

Identities, Aspirations and Belonging of Cosmopolitan Youth in Australia

Jock Collins

University of Technology, Sydney

Carol Reid

University of Western Sydney

Charlotte Fabiansson

University of Western Sydney

Abstract

This article presents the results of a survey of the attitudes, aspirations and belonging of mainly immigrant minority youth living in western and south western Sydney conducted in 2007 to provide some evidence to contest the populist view of immigrant youth as being a threat to Australian society. Rather the survey points to the very positive aspirations of Sydney's immigrant youth, their strong sense of having a positive future role in Australian society, their sense of belonging and ownership of their neighbourhood. They live connected lives, with multicultural friendship networks rather than living their lives parallel to and separate from other youth. Only one in three surveyed identify as 'Australian', with most offering some hybrid-Australian identity. The paper argues that a more cosmopolitan approach to multiculturalism would assist in valuing the globalised, fluid, hybrid identities of immigrant youth and assist in relieving the nationalist anxieties about Australian cultural, linguistic and cultural diversity.

Introduction

The Australian population is one of the most cosmopolitan in the world today, a product of one of the world's relatively largest and most diverse immigration policies and the great linguistic and cultural diversity of Australia's Indigenous peoples. Australia's immigration policies have been very controversial, with critics from the Right (Blainey 1984; Sheehan 1998; 2006) arguing that the increasing presence of immigrant minorities – that is, non-British and non-White immigrants – supported by multiculturalism will undermine social cohesion in Australian society and lead to social conflict. The ongoing federal Australian political storm to the 'boat people' issue highlights the undue sensitivity in Australian politics and Australian society to immigration and immigrant settlement policy. However, Australia is not alone in experiencing heightened political debate about immigration issues. The central political plank of newly-resurgent right wing parties and politicians in European and North

America is opposition to immigrant minorities who have been increasingly linked to crime, criminal gangs and anti-social behaviour. Central to this anti-immigration politics has been the argument that the values and identities of Muslim immigrants in particular are not only incompatible with western society but a threat to it (Huntington 1997; 2004).

The ethnic diversity of Sydney is the result of sustained waves of immigration. Inter-ethnic relations and issues of social cohesion are of key concern in culturally diverse societies like Australia (Jupp and Nieuwenhuysen 2007). Although social conflict between young people of different ethnic backgrounds – as witnessed in the Sydney Cronulla beach riots – are the exception, not the rule (Collins 2007), it is important to monitor the aspirations, attitudes and social interactions of young people in Sydney. This is particularly the case in western and south-western Sydney, the most culturally diverse region in Sydney (Collins and Poynting 2000).

The growing literature on ethnic youth gangs and criminal gangs highlights a major anxiety about the dangers that immigrant pose for western countries (van Gemert, Peterson, and Lien 2008; Decker, van Gemert, and Pyrooz 2009). This anxiety about ethnic gangs, particularly youth gangs, has also been prevalent in Australia (White et al. 1999; Collins et al. 2000; Poynting et al. 2004; White 2008; Collins and Reid 2009; White 2009). The evidence on immigrant youth criminality and ethnic youth gangs is however weak. A moral panic about immigrant youth crime, the isolation of young people into ethnic enclaves and immigrant youth gangs is disproportionate to the reality in western societies, including Australia, today. Despite this, media discourses and political opportunism helps to build negative, stereotypical images of young people from minority backgrounds. The consequence is that this shifts the criminal gaze from individuals to whole communities in the form of a preoccupation with dysfunctional, disengaged minority cultures and, at the same time, directs attention away from policy responses rooted in the socio-economic disadvantage of minority youth evident in many western societies, including Australia.

Understanding ethnic minority youth experiences involves the exploration of a wide range of institutional contexts within which young people find themselves. Ethnic youth from particular cultures can experience problems of social adjustment stemming from the conflict of traditional cultural and family values with those of a secular, western society (Hoerder, Hébert, and Schmitt 2006). Issues of national identity have long been considered contentious

in multicultural society (Parekh 2008) with the hybrid and fluid identities of immigrant youth a challenge to the overt nationalism underlying Australian multiculturalism (Hage 1988; Butcher and Thomas 2003; White 2008).

To the critics of immigration and cultural diversity, ethnic minority youth in general and Muslim youth in particular are viewed as a threat to future of western societies. Cited as firm evidence for this argument about the inability of immigrant youth to identify with and integrate into the nations and neighbourhoods where they settle in a cohesive, inclusive way are the instances of inter-ethnic youth conflict in Bradford, Burnley, and Oldham (2001-2), Paris (2005), Sydney (2005) over the past decade. The Cantel Report (2002) into the Bradford, Burnley, and Oldham riots highlighted the segregation of minority youth and the separation in their daily lives from white youth, emphasising the ‘depth of polarisation’ between white and minority youth in Britain, leading them to live disconnected ‘parallel lives’. Loch (2009 p.5) argues that the Paris riots can be interpreted as the tipping point from frustrated youth who have withdrawn from the labour market (more than 50 per cent of Muslim youth in the *Banlieux* were unemployed) and other society institutions from engagement to spontaneous, violent protest and disengagement from French society. While the riots in 2011 London and other British cities saw youth of all backgrounds – white and immigrant – rioting and looting, to conservatives these events confirm this view of immigrant minority youth as being anti-social and sources of conflict and violence (The Guardian 2011).

In this article we present the results of a survey of the attitudes, aspirations and belonging of mainly immigrant minority youth living in western and south western Sydney to provide some evidence to contest the populist view of immigrant youth as being a threat to Australian society. Rather the survey points to the very positive aspirations of Sydney’s immigrant youth, their strong sense of having a positive future role in Australian society, their sense of belonging and ownership of their neighbourhood. They live connected lives, with multicultural friendship networks rather than living their lives parallel to and separate from other youth. This research, then, provides strong evidence that supports Australian immigration and multiculturalism policy and undermines the fears and prejudices of the Right wing critics of immigration and multiculturalism. The majority of the youth surveyed were born in Australia – that is, were second generation immigrants – yet most reported cosmopolitan identities that were hybrid rather than “Australian”. This reflected their diverse cultural heritage and their global connectedness through diasporic family networks and global

youth culture mediated through the Internet and social media. This notion of immigrant youth having hybrid, fluid and cosmopolitan identities is not new in Australia and is found in most western societies with significant immigrant youth minorities. It is not a threat to Australian society but rather a reflection of the global dimensions of contemporary Australian life for immigrant youth whose roots are found in all corners of the globe. Yet the hyper-sensitivity to the issue of the identity of immigrant youth highlights that the political anxiety about Australian cosmopolitanism and the inability of the current generation of political leaders to come to terms with the way that immigration has changed, and will continue to change, Australian society.

This research also has implications for current policy discussions about the future of Australian multiculturalism and theoretical discussions about cosmopolitanism and its relevance to Australia and other western and non-western societies. These issues will be explored in the final section of this paper.

The structure of the article is as follows. Section 2 outlines the methodology underlying the youth survey. Section 3 outlines the main findings of the survey. Section 4 returns to the themes of cosmopolitan youth and Australian multiculturalism.

Methodology

The survey of 340 youth – 144 (42.5 per cent) males and 195 (57.5 per cent) females – aged from 14 to 18 years inclusive was undertaken in western and south-western Sydney in 2007. Information about the everyday life of these young people, their community affiliations and their attitudes towards school and future prospects were explored. The survey sample was stratified to ensure that 80 per cent were from LOTE (languages other than English) background. The methodology employed for the survey was a *networking methodology*. People from each ethnic community were sought, in the first instance, to find and survey other young people from their community through their own social networks and, subsequently, via a process of *snowballing*. Each part-time research assistant was asked to use his/her social networks to find 20 young people to be surveyed. We matched the interviewer to the gender and ethnic/cultural/language background of the young person to be interviewed. In many instances, the paid surveyor was known to the family of the youth to be interviewed or knew someone recommended the interviewer to the family.

The interviews were confidential, with no identifiable personal information supplied on the completed questionnaire. Prior to the interview, interviewees and their parents were informed about the project, and parents were asked to sign a permission form to acknowledge that they were informed about the project, that they understood its aims and that they gave their permission for the interview to be undertaken with their son or daughter.

The young people were well established in their residential areas, with two thirds having lived there for more than five years. Only a small group of young people had been living in their present community less than two years (15.7 per cent). The majority of the youths were familiar with the facilities and recreational possibilities offered by their community. The majority of youth surveyed – 74% of males and 61% of females - were second generation immigrants, that is, born in Australia but with one or both parents born overseas. Others were born in New Zealand, Sudan, Korean, Sri Lanka, India, South Korea, China, England and Tonga. Only 4.3 per cent of the mothers (Table 1) and 4.4 per cent of the fathers (Table 2) were born in Australia.

Table 1 Country of birth of young people’s mothers in relation to gender

Mother’s country of birth	Males	Females	Total
	<i>Per cent</i>	<i>Per cent</i>	<i>Per cent/N</i>
Tonga	23.9	26.8	25.6/71
(South) Korea	16.5	11.9	13.7 /38
Lebanon	11.0	10.7	10.8/30
Sudan	5.5	13.7	10.5/29
Sri Lanka	8.3	7.7	7.9/22
Vietnam	10.1	4.8	6.9/19
China	5.5	5.4	5.4/15
Australia	3.7	4.8	4.3/12
India	4.6	2.4	3.2/9
Turkey	2.8	3.6	3.2/9
Hong Kong	5.5	1.2	2.9/8
Other ¹	2.8/3	7.1/12	5.4/15
<i>Total</i>	<i>100.0/109</i>	<i>100.0/168</i>	<i>100.0/277</i>

¹ Mothers born in Malaysia, Greece, Egypt, New Zealand, Italy, Fiji, Croatia, South Africa, West Papua, England

The largest group of mothers were born in Tonga (25.6 per cent) followed by Korea (11.2 per cent), Lebanon (10.8 per cent) and Sudan (10.5 per cent). The largest group of fathers were also born in Tonga (24.5 per cent), followed by Korea (11.3 per cent) Sudan (10.9 per cent) and Lebanon (10.6 per cent). This relatively large Tongan sample emerged as a result of finding it difficult to secure the number of surveys required. The research assistant interviewing Tongan ethnic groups additionally had the ability to tap into a larger pool of respondents. It was decided that a large group of Tongans allowed for experimentation with fieldwork options in this pilot survey. Future research anticipates the addition of focus group discussions to the survey instrument in order to drill deeper into underlying social dynamics.

Table 2 Country of birth of the young people's father in relation to gender

Father's country of birth	Males	Females	Total
	<i>Per cent</i>	<i>Per cent</i>	<i>Per cent/N</i>
Tonga	22.4	25.7	24.5/67
Korea/ South Korea	16.8	12.0	13.9/38
Sudan	5.6	14.4	10.9/30
Lebanon	11.2	10.2	10.6/29
Sri Lanka	7.5	7.8	7.7/21
Vietnam	9.3	6.0	7.3/20
China	6.5	4.8	5.5/15
Australia	3.7	4.8	4.4/12
India	6.5	2.4	4.0/11
Turkey	2.8	3.6	3.3/9
Hong Kong	3.7	.6	1.8/5
New Zealand	.9	2.4	1.8/5
Other ²	2.8/3	5.4/9	4.4/12
<i>Total</i>	<i>100.0/107</i>	<i>100.0/167</i>	<i>100.0/274</i>

Findings

The young people who identified as 'Anglo' – the largest group in the sample – stated that the majority of their friends came from Australia (44), followed by Tonga (31), Lebanon (27), parts of Asia (16), as well as China (16) and Korea (11). The second largest group was from New Zealand. The majority of their friends were Tongan (16), Asian (3) and Islander (2). The Sudanese had the majority of their friends among Australians and among other

² Fathers born in Malaysia, England, America, Bangladesh, Greece, Fiji, Germany, South Africa, PNG

Sudanese (both 5), but also among the Lebanese (3) and Indian (3). Even if the respondents were most inclined to have friends who shared their own national identity, they did have friends from other ethnic groups. The group of young people who indicated that they did not have any friends are proportionally largest among the Korean (11.8 per cent), followed by the Sudanese (8 per cent), New Zealanders (7.7 per cent) and the Australians (4.1 per cent). Thus, loneliness is more prevalent among the non-Australian born youths.

The issue of national identity among minority youth in Australian multicultural society has long been contentious (Castles, Kalantzis, Cope & Morrissey, 1988; Sheehan 1998; Hage, 1998; Castles, 2000). Critics of immigration in western societies worry that immigrants from different cultural, linguistic and religious backgrounds will not fit in to, and identify with, their new host society. Two thirds of the young people were born in Australia and it would be anticipated that they would feel 'Australian'. However, less than half of the respondents felt 'Australian' (48.5 per cent). About a quarter sometimes felt 'Australian' (Table 3). One in twenty rarely felt 'Australian' and a fifth of the young people did not really feel 'Australian' at all. This supports the argument that minority youth in Sydney have diverse and multiple identities, as noted by Butcher and Thomas (2003), who also interviewed young people in western Sydney and found that they forged hybrid identities that incorporate their migrant identities with elements of 'being Australian'. Hall's notion that ethnicity is an invention by the self and in relation to, and by, others (Hall, 1987; 1992; 1996) is also useful in understanding this contradiction. That is, we would expect that identity is fluid but also that choices are not available to all equally.

Table 3 Feeling 'Australian' in relation to gender

Feeling 'Australian'	Males	Females	Total
	<i>Per cent</i>	<i>Per cent</i>	<i>Per cent/N</i>
Yes, Australian	51.4	46.4	48.5/162 [#]
Sometimes I feel Australian	25.7	23.2	24.3/81
Rarely	3.6	5.7	4.8/16
No, not really	19.3	24.7	22.5/75
<i>Total</i>	<i>100.0/140</i>	<i>100.0/194</i>	<i>100.0/334</i>

Pearson Chi-square level of significance: strong $\geq .001$ ***, moderate $\geq .001$ -.009**, weak $\geq .01$ -.05*, [#] difference not significant.

The males (51.4 per cent) indicated that they felt more ‘Australian’ than the females (46.4 per cent). A quarter of the females rarely felt ‘Australian’. The difference between the genders, however, was not markedly significant.

The young people were asked if the Australian flag was important to them (Table 4). Approximately two thirds of the youths thought the flag was important often or sometimes important (69.1 per cent). Nearly one fifth of the males and fewer of the females thought that the flag was never important. There was no significant difference between genders.

Table 4 Importance of the Australian flag in relation to gender

Importance of Australian flag	Males	Females	Total
	<i>Per cent</i>	<i>Per cent</i>	<i>Per cent/N</i>
Yes, often	38.9	36.9	37.8/128 [#]
Sometimes	32.6	30.3	31.3/106
Rarely	10.4	16.4	13.9/47
No, never	18.1	16.4	17.1/58
<i>Total</i>	<i>100.0/144</i>	<i>100.0/195</i>	<i>100.0/339</i>

Pearson Chi-square level of significance: strong $\geq .001$ ***, moderate $\geq .001-.009$ **, weak $\geq .01-.05$ *, [#] difference not significant.

The young people were asked what the Australian flag meant to them (Table 5). The most common response was that it was an “Australian symbol” (70). It also “represents the Australian people”, “patriotism” (66), “being Australian” (35), “respect” (33) and “freedom” (31). There was a group of young people, however, who thought the flag did not represent anything (66). Taken with responses to questions about national identity this suggests fluidity in subjective belonging: there are moments when minority youth do not feel Australian or identify with the flag but at other times they do, particularly if they belong to transnational communities (Baldasser, 1997).

Table 5 What the Australian flag means to the young people

Meaning of the Australian flag	N	Meaning of the Australian flag	N
Australian symbol	70	Peace	13
It is just a flag/nothing much	66	Better opportunities	12
Our people/patriotism/courage	66	Colours/ Southern cross/stars	10
Being Australian	35	Democracy/ duty/obligation to laws/politics	10
Respects	33	History/Heritage	8
Freedom/independence	31	Living in a good country	6
Britain/Commonwealth	15	Honesty	4
Multiculturalism	15	Security	3
Unity	15	Same as the Aboriginal flag	1
Belonging	14	White Country	1
A flag to be respected	14	Sport	1
<i>Total N</i>			<i>443</i>

We also explored the degree to which these minority youth trust other people and found that most have low expectations in trusting people: only one fifth of the youths felt that people could ‘always’ be trusted, about half of them felt that people could ‘sometimes’ be trusted and one in ten thought people could ‘never’ be trusted, with no significant difference in this regard evident for young men and young women. The levels of trust the young people are expressing are lower than the levels of trust expressed by rural young people, who were asked the same question in 2003 (Fabiansson, 2006).

It might be concluded that these findings are supportive of notions that minority youth live parallel lives to other majority youth; that they do not identify with or engage with mainstream, White, Australian society, and that therein lays an explanation for their (occasional) criminality or anti-social behaviour. Such a simplistic conclusion is undermined by other findings from the Sydney survey. The first is the finding that most of the young people surveyed felt good about living in Australia, like living in their Sydney suburb and felt that they belong in local neighbourhoods. Two in three young people reported “*often* feeling good about living in Australia” and another one in four young people reported “*sometimes*

feeling good about living in Australia. On the other hand, one in three males and one in four females ‘rarely’ or ‘never’ felt ownership of their local area, as Table 6 shows.

Table 6 Ownership of the local place in relation to gender

Ownership of the local place	Males	Females	Total
	<i>Per cent</i>	<i>Per cent</i>	<i>Per cent/N</i>
Yes, often	37.8	34.7	36.0/121 [#]
Sometimes	30.8	40.4	36.3/122
Rarely	10.5	11.9	11.3/38
No, never	21.0	13.0	16.4/55
Total %/ N	100.0/143	100.0/193	100.0/336

Pearson Chi-square level of significance: strong $\geq .001$ ***, moderate $\geq .001$ -.009**, weak $\geq .01$ -.05*, [#] difference not significant.

Nor are these minority youth isolated from other youth. Most youth we surveyed have multi-cultural social networks, evidence that the underlying social cohesion of inter-ethnic youth relations is quite strong in Sydney, notwithstanding the rather exceptional events at Cronulla Beach in December 2005. The Sudanese youth surveyed, for example, had as friends ‘Australian’, Lebanese and Indian youth as well as Sudanese. What these youth most liked about their local area were their social networks and social environment that they found there. When asked to identify “Australian values” (table 7), the minority youth listed (in order of frequency) friendship (98), honesty (80), trust (63), family (61), respect (60), loyalty (45), your own personality (41), religion (39), love (32), school, education, knowledge and intelligence (32). Disconnection with schooling is as a key aspect of the social exclusion of immigrant minorities (Reid, 2009). Most of the youth surveyed seemed to connect with their school. About half of the females (52.1%) and two in five males (42.4%) reported that they felt valued ‘often’, with only one in ten males (9.7%) one in fifty young women feeling that they were not valued at school.

The youth surveyed demonstrated strong aspirations and a confidence about their future in Australia. The preferred future occupation for young people was to be a medical doctor or work within the medical field (31). This was followed by being a teacher either at school or pre-school level (30). This was followed by an artistic profession (17), lawyer (15) or an accountant (15) related occupation. Mechanics and working within the building industry were

the other most often chosen occupations. It is one thing to have strong aspirations, and another to think that these aspirations will be fulfilled. Accordingly, the young people in the research were asked how successful they thought they would be in achieving their preferred occupation, which can express their confidence in their present situation and hope for the future. The results showed that females (49.0 per cent) were more confident in their ability to achieve their preferred occupation than males (39.8 per cent). Only a few of the youths expressed pessimism about their chances of achieving their preferred occupation in the future.

Table 7 **Important values for young people**

Important values	N	Important values	N
Friendship	98	Cultural values	11
Honesty	80	Equal rights	11
Trust	63	Acceptance/opportunities	11
Family	61	Humour	6
Respect	60	Generosity	5
Loyalty/Sharing	45	Safety /security	4
Personality	41	Good listener	3
Religion/Christian values	39	Good looking	3
School/Education/knowledge/intelligence	32	Happiness	3
Love	32	Good/ nice	3
Kindness	21	Integrity	2
Peace	20	Material goods/money	2
Caring/compassion	18	Elders	2
Freedom/ freedom of speech	18	Work ethics	2
Morals	14	Food	2
Reliability	12	Sport	1
<i>Total N</i>			725

Discussion

The research outlined in this paper presents findings that are at odds with the increasing anxiety about the dangers to Australian society of a large scale, non-discriminatory and increasingly non-British immigration policy – an anxiety manifest in the disproportionate hysteria from both major political parties about a few thousand boat arrivals – and the fears that immigrant youth from minority backgrounds will undermine Australia’s future and generate conflict. It is often difficult to point to data and evidence that confirms that

Australian cosmopolitan society is working well, against the odds. Sensationalist media concentrates on the controversies related to ethnic crime, the Cronulla riots, and the boat people. In the main, media images of people of ethnic, cultural, and/or religious diversity are associated with those of social conflict and social problem. Results from the survey of mainly first and second generation immigrant youth, presented above, suggest that contemporary cosmopolitan youth in western and south-western Sydney are not disaffected, isolated, fearful and angry but that they are, in the main, hopeful and optimistic, that they experience the sensation of 'belonging' to their western and south-western Sydney suburbs in which they live with a majority of their culturally-diverse friends. They generally feel safe, and they feel good about living in Australia. They hold strongly to values of family, friendship, loyalty and trust. But only one in three surveyed identify as 'Australian', with most offering some hybrid-Australian identity. This is common across all western countries, and should not be a concern, reflecting the diverse family connections past, present and future of immigrant youth. Yet it was this finding that many first and second generation immigrant youth did not identify as solely as Australian that is most controversial. Immigrant identity is clearly a very sensitive issue to Australian policy makers responsible for immigration settlement and the policy of multiculturalism that still frames Australian settlement policy and programs. To fixate on this aspect of the research, despite many findings such as positive responses to questions related to aspiration, belonging and values of the immigrant youth informants in western and south-western Sydney, reveals a federal government anxiety about the relationship between immigration, multiculturalism and Australian nationalism. Most do not feel as safe in other parts of Sydney as they do in their local neighbourhoods. Impressions of confronting racism and prejudice in their lives endure, alongside networks of cross-cultural friendships. Most are not sure that people outside their social networks can be trusted. Importantly, there is the belief that another riot is possible and that we need to be alert to these dynamics, particularly in schools. The overwhelming sense that emerges from this research is that contemporary cosmopolitan young people in western and south-western Sydney tend to live their days feeling that they belong in Australia and in their neighbourhood, that they are valued by friends and family, and that they have prospects of achieving their post-school occupation ambitions. The two days of the Cronulla riots (social conflict) were an aberration: the daily life of relatively harmonious inter-ethnic youth relations for the remaining days over the past two years (social cohesion) constitute the norm (Collins and Reid 2009).

However surveys are limited in their scope, providing a social snapshot at one point of time. This research needs to be complemented by larger scale longitudinal surveys in order to track youth attitudes, experiences, aspirations and opinions over time and qualitative research methodologies designed to better probe the complexities of identities and belonging of first and second generation immigrant youth in Australia.

As Tabar, Noble and Poynting (2010: 12) in their research on Australians of a Lebanese background point out, identities are not simply symbolic entities through which we represent ourselves and others, but identity embodies practices of identification and adaptation deploying particular kinds of resources through which we position ourselves in diverse social domains. This is, of course, no simple act of will, for those resources are shaped by our histories, which are classed, gendered and racialised, and those processes of positioning are met by the acts of others who often have greater power to reject, validate or reshape those practices.

This suggests that there is much more to be investigated about immigrant youth identity than our survey questions can identify. But cosmopolitan youth identities should not be seen as a threat to Australian society or Australian nationalism, unless that vision of the Australian nation is constructed through the prism of British whiteness and the symbol of the Australian flag constructed through the drunken, racist, lens of the white Australian male youth bashing those perceived as Middle Eastern at Cronulla Beach in December 2005 (Noble 2009).

This suggests that there is a need to move from static, stereotyped and essentialist notions of ethnicity that have characterised the philosophy and practice of Australian multiculturalism in the past and recognise the fluidity and global connectedness, alliances and identities of contemporary immigrant communities in Australia, particularly of first and second generation youth. We would argue that an Australian multiculturalism that is developed to embody more explicitly and enthusiastically elements of cosmopolitanism would assist in moving forward on issues related to immigrant identity and other practices that constrain Australia's ability to embrace the cultural, linguistic and religious diversity that characterises the nation's people. Here we envisage a development which marries the commitments of programs and services of multiculturalism with anti-racism to reduce the extent of migrant social inclusion with a more globally-oriented understanding of identity and belonging in a form of cosmopolitanism (Delanty 2009, pp.132-156) that would be more relevant to Australian ethnic and cultural

diversity in the twenty-first century. This could also assist in overcoming one of Australian multiculturalism's key contradictions: that it has not sufficiently engaged the mainstream, dominant Anglo Australian community. This is because the focus of Australian multiculturalism would shift from being concerned only with ethnic minorities to being concerned with all Australians living in an increasing globalised world. It would also assist in valuing the globalised, fluid, hybrid identities of immigrant youth, shoring up their subjective inclusion in the nation and in the communities that they live their daily lives.

Moreover, Australian multiculturalism has always had a problem about the place of indigenous Australians in the multicultural nation, a problem also identified in the Canadian case (Kymlicka 1995). The Rudd Labor Government's apology to Australia's Indigenous peoples makes it now possible to develop a more cosmopolitan approach to multiculturalism that is inclusive of all Australians and permit new bridges in inclusion to be built between indigenous, minority immigrant and majority Anglo-Australian communities. As Delanty (2009, p.156) argues, "instead of presupposing discrete cultural groups, as in liberal multiculturalism, a cosmopolitan perspective requires the internal transformation of all groups in a process of ongoing deliberation and interpretation". At the same time, racism is the social cancer of culturally-diverse societies. While Australian multiculturalism has been more effective in embracing anti-racist elements than British multiculturalism, racism is persistent and enduring in Australia and other western countries, with Indigenous and immigrant minorities the main casualties and social exclusion in everyday life the main consequence. Since cosmopolitanism "is not merely about the plurality of cultures but more about the embracing of difference and the search for an alternative political order" (Delanty 2009, p.150), a cosmopolitan multiculturalism moves the political community from a liberal notion of tolerance and harmony – which both exaggerates and stereotypes cultural differences and sweeps racism under the carpet – to a cosmopolitan political culture that can more directly address, and track, racism and racial discrimination.

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