cultural choices and identifiers. They can choose elements from and become immersed in not only their own ethnic cultures, but cultures from far-ranging regions that they may never have visited. In this way, the cultural self-identity of young people from the majority group has also become far more culturally complex and diverse.

> 'Young people draw upon the signs and symbols
> of multiculture to refashion their ethnicities beyond the spatial limits
> of the local ... these performances are evidence of
> young people's emerging ethnicities and their engagement
> with globalisation, hybridity and new styles of consumption.'
>
> *(Nayak, 2003 cited in Harris, 2008: 195)*

Globalisation has broadened cultural diversity beyond that represented by the people and objects physically present in a geographical area. Therefore, exposure to cultural diversity is no longer dependent on direct encounters at school or in local neighbourhoods, but is incorporated into the daily lives of most people in often subtle ways.

3.3.2. Media, Arts and Popular Culture

The world of young people is a world of popular culture, saturated with messages from magazines, radio, television, movies, Internet, advertising and the plethora of mass media sources. To some extent, young people are active agents in their consumption of popular culture — they select, filter and produce culture and create their own youth subcultures. Kilbride et al's (2001) extensive study examined the role of the media in creating pressures for cultural conformity and revealed that these pressures are more acutely felt by young people who are newly arrived in the host country. However, the media can also assist the settlement of minority young people by providing information and representing positive ethnic role models.

The media has repeatedly been criticised for its often stereotypical and negative portrayals of minority young people. Such representations perpetuate the harmful labelling, assumptions and rigid categories that constrain young people's abilities to produce alternative and fluid identities. To draw on Wenger's (1998) social theory of learning, inaccurate and rigid depictions of minority young people serve to deny, firstly, the recognition of the meanings young people themselves create and, secondly, equal structural opportunities to participate in meaning-making.

> Ang et al's (2002) survey found that many NESB groups strongly feel that the Australian media does not accurately represent them and their lives, and Francis and Cornfoot's (2007) extensive literature review confirmed that migrant and refugee young people have concerns over media representations of their communities.
>
> Hopkins' study (2007) highlighted serious concerns about media portrayals of Muslim-Australians, particularly in the language used that implied that Muslims are 'un-Australian' and threaten the Australian way of life and in the predominance of negative depictions of Muslims.

The media conveys messages about identity-based groups in ways that are both inferred and openly evident. These messages continue to draw heavily on rigid stereotypes based on ethnicity and rarely reflect the rich cultural hodgepodge of young people's realities. As an example, Australian media representations of 'the Muslim community' in Australia implied the existence of a single, seemingly homogenous, group without more sophisticated acknowledgement of the diverse reality.

Providing young people with the skills and access to public forms of expression can partly counteract the biased media representations of ethnicity. With adequate supports and access to arts-based outlets, young people can be empowered to create, disseminate and have recognised their individual and collective identities and experiences, 'to communicate for themselves, on their own terms; to challenge, and have greater access to the media; to build identity and strengthen their sense of culture, and to use the arts to bring their voices to wider … society' (Archer, cited in Creative Exchange, 2002).

These opportunities also provide young people the opportunity to explore their identities individually and collectively, and to have an equal role in shaping meanings and public discourses around issues of cultural identities and multiculturalism. Effective arts-based projects enable often disempowered groups to create and envision new identities that challenge the traditional stereotypes and labels. Gould (2005) adds that arts and cultural projects can provide an 'alternative media' to present a different and positive image of minority groups that can counter negative media coverage.

Involving minority youth, and young people in general, in the active creation of culture and ensuring continued public open access to the internet as a global source of information can, to some extent, balance biases in mainstream media. However, there is also an onus on the media to take steps to minimise their perpetuation of negative cultural stereotypes and increase positive coverage of young people from all backgrounds (FECCA, 2008).

Recommendation :

It is imperative that media organisations advance more sophisticated approaches that effectively capture and represent the complexity of today's multiculturalism and that reflect a diversity of voices and perspectives (Ang et al, 2006). Without these changes, outdated stereotypes and tokenistic, simplistic representations will continue to deny and frustrate the efforts of young people to forge adaptive, complex identities.

3.3.3. Citizenship

For some minority young people, the concept of citizenship is closely linked with perceptions of identity and belonging (Mansouri & Wood, 2008). The young people of Arab and Muslim backgrounds participating in Mansouri and Wood's study regarded citizenship as an important factor in their perception of themselves as Australians. This was consistent across the first-, second- and third-generation youth sampled.

Citizenship is a formal marker of national and cultural identity. The process of 'naturalisation' is a two-way symbolic and public expression of the individual's aspiration to belong and be accepted by the host country. Batrouney (2002) found that Arab-Australians attach great importance to both becoming formally attached to their host country by taking up Australian citizenship and to preserving markers of their ethnic identity. This is one strategy through which both cultures may be combined into a new hyphenated identity.

3.4. Macrosystemic Influences

'Migrant communities reshape their identities in relation to historically contingent
conflicts between the local and the global, and in relation to existing relations of power …
Identities, then, are strategic and positional: they mobilise cultural resources
through practices of accommodation, negotiation and resistance in relation
to economic and political processes.'

(Noble et al, 1999: 31)

The interactions between people and their more perceptible settings are set within a broader, less tangible system that informs ways of thinking, being, relating and envisioning. The prevailing ideologies, values and norms guide the choices that are available to individuals in ways that can be both liberating and constrictive. Some people enjoy greater choices to 'be who they really want to be' while others encounter more boundaries in their personal construction of the 'self'.

For instance, language is an important, and often indirect, transmitter of culture and facilitates a range of expressions. However, words and terms are often associated with a set of implicit values and understandings specific to a particular culture and time period. Words such as 'youth', 'multiculturalism', 'refugee' and 'community' have certain social connotations that reflect a complex process of shared meaning-making. Unless individuals have the chance to introduce new terms or reshape the meanings of commonly used words, their ability to effectively describe their identities is restricted by the existing lexis and the prevailing paradigms.

Broader social and cultural influences shape, in various other ways, the manner in which individuals conceptualise themselves and others. Macrosystemic factors significantly mediate individual and group identities, both in the ways in which they are formed by the subject and the ways in which identities are manifested, perceived and responded to by others. Yon (2000) highlights the intimate relationship between social discourse, representations of identities and the formation and functioning of identities.

The macrosystem represents a complex intersection of historical, cultural, political and economic forces that is dynamic in some aspects, invariable in others, complementary and contradictory, but certainly far-reaching and pervasive. Significantly, it reflects the differential power between institutions and groups in the creation, ownership and application of meaning.

3.4.1   Social Categories and Attitudes

'Stereotypes of any kind tend to label individuals as a sort or kind,
without allowing individuals an opportunity to be themselves.'

(Kilbride et al, 2001)

Assigning objects, ideas and experiences to discrete, neat and relatively simple categories enables people to process a large quantity of information in a reasonably short time and, in this way, to function effectively in a highly complex society. Stereotyping can help in anticipating the social environment and preparing appropriate responses. However, stereotyping and other means of information cataloguing often lead to incorrect assumptions and are inadequate to reflect the true diversity and complexity of reality. Regardless of this, self-identity is strongly affected by social categories, both in the classifications that others impose on the individual and in the social categories available to the individual to define his / her self-identity.

Social categories are often constructed as rigid and discrete groupings that prescribe an unwavering set of characteristics to those who have been assigned to the category.   They are regarded as being absolute, flexible enough only to accommodate the slightest changes and variations, but unable to be transcended. Despite the increasing cultural diversity and hybridity of modern society, the prevailing social categories in relation to ethnicity remain relatively simplistic and unchanged.

The term 'Australian' is still largely reserved for Anglo-Australians, and second- and third-generation young people continue to be associated with ethnic identifiers (Cahill & Ewen 1987) such as 'Italian', 'from a Chinese background' and 'Maltese-Australian'. Visible minorities, in particular, continue to have their difference highlighted and their identities constrained by social categories. As Tuan (1999: 110) puts it, 'While white ethnics are free to discard their ethnic links and merge with the American mainstream after the first generation, Asian ethnics do not have this option; an assumption of foreignness stubbornly clings to them irrespective of generational status.'

> Most of the participants in Tuan's (1999) study of Asian-Americans had been asked 'where are you from' at some point in their lives, and many who did not reply with an ethnic heritage or nationality were further 'interrogated' to get at the 'truth' (e.g. further asked 'where are you *really* from', 'where were you born', etc).

Social categorisation can severely constrain freedom of identity exploration in a number of ways. Firstly, an ethnicity label is associated with the individual. This label may be imposed on the individual by others, or it may be a label the individual selects to identify him / herself, or it may be internalised through a combination of other- and self-imposed labelling. In any case, the label is usually drawn from a pre-existing and limited range of ethnic categories. Secondly, these labels are associated with a prescribed set of values and behaviours which are assumed to be inherent in the labelled individual. This can affect both how others treat the individual and the individual's internalised values and behaviours. As a result, individuals are constrained in their exploration and development of self-identity by the available categories and the associated content of those categories.

These essentialised ethnicities cannot represent the emerging 'new ethnicities' and identities (Noble et al, 1999), nor the multiple and fluid complexities of youth identity. Therefore, in addition to perpetuating negative stereotypes and limiting the choices associated with ethnic self-identity exploration and formation, the conventional categories of ethnicity deny the reality of flexible, dynamic and hybrid identities.

However, minority young people often find their own ways of creating and expressing authentic identities and of defining their own identities through a 'process of making and producing rather than inheriting a culture' (Min 2000, cited in Shi & Babrow, 2007: 320). As discussed earlier, Noble, Poynting and Tabar's key study of 'strategic essentialism and strategic hybridity' showed the ways in which minority young people seemed to both accept and resist their essentialised ethnic categories, depending on the context.

In considering the translation of essentialism to the lived experience, a notable finding of Noble et al's study is that the young men interviewed tended to revert to essentialised strategies (e.g. learning a traditional dance or identifying themselves according to ethnic labels) in situations in which they perceived intolerance and challenges to their ethnic identities.

Racism and discrimination

Racism and other forms of overt discrimination continue to be key issues in the lives of minority young people (Guerra & White, 1995). The experience of being singled out for harassment and exclusion, or of one's ethnic group being devalued, can negatively impact on the adolescent's self-esteem, self-confidence, sense of belonging and acceptance by peers and the wider society (Kilbride et al, 2001).

Racism and discrimination can also affect the young person's education, employment, housing and social participation, and contribute to psychological distress and anti-social behaviours (DHS, 2008). Nesdale and Mak (2000) found that, regardless of whether an individual forms social relationships with members of the majority group, the individual is more likely to identify with the host country if he / she feels accepted as an equal member. Discrimination and overt prejudice obviously erodes this feeling of acceptance and can affect identification with the host country in various ways.

For people with 'salient stigmas' (Padilla, 2008: 15), such as race, ethnicity, religious attire, name, language and accent, the stigmatised attribute may present the individual's primary identification marker through which others form judgements and responses. Visible minorities are often unable to conceal their stigma, so their ethnicity, race or culture remains continuously salient and is a major influence on their self-identity. Many newly-arrived young people find the salient attribute (race, religion, language, etc) to be a problem and marker of difference for the first time in their lives.

Padilla (2008) found that Latinos who experienced a threat to their ethnicity generally exhibit one of three strategies for coping with discrimination and racism:

▶ Social activism

The person asserts his / her ethnic identity as a form of resistance. This could involve forming a stronger ethnic identity or a self-identity that includes an ethnicity label. Young people who feel 'different' because of something that is difficult to change or hide are often compelled to acknowledge and explore their ethnic heritage and incorporate it in some way in their self-identity (Germain, 2004). As discrimination increases the salience of ethnic identity, they are also more likely to explore their ethnic identity than individuals with less visible attributes and may experience an extended period of psychosocial moratorium in this identity domain (Phinney, 2008).

▶ **Assimilation / passing**

The person attempts to gain 'access to a group or social category … by camouflaging [his / her] group origins' (Padilla, 2008: 116). As a consequence of minority group discrimination, young people may internalise the dominant culture's negative views and devalue aspects of their own ethnic culture (Sonderegger et al, 2004, Bachay, 1998). This could lead to poor self-esteem and assimilation or withdrawal-type approaches where the ethnic background is rejected. However, the effects of internalising the negative views have been shown to be far more complex and, in some ways, self-perpetuating.

> Pyke and Dang (2003) investigated the adaptation patterns of second-generation children of Korean and Vietnamese immigrants in the United States. They found that the young adult respondents used negative terms such as 'FOB' ('Fresh Off the Boat') and 'whitewashed' to describe co-ethnic peers. These negative identities drew on mainstream derogatory stereotypes and were used to demean co-ethnics as 'too ethnic' or 'too assimilated'.
>
> Although these identities were constructed and used as a resistance to racial stigma, they also served as a form of internalised racism that reinforced and endorsed the cultural denigration. Such 'defensive othering' (a term coined by Schwalbe et al, 2000, cited in Pyke & Dang, 2003) is a defensive reaction to negative discrimination through seeking affiliation with the dominant group or distance from the ethnic group.

▶ **Biculturalism**

The person adopts multiple group membership and can draw on alternative identities when one identity is threatened.

Padilla (2008) suggests that each of these strategies is associated with particular social identities that the individual draws on, according to the situational context, to cope with external threats to their ethnicity. Noble, Poynting and Tabar's study of young Lebanese-Australian males illustrates the use of different strategies in a context-dependent way. At times, the young men in the study would assert collective, resistant and oppositional strategies (e.g. learning a traditional dance or identifying as 'Lebanese'); on other occasions, they would adopt assimilation-style approaches (e.g. to challenge their parents' restrictions on their freedoms); and they would exhibit bicultural identities in certain situations (e.g. conversing in a mix of Arabic and English to selectively control what could be understood by others present). By using these different expressions of their identities, they could regain a sense of control to combat the demeaning effects of the discrimination they experienced.

Young people need a safe and supportive environment to freely explore their self-identity. Racism undermines feelings of safety which constrains ethnic exploration. Whitehead and his colleagues (2009) found that young people of various ethnic backgrounds (Euro-Americans, Asian-Americans and Latino-Americans) who had experienced higher ethnic identity exploration also had more positive feelings towards their own ethnic group and other ethnic groups. This suggests that racism and interethnic conflicts can be reduced by ensuring that young people have safe and appropriate environments in which to explore their ethnic identities.

Institutions in which young people more commonly encounter racism are schools, workplaces, the criminal justice system (including the police) and the media (Guerra & White 1995). There is, therefore, a clear need to address structural discrimination, combat ethnicity-based stereotypes and promote anti-discrimination attitudes in key settings. As Australia's immigration base broadens to include more immigrants from Asia, the Middle East and Africa, it is even more crucial that racism and essentialism be appropriately addressed to reduce the negative impacts on young people's self-identity and overall wellbeing.

3.4.2. Social Policies

In the late 1970s, multiculturalism was introduced as the new government policy response to increasing ethnic and cultural diversity (Roth, 2007), replacing the assimilation ideologies of the 1950s and 1960s and the integrationist approaches of the 1970s (Guerra & White, 1995). Under assimilation policies, the languages and traditions of children were largely ignored and even rejected in school settings, which left children confused about their identity and culture and led to a higher level of intergenerational conflict at home (Vasta, 1995).

As proclaimed in the 1978 Galbally report, multiculturalism affirms the right of migrants to retain their cultural and racial identity and to be 'identified with their cultural background and ethnic group [which] enables them to take their places in their new society with confidence and a sense of purpose if their ethnicity has been accepted by the community' (cited in Roth, 2007: 6). The report further stated that migrants should be assisted and encouraged to maintain their cultural identity if they wish. Multiculturalism thus represented a significant policy shift from previous approaches which required all other cultures to be either jettisoned or subsumed under the dominant culture.

This opened up the choices available to minority youth in exploring and developing their self-identities: they no longer needed to deny their cultural heritage but now had greater agency over the strategies they used to bridge their two worlds. However, multiculturalism, as some interpret it, can also severely restrict full ethnic identity exploration and expression as it:

▶ Essentialises ethnic groups

▶ Favours the culture of the majority

▶ Portrays a superficial and limited experience of diversity

▶ Presents community relations as largely harmonious and cohesive

▶ Excludes majority group members

▶ Denies the complexities and fluidities of multiple cultural identities.

This interpretation of multiculturalism largely regards and portrays ethnic groups and cultural identities as static, discrete and homogenous categories that reflect stereotypical representations. Therefore, by taking on an ethnicity label (e.g. identifying oneself as German-Australian or Turkish-Australian), the individual also becomes intrinsically associated with the set of essentialised features associated with the ethnic group. In this way, the ideal of multiculturalism becomes little more than a simplistic way of organising and classifying ethnic communities (Harris, 2008).

An essentialised categorisation based on ethnicity and culture can cause social divisiveness which contradicts the purpose of multiculturalism. It presents a conservative view of stagnant cultures that are resistant to change and often defined by older 'community leaders' (Edwards, 2009). This denies the reality that group characteristics and identity can change over time and across generations and space, or of the heterogeneity within groups and fluidities between groups.

Furthermore, the simplistic 'us / them' notion of cultural plurality is inadequate to capture the increasing complexities and fluidities of the multi-layered, cosmopolitan identities of current younger generations. The globalised context of most young people, including those of Anglo-Australian backgrounds, is not comprised of discrete cultural classifications in which different cultures exist in parallel. Instead, theirs is a dynamic world of intercultural contacts, exchanges and fusions of such fluidity that it is often difficult to establish the original cultural sources and to speak of specific cultures in isolation.

'Ethnic youth are a reminder that the Australian identity
can no longer be wedded totally to its Anglo-Australian core.'

(Cahill & Ewen, 1987: 86)

While the policy of multiculturalism has advanced Australian society beyond the outwardly culturally hegemonic ideologies of assimilation and integration, as far as many younger Australians are concerned, multiculturalism in practice has not kept pace with social changes and is now plainly incongruent with the borderless reality of today's globalised, super-diverse and post-modern world. Critically, it imposes a language and discourse that limits discussions of alternative conceptualisations of diversity and identity.

Multiculturalism is about the sharing of space and it is within these sites of regular intercultural interactions that individuals are exposed to cultural differences, explore and form their cultural identities, and develop strategic ways to navigate the complex diversities of their world.

As Olliff (2007: 34) comments, 'the Census does not tell us how young people experience and negotiate their sense of belonging and identity within Australia.' Quantitative approaches cannot capture the intricacies of experiences and subjective meanings which can only be described through more robust qualitative methods such as ethnographic and narrative approaches. Such a focus also positions young people as active agents that are influenced by, but also affect, their environment.

The challenge for policymakers is to ensure that there are genuine opportunities for young people to participate in the construction of social meanings and that these opportunities and processes allow for new and complex understandings of the everyday realities of Australia's cultural diversity (Ang et al, 2006).

<u>Recommendation :</u>

The devising of the next multicultural policy framework must appropriately respond to, and reflect, the changing experiences of cultural diversity. A social policy that is responsive to the realities of cultural diversity needs to be informed by greater in-depth understanding of 'the complex task of doing everyday togetherness-in-difference' (Ang, 2005, cited in Harris, 2008) and a focus on how cultural differences are negotiated within the framework of 'place-sharing' (Wise, 2005).

It should build upon the progress of multiculturalism without rigid adherence to a dominant cultural core or essentialised conceptions of ethnicity, and be inclusive of all ages and cultural backgrounds. Most pertinently, it must permit an accurate rendering of the fluid and often contradictory ways in which people forge and apply identities within the context of a super-diverse world.

3.4.3   Inclusive Meaning-Making

'Multiculturalism is a future-oriented process … ethnic youth have a unique role
in forwarding this process in addition to being its beneficiaries.'

(Cahill and Ewen, 1987: 96)

The formation of popular ideologies and public policy is about the construction and ownership of meaning, inherent in which are issues of power and inclusion. Wenger (1998) considers identity formation to be a dual process involving identification through which the individual associates and differentiates him / herself from available identifiers, and negotiability through which the individual contributes to, and becomes invested in, social meanings. According to Wenger, individuals tend to identify most strongly with the communities in which they have greater ownership (i.e. influence and control) over the collective meanings.

Clearly, it is important that young people of all cultural backgrounds play a real part in the construction of public meanings, not only to facilitate their sense of ownership of those meanings but also because their unique perspectives are essential to shaping meaningful public policies that support their needs and aspirations. The inclusion of voices of all ages, ethnicities and cultural backgrounds is vital to the discussion and this includes Anglo-Australian youth and others traditionally excluded from the multicultural arena.

The creation of new meanings should not be framed around dominant culture to which other cultures are peripheral, but needs to regard all cultures, including those conventionally subsumed under the 'Australian' umbrella, as being equally valid: it would involve 'culturally diverse people living together in the process of forging, and sometimes struggling with, new kinds of national belonging free of white ethnic moorings' (Amin, 2002, cited in Harris, 2008: 191).

These meanings are important to inform policy approaches and to nurture environments that support young people to fully and confidently form and express authentic identities. Broad debates around the management of cultural diversity usually takes place in the political spheres through government consultations, forums and other consultation mechanisms. A 2009 study by Arvanitakis and Marren showed that young people are keen to be involved in decision-making, but often feel that traditional practices, such as consultative committees, are 'tokenistic' and that decision-makers regard their participation as irrelevant or insignificant.

Arvanitakis and Marren (2009) highlighted the growing disconnection of young people from formalised politics and the shift to less formal political structures. For today's generations of young people, political participation is 'just something they do' (Collins, 2007, cited in Arvanitakis & Marren, 2009: 10), connected to their everyday activities and social settings. Consequently, engaging young people in the collective construction of meaning needs to move beyond the traditional 'top-down' approaches of involving young people in consultations and committees. There are a number of methods and principles that can be applied to more effectively engage young people of all cultural backgrounds in constructing social meanings around issues of cultural diversity and identity.

▶ **A focus on 'everyday multiculturalism'**

Research and decision-making processes should be framed in ways that are relevant to and consistent with young people's lived experiences (Bell et al, 2008). As the studies by Noble, Poynting and Tabar (1999) and Ang and his colleagues (2002, 2006) demonstrate, probing the ways in which young people understand and employ their cultural identities in their everyday lives reveals the complex realities of multiculturalism that are usually at odds with the simplistic framings of multiculturalism found in dominant discourses and policy approaches.

▶ **Unique and multiple identities**

The complex interplay between the numerous self-identity factors results in highly unique individual identities, even among young people who share the same cultural background and similar experiences. The research commissioned by the National Youth Affairs Research Scheme (Bell et al, 2008) recommended that decision-making processes should avoid the expectation that young people 'represent' their social group. Instead, young people should be allowed to present their own views and not be expected to speak on behalf of others.

▶ **Appropriate tools and language**

There is now wider recognition of the exclusiveness of formal consultation tools, such as consultative committees, public forums and written submissions. These tools tend to limit participation to young people who have the time and resources. Greater inclusion requires a diversification of tools, including less formal approaches (Bell et al, 2008). For example, approaches using visual arts could allow less articulate or low-English-proficient young people to participate.

Additionally, the language and expressions used to communicate concepts such as multiculturalism and identity, should be meaningful to young people. The formal, public language of social policy (e.g. 'social cohesion', 'diversity', 'discrimination') does not resonate with the experience of everyday multiculturalism and young people often find it difficult to express their experiences using these terms. This highlights the need to construct new, or at least reconstruct existing, language through which cultural diversity issues can be debated in more comprehensive and inclusive ways.

►   Open discourse

An inclusive and genuine approach brings about the potential for disagreement. Hage (cited in University of Melbourne, 2008) states, 'we need to re-affirm [multiculturalism] because it is important to recognise the diversity in which we exist. But at the same time, too many people re-affirm it in a claustrophobic way, defensively. And don't want to deal with its shortcomings.' Constructive dialogue around contentious issues such as multiculturalism should allow for opinions that both favour and are critical of current policies and ideologies.

Restricted and directed debate will only continue to marginalise those who already feel alienated from and silenced by existing policies and processes, and will lead to policies that are not truly reflective of the lived experiences. Evidently, means of productively managing disagreement should be established to ensure that the processes remain respectful of differences and is constructive. It is not the presence of conflict itself, but 'the way in which these conflicts are articulated' (Rathzel, 2008, cited in Harris, 2008: 201).

►   Enabling participation

Young people from culturally and linguistically different backgrounds may experience additional barriers to participation in political processes. Therefore, specific effort is required to eliminate these barriers so that they can be equal participants in the process of constructing shared meanings.

3.5. Chronosystemic Influences

3.5.1. Age of Arrival

It has been widely noted that the age of the individual at the time of migration can affect cultural adjustment and identity formation (O'Sullivan, 2006; Sonderegger et al, 2004; Batrouney, 2002; Kilbride et al, 2001; Bevan, 2000). Arrival at a younger age, particularly prior to puberty, is generally associated with easier settlement and cultural adjustment. This may be because younger children are less entrenched in their original culture, have longer time in the school system to learn about and adjust to cultural differences, and can more easily acquire the English language.

Individuals who arrive in the new country during adolescence face additional acculturation difficulties associated with:

►   The need to simultaneously deal with both settlement and adolescence issues

►   Greater difficulties forming friendships as most peers are already in established friendship groups

►   The need to adapt to a different education system and, particularly if their previous schooling was disrupted or lacking, the need to 'catch up' to the knowledge and skills expected of their assigned year level

►   Potentially significant pressures to achieve academically

►   Higher levels of family responsibilities due to changes in family roles

These difficulties are likely to have a bearing on the development of the adolescent's self-identity.

3.5.2. Length of Residence

The length of time since migration can also affect ethnic identity. Although the impact is variable, in general identification with the new country increases over time (Batrouney, 2002).

A Canadian study by Walters, Phythian and Anisef (2007) found that time since migration has a stronger impact on ethnic identity formation than many other key factors, including perceptions of discrimination, visibility, language and the proportion of friends of the same ethnicity. However, there are different dimensions of ethnic identity and Zheng, Sang and Wang's (2004) study of Chinese students in Australia suggested that length of time is associated with identification with the host country, but not necessarily identification with the country of origin.

The duration of residence can increase one's sense of belonging to and affinity with the new country, but does not appear to have any significant impact on one's connection with the original country. In fact, Sonderegger and Barrett (2004) found the overall identification with one's ethnicity actually increases over time. They theorise that young people may initially hide or change markers of their ethnicity in order to be accepted by their peers; however, once they have gained acceptance and their self-esteem improves, they are then able to explore and develop a greater appreciation of their ethnic culture.

'If we are to strengthen and support a vibrant multicultural society,
we need to ask: how can we support young people to negotiate
their multiple identities — as valued members of their local, cultural
and Australian community — within this broader socio-political context?'

(Olliff, 2007: 34)

'What is certain, however, is that the age of globalization —
more than any other age before it — is an age that has both
exerted great effects upon, and been greatly affected by, young people.'

(Heaven & Tubridy, 2003: 149)

4. Conclusion

Amongst today's youth, ethnic identity has evolved into a broader notion of cultural identity. This cultural identity embraces a cosmopolitan sense of being comprised of a highly individualised assemblage of elements from an extensive range of cultures. No longer is identity confined to a prescribed set of values and behaviours linked with particular ethnicities, nor is it singular and constant or limited to one's heritage and past. In an increasingly diverse society, cultural identity has become a highly complex, strategically applied and flexible sense of self that is shaped by the confluence of various factors and is constantly reworked.

The lengthening period between childhood and adulthood continues to be a time of psychosocial moratorium when identity exploration is most intense. During this usually turbulent life transition, it is critical that young people are supported with environments that encourage free exploration and expressions of the 'self'. For this to be achieved, the various systems that influence the development of young people need to offer real choices and the freedom to choose for oneself, unconstrained by essentialism, insecurity and threats, superseded theories and frameworks, disempowerment or cultural dominance. There should be a seamless consistency between these social structures to ensure that young people have the opportunity and control over whether their chosen identity remains constant throughout all aspects of their life or switches between different masks for different settings.

Importantly, the right of young people to participate and share in the formulation and control of social meanings must be respected. 'The challenge is to ensure that our social institutions create a positive environment for young people to develop a sense that they are Australian and have an identity that is valued and respected' (Guerra & White, 1995: 7). It is only by truly understanding young people's experiences of everyday multiculturalism that relevant and sustainable policies can be developed to unlock the next stage in our multicultural journey.

Definition of Terms

This section defines some of the key terms as they are applied in this paper.

Culture	–	This broad concept encapsulates all the aspects that affect how we perceive, interact with and create our reality. It includes language, institutions, ideologies, the arts, ways of interacting, dress, food, social norms, shared understandings and histories, spirituality, etc. A culture is constructed, shared and reinforced by a social community.
Cultural identity	–	Cultural identity is a broader concept than ethnic identity. It reflects identifying, in part or in whole, with the culture of one or more communities and engaging with its / their cultural markers.
Ethnicity	–	Ethnicity is a narrower concept than culture and is based on a perceived shared heritage (Guerra & Smith 2006, cited in French et al 2006) that can involve the sharing of a language, religion, customs, values, traditions or history. It requires the recognition of group membership, whether that recognition is self-derived or given by other members of either the ethnic group or those outside the ethnic group.
		In Australia, the term 'ethnicity' tends to be associated with people from non-English speaking backgrounds (Vasta 1995). However, in this paper the term has a broader application (e.g. 'Scottish' or 'South African' can be considered to be specific ethnicities), but with the prerequisite that the ethnicity is recognised.
Ethnic identity	–	In the sense of individual subjective identity (as opposed to group or community identities), ethnic identity is considered to be one element of personal identity.
		Ethnic identity comprises active cognitive, affective and behavioural components. Rotheram and Phinney (1987) distinguished four components of ethnic identity that interact in complex ways:
		▶ Ethnic awareness – an awareness and understanding of own and other ethnic groups
		▶ Ethnic self-identification – the labels used to define one's ethnic identity which reflects one's sense of belonging and attachment
		▶ Ethnic attitudes – feelings about own and other ethnic groups
		▶ Ethnic behaviour – adoption of the norms and participation in the activities of the ethnic group.
		Isajiw (1990, cited in Kwan & Sodowsky, 1997: 35) noted that ethnic identity is a social-psychological phenomenon 'in the sense that the internal psychological states express themselves objectively in external behaviour patterns that come to be shared by others. Thus, individuals locate themselves in one or another community internally by states of mind and feelings ... and externally by behaviour appropriate to these states of mind and feelings.'
		Ethnic identity therefore requires an informed choice that is mediated by feelings and outwardly displayed through behaviour.

|		
Identity	–	Identity captures and conveys the essence of who we are. It embodies the individual's core values and his / her relationships with other people and social institutions (Grotevant & Cooper 1998). It is highly individualistic and connotes a sense of 'self', but at the same time is defined by and through social categories. Identity is multidimensional as it incorporates (and oftentimes integrates) a number of social constructs (e.g. age, race, gender, sexuality, occupation). It can be subjectively and/or objectively constructed and defined.
		Importantly, though aspects of identity can change over time, as a whole, identity provides a sense of continuity and coherence of self over time (Mann, 2006).
Self-identity	–	Self-identity refers to the subjective construction, definition, evaluation and perception of one's own identity. External factors impact on this subjective identity, but the prime focus of self-identity is the individual's role in constructing, reshaping, presenting and experiencing his / her identity.
		Purdie et al's (2000) study of the self-identities of young Indigenous Australians concluded that self-identity is a complex and multifaceted construct that is context-specific, affected by the value the individual places on its multiple dimensions, involves both positive and negative aspects (i.e. characterised by both what the individual accepts and denies), at times conflicted and uncertain, and subject to constant reassessment.
Young people/ Youth	–	There are wide variations in the exact ages at which 'youth' begins and ends. The Victorian Government uses the age span of 12 to 25 years to define 'young people'. However, a set age bracket is problematic given the cultural variations and ever-changing societal expectations. The period of 'youth' is extending as young people are accomplishing key life transitions at a later age (State Government of Victoria, 2006).
		This paper applies a relatively flexible definition that is in line with the common definition of the life stage of adolescence (see Ross & Buehler, 2004). The terms 'youth' and 'young people' are used interchangeably to represent the period between childhood and adulthood during which, according to Erikson (2008), the individual has a socially sanctioned 'psychosocial moratorium' to experiment with his / her role and identity.
Minority young people / youth	–	This term refers to young people who are from, or have backgrounds from, groups that are quantifiable ethnic minorities by virtue of their fewer numbers of members in Australian society. The term 'minority' in this context is not a reflection on age (i.e. being a minor in the legal sense) or of the diminished importance of the groups, but purely represents ethnic groups that numerically comprise less than half the total population.
		Terms commonly used to describe minority ethnic groups include 'non-English speaking background' and 'culturally and linguistically diverse'. However, for the purposes of this paper, it was felt that neither term was fully suitable as the former excludes groups that may be culturally or racially different from the majority group but who are from English-speaking countries (e.g. Southern Africa, the Caribbean and Singapore) (Kapetopoulos, 2009); and the latter implies that the Anglo-Australian majority group lack sufficient cultural or linguistic markers.

First-generation	–	This term refers to people who arrived in Australia after or around the time of puberty (around 10-12 years of age) and spent their early childhood, including the period of key language development and socialisation, in another country.
Second-generation	–	A person who is 'second-generation Australian' was either born in Australia but has at least one parent who was born overseas, or arrived in Australia prior to puberty.
Third-generation	–	This term refers to Australian-born children of second-generation Australians who may or may not have direct connection with the ethnic heritage of their grandparents and parents.
Biculturalism	–	Biculturalism is characterised by a level of hybridity where the individual has an identity involving elements (norms, attitudes, behaviours, etc) of two different cultures. When identity involves a combination of more than two cultures, it is more appropriate to use the term 'multiculturalism'. Rotheram and Phinney (1987) note that, while biculturalism is typically associated with people from ethnic minority groups, it can also occur with members of the majority group who have contact with minority groups (e.g. in many interethnic marriages).
Multi-ethnicity	–	Children with multi-ethnicity have parents from two or more different ethnic or racial backgrounds and may face different and more complex identity issues (Phinney, 2008).
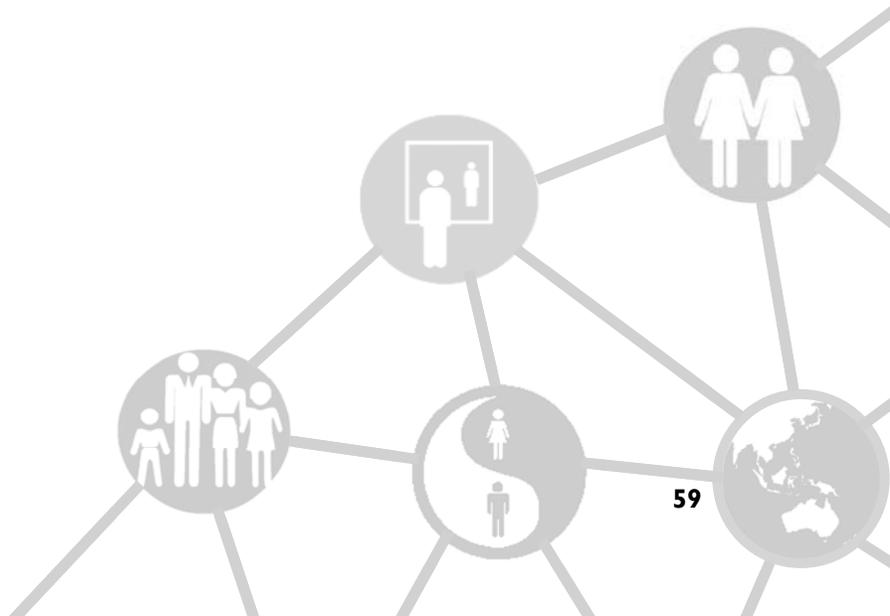
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Appendices

Appendix 1. Diversity of Young Victorians

Table 1. Overseas-Born Australians Aged 12 to 25 Years by State/Territory

	Persons	% of Age Group
New South Wales	196,546	17.1
Victoria	147,713	16.7
Queensland	93,402	13.1
South Australia	29,562	11.1
Western Australia	65,991	18.4
Tasmania	4,462	5.4
Northern Territory	2,743	7.2
ACT	9,186	13.9
Other	61	15.7
Total	*549,666*	*15.5*

Data source: ABS 2006 Census of Population & Housing

Table 2. Citizenship Status of Victorians Aged 12 to 25 Years

	Persons	%
Australian Citizen	800,761	85.3
Not Australian Citizen	79,185	8.4
Not stated	58,813	6.3
Total	*938,759*	*100.0*

Data source: ABS 2006 Census of Population & Housing

Table 3. Birthplaces of Victorians Aged 12 to 25 Years

Region of Birth	Persons	%
Oceania *(Australia)*	750,249	79.9
North-West Europe	12,296	1.3
Southern and Eastern Europe	12,074	1.3
North Africa and the Middle East	11,176	1.2
South-East Asia	34,080	3.6
North-East Asia	28,640	3.1
Southern and Central Asia	21,310	2.3
Americas	5,886	0.6
Sub-Saharan Africa	8,129	0.9
Not stated	54,494	5.8
Other	425	< 0.1
Total	*938,759*	*100.0*

Data source: ABS 2006 Census of Population & Housing

Table 4. Ancestries[*] of Victorians Aged 12 to 25 Years

	1st Response	2nd Response
Oceanic *(Australian peoples)*	30.0 *(29.2)*	11.7 *(10.8)*
North-West European	35.0	10.5
Southern and Eastern European	10.4	4.6
North African and the Middle Eastern	2.7	0.5
South-East Asian	3.1	0.8
North-East Asian	6.1	0.4
Southern and Central Asian	3.2	0.6
People of the Americas	0.5	0.5
Sub-Saharan African	0.7	0.3
Not stated/applicable	8.1	70.0
Other	0.2	0.1
Total	*100.0*	*100.0*

Data source: ABS 2006 Census of Population & Housing
[*] Census respondents could select up to two ancestries.

Table 5. Languages Spoken at Home by Victorians Aged 12 to 25 Years

Languages	Persons	%
Northern European *(English only)*	703,513 *(700,606)*	74.9 *(74.6)*
Southern European	31,943	3.4
Eastern European	21,824	2.3
Southwest and Central Asian	27,682	2.9
Southern Asian	19,818	2.1
Southeast Asian	30,995	3.3
Eastern Asian	45,988	4.9
Australian Indigenous	266	< 0.1
Other	7,264	0.8
Not stated	49,501	5.3
Total	*938,759*	*100.0*

Data source: ABS 2006 Census of Population & Housing

Table 6. Proficiency in Spoken English of Victorians Aged 12 to 25 Years

	Persons	%
Very well	141,194	15.0
Well	39,142	4.2
Not well	9,034	1.0
Not at all	1,153	0.1
Not stated	47,630	5.1
Speaks English only	700,606	74.6
Total	*938,759*	*100.0*

Data source: ABS 2006 Census of Population & Housing

Table 7. Religious Affiliations of Victorians Aged 12 to 25 Years

	Persons	%
Buddhism	30,076	3.2
Christianity	502,630	53.5
Hinduism	11,476	1.2
Islam	28,872	3.1
Judaism	6,868	0.7
Other religions	6,897	0.7
No religion	231,164	24.6
Not stated	110,042	11.7
Other	10,734	1.1
Total	*938,759*	*100.0*

Data source: ABS 2006 Census of Population & Housing

Table 8. Year of Arrival of Victorians Aged 12 to 25 Years

	Persons	%
1981-1985	5,371	0.6
1986-1990	19,532	2.1
1991-1995	21,374	2.3
1996-2000	24,668	2.6
2001-2005	56,085	6.0
2006 (1Jan-8Aug)	12,246	1.3
Born in Australia or arrived prior to 1981	799,483	85.2
Total	*938,759*	*100.0*

Data source: ABS 2006 Census of Population & Housing

Appendix 2. Practical Approaches: Selected Case Studies

Family Story Collaborative Project (Grotevant & Cooper, 1998)

This project used a narrative approach to examine the processes by which risk and resilience are transmitted across generations. Through this approach, the coherence of a person's life story is regarded as the benchmark for evaluating how well meaning and a sense of integrity are maintained over time. It is especially interested in 'meaning-making' — how people construct meaning about events in their lives. The meanings embody their interpretations of events and interactions, and reflect their expectations about the future and relationships in which they do or might participate.

Every Tree Has Its Roots Project (Gould, 2005)

This UK-based project used oral history methods to record the testimonies of 110 refugees and their children. It bridged the gap between three generations, helping young people to understand some of the concerns and experiences of the older generation both in Vietnam and as refugees in the UK. It included an arts component which engaged the younger generation in activities such as drawing, essays, painting and creative writing to draw out the young people's views on their culture and identity. Through this project, the younger generation gained a better understanding of the experiences of the older generation, the older generation discovered how the younger generation were developing their own sense of identity, and the community as a whole was able to document its history and experiences.

From Great Grandmothers to Great Granddaughters (Loong, 2006a)

In response to the interest generated by a symposium on the lives of Chinese-Australian women across several generations, the Chinese Australian Historical Society decided to document the oral histories. The resulting book features the narrative accounts of six Chinese-Australian women who define their identities and experiences through very different experiences. Recounted in their own 'voices' and spanning several generations, these personal narratives highlight the unique identities and the systemic influences on self-identity. Together, the stories demonstrate the heterogeneity of self-identities that occur within the same ethnic group, ranging from the curiosity around their mysterious ethnic heritage amongst a family of fourth-generation Chinese-Australian women, to the intergenerational conflicts experienced by those growing up in two sharply divided worlds, and finally to the greater bicultural competence and confidence of the 'banana generation' with the opportunities to 'pick and choose within limits' (Loong, 2006b: 53).

Klassroom Kaleidoscope Program (Foundation House, 2007)

This Victorian school-based program was developed by Foundation House to explore issues of identity and emotions among students in the transition stages (Years 6 to 8). It involves a seven-week program delivered in small groups by counsellors and teaching staff. The program has a number of aims, including the development of 'a healthy sense of identity in students through understanding and appreciation of the contributing factors, including past and present experiences, hopes for the future, personal qualities, culture and environment.' One group activity is the Personal Posters activity in which the students complete their own personal posters to 'identify what you would like to know about another person, what would you like a friend to know about you, what is something in your life or about yourself you would like to change.' Within this activity, the students explore their own and others' self-identities and discuss what culture is and how it influences identity. In a separate activity, the students explore the concept of a kaleidoscope and its links with cultural diversity. The program also includes specific modules to explore and develop relationship skills and solutions to assist students in managing peer and family difficulties.

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