

1 INTRODUCTION – MULTI CULTURAL FUTURES

The fact is that multiculturalism ain't what it used to be
(UK Chair of the Commission for Racial Equality, Trevor Phillips,
The Guardian, 28th May, 2004: p26).

This thesis is concerned with the analysis of possible futures for multiculturalism, a discussion which is well suited to human geographical analysis. The place of 'cultures' in human geography has become more important following the onset of 'the cultural turn', manifesting itself in renewed interest in the study of cultural geographies (Jackson, [1989] 1994; Duncan and Ley, 1993; Mitchell, 2000; Shurmer-Smith, 2002). Geographers have become increasingly interested in questions over the 'places of culture' in society. The successes (or failures) of policies of multiculturalism are natural contexts in which to focus an investigation of the processes at work in cultural geographies. Yet studies of multiculturalism/s by cultural geographers are few and far between (notable exceptions include K. Anderson, 2000; Kobayashi, 1993, 1999; Bonnett, 1993; Thompson *et al.*, 1998; Mahtani, 2002). Policies of multiculturalism endeavour to 'make places' through an understanding of, rather than a denial of, the differences within and between groups of people wedded to particular contexts. In order to better understand the representation of difference through multicultural policy and the realities of difference that these policies hope to capture an empirically grounded cultural geographical analysis is needed.

This thesis has several discrete aims. Firstly, this thesis aims to decentre hegemonic discourses of national identity that serve to limit the potential of multiculturalism. Secondly, and in a related manner, this thesis seeks to bring theories of multiculturalism into engagement with the empirical, through a study of the second generation from an Iranian background in three cities, in order to show how the nation limits multiculturalism. Thirdly, the thesis seeks to bring national discourses of identity into engagement with other forms of identity, such as religious identity, class, gender and subcultural identities, in order to 'see the nation' as an integral part of complex discourses of identity. Finally, through this analysis this thesis seeks to produce new ways of thinking about multiculturalism to embody future directions for

multicultural theory and praxis, and link this into new considerations of culture within human geography.

In attempting to achieve these aims, the analysis will seek to advance contemporary academic knowledge on several fronts. Firstly, in terms of its overall structure, this thesis brings theories of multiculturalism into engagement with empirical realities. In most cases, multiculturalism is studied in the rarefied halls of theoretical analysis in the disciplines of political science and cultural studies (see Chapters 2 and 3), where the varied subtle theoretical positions of multiculturalism are critiqued. However, one thing that is sadly lacking from these debates is an empirical grounding: multiculturalism is seen as a policy about individual recognition and difference, and yet the individual voices and the differences they embody are largely absent. The engagement of theoretical and empirical multiculturalism at the core of this thesis is overdue, and should be seen as a necessary progression towards a more comprehensive understanding of attempts to include diversity in society. Further new empirical research in this thesis includes the empirical study of the 'Iranian' communities of Sydney, London, and Vancouver. Whilst studies of Iranians have been conducted in Los Angeles and Stockholm (see Chapter 3) there is a dearth of material concerning the lives of Iranians in the cities which form the focus of this analysis.¹ Following from this, the empirical focus on second generation 'Iranians' in this thesis is a break from traditional research on the second generation in that it problematises the developmentalist assumptions inherent in most research on the second generation (see Chapter 2). Instead, this thesis seeks to highlight how the interstitial position of these children of migrants 'between nations', is merely a reflection of the complex identities of all individuals made more visible through the dominance of national discourses of belonging. Finally, whilst other theorists have sought to understand the limitations and possibilities inherent in multiculturalism (e.g. Stuart Hall, 2000), this research is distinctive in that it focuses on 'the nation' and national discourses of identity as central to the question of finding a productive multicultural future. All of these new and innovative features make this research a valuable addition to academic discussions on multiculturalism, the accommodation and understanding of diversity, and the place of the nation in contemporary society.

¹ Exceptions include Mirfakhraie (1999) in his unpublished Masters thesis on Iranians in Canada, and an article by Sanadjian (2000) set amongst football spectators outside an Iranian store in London.

1.1 Cultures, Culturalisms, and Multiculturalisms

The question of the place of migrants within immigration reception cities in 'the West' is as relevant as ever following recent events in the United States, Afghanistan, and Iraq. It is a crucial time for multicultural policy, with the 'War on Terror' threatening the integrity of Western societies, drawing lines in the sand between members of the same national community, as those of 'Middle Eastern appearance' are increasingly seen and treated as a security threat. The 'threat of Islam', like so many migrant threats before it, is a rallying point for the fear of the Other which threatens to undo the benefits achieved through multiculturalism. Under these conditions, multicultural policies have been increasingly criticised for failing to achieve the promised harmony between 'migrants' and the national core cultures in Australia, Canada and Britain.

These 'core cultures' at the centre of popular debates over the merits of multiculturalism are representations of national cultures that work to explain the 'cultural essence' (Baumann, 1999: 23-4) that signifies belonging. The importance of the national core or centre as the goal of multicultural change highlights the relevance of context in what could otherwise be seen as a universal project of acceptance and recognition. Beneath multicultural policies lies the potential to recognise the difference of and between *all* peoples in a society. This equality through difference is sometimes expressed as *unity in diversity*. Multiculturalism as an ideal seeks to unite people through their common differences, ensuring that as all people are imbued with an individuality that defines and limits them, this very indivisible individualism becomes a point of common existence on which turns the fundamentals of liberal equality and inclusion. However, an emphasis on national values as the 'correct' way to be in the nation limits the ideological intention of multiculturalism, setting the context of the nation as the defining feature. In this research I have sought to examine these *national multiculturalisms* as incomplete expressions of the unity in diversity relation, interrupted by the imperative of *national* belonging, set above other possible modes of difference and similarity, and therefore dominating questions of inclusion and exclusion.

In these discussions the national cultures at the core take on the appearance of Carl Sauer's 'superorganic' cultures (Duncan, 1980) where cultures are reified as essentialised and homogenous *things* (Cloke et al., 2001: 182-3). A key aspect of the cultural turn in geography was the problematising of superorganicism in geographic analysis of cultures by such scholars as James S. Duncan (1980) and Peter Jackson ([1989]1994). However, these 'culturalisms' remain and continue to express their constitutive power over relations between individuals and within and between groups and 'communities'. As Cloke et al. note,

We are used to hearing talk of British culture, Islamic culture, gay culture, youth culture, black culture, or urban culture. Many people are fascinated by their 'own' and/or 'other cultures', see themselves as moving 'between cultures' and/or as having a 'mixed culture' (2001: 183).

Despite the best efforts to resist these culturalisms (Gilroy, 1987, 1992; hooks, 1994; Jackson, 1994; Jackson and Penrose, 1993; Penrose, 1993), they remain useful for understanding, and central to communicating, discussions about people in society. Recognising the essential character of 'cultures' is a good place to start in a discussion of the possible futures for multiculturalism. The potential to understand diversity at the level of the individual that underpins multicultural policies is prone to this ideological slippage, producing a policy that instead serves to reproduce differences 'between cultures', most typically between 'migrants' and the more legitimate 'national culture'. Whilst at one level these 'people-grouping' terms may be meaningless, it is the way they are "defined, deployed and contested in real-world situations [that] have profound effects" (Cloke et al., 2001: 184).

In this research, the importance of national culturalisms in multiculturalism is investigated through a multi-site empirical analysis of the lives of the children of Iranian migrants. Iran has become an archetype for the threat of terror, cast as a member of the 'Axis of Evil' and as a so-called 'state-sponsor of terrorism' in political and popular rhetoric. The existence of 'Iranians' as powerful signifying agents of threat and difference in Australia, Britain and Canada presents a strong starting point to look at the different ways representation and reality interplay in 'multicultural' societies. The sites chosen for this analysis are the immigrant reception cities of Sydney, Vancouver and London (SVL). Additionally, selecting the children

of migrants allows the problematising of discourses of unitary national belonging as ‘the nation’ is critiqued against their interstitial position between nations. Further, amongst these ‘second generation’ individuals I have chosen to analyse two different religious groups: those representing the dominant Shi’i Muslim cohort from Iran; and those subscribing to the Baha’i Faith, a politically repressed minority religious group in Iran. The decisions behind the selection of these cities and the second generation from an Iranian background are validated below and in Chapter 3.

1.2 Structure and Agency

Recent comments made by Trevor Phillips, the UK Commissioner for Racial Equality, calling for the rebranding of British policies of multiculturalism under the new label of ‘integration’ have been interpreted as a call for a reinvestment in the core values of ‘being British’ in order to more quickly and completely ‘solve the migrant problem’ (Phillips, 2004). Likewise, in Australia the conservative Liberal government has reworked multiculturalism since 1996 into a toothless beast with an increasingly shallow agenda. Here too there has been a recent emphasis on a return to core values and the importance of becoming an Australian citizen. In Canada, where multiculturalism has been inculcated as more than merely a settlement program, funding is shrinking and the voices of dissent are growing.

Multicultural policy in each of these national contexts reflects a structuring of identity that is dominated by national cultures, setting up the dialectical national ‘us’ versus the migrant ‘them’, as representations of national unity versus migrant diversity. In attempting to negotiate our identities the agency to choose how we know ourselves and how we are perceived is mediated by the forms that structure our society (Louw, 2001). This analysis presupposes a Foucaultian discursive position with respect to the agency of the individual. For Foucault, the ability of individuals to claim agency over their negotiations of identity is in tension with the socialising forces that seek to structure meaning in society (Louw, 2001: 10).² These negotiations form a web of cause and effect between the “independently constituted subject” and the “constraints

² Foucault’s theories of the structuring of society contrast the Saussurian structuralism which places the individual as constrained within the ‘prison of language’, or the Althusserian Marxist subjugation of individual agency to the power of the ideological state apparatus (Althusser, 1971; Louw, 2001).

to free initiative” (Giddens, 1984, in Cloke *et al.*, 2001: 186). The unity of national ‘cultures’ cannot be disengaged from the poststructural complexity of the polyvalent individual, and it is in the tension between this dialectic that multiculturalism is positioned. In this analysis, multiculturalism is investigated through the structures that inform and constrain communal identity, such as the national policies of multiculturalism and the agenda setting impact of the mainstream media, and the agency of the individual to express their complex ‘positionality’ as an embodiment of multiple communities, (partially) captured here through ethnographic analysis. How ‘decisions’ about identity play themselves out reflects the tensions between the constraints of structure and the freedom of agency.

The unity in diversity relation opens up a postcolonial relationship where the whiteness of the centre is contrasted with the non-whiteness of those migrants who threaten to miscegenate the constructed purity of the nation. This ‘purity’ is bound by the national borders, which are increasingly subject to the contradictions and challenges of increased transnational flows. The sanctity of white national identity is challenged by immigration flows, both formal and informal, as asylum seekers wash up on the shores of Christmas Island, or as South Asians take advantage of their former colonial ties to migrate to Britain, or as West Indians migrate to Canada. With the increase in transnational human flows under the conditions of increased globalisation, questions of identity, what it is and who we are, are becoming ever more relevant. The modern nation-state, as a geopolitical form covering almost all the territories of the globe, has come to dominate these questions of cultural identity. The last century, a century of nation-building, has produced nation-states as a geopolitical fact, and the nation as hegemonic in identity relations. The fundamental fact of identity, as a way of expressing the bounded difference between the self and ‘the Other’, sits well with the ubiquity of nation-statehood. Everyone is expected to have a national identity, thus allowing everyone to define themselves by their national belonging. Of course, there are other ubiquitous identity relations, such as gender identity, or linguistic identity, but it is the hegemonic nature of national identity that is the focus of multiculturalism and hence this thesis. Despite this dominance, the reality of this hegemony is relative, for with the growing recognition of transnational and hybrid realities the explicit singularity of national belonging has been undermined. One group in society that challenges the dominance of national discourses of

belonging are the children of migrants within nations, a group we can call the second generation.

1.3 The Second Generation: Hybrid and/or Hyphenated

In many ways an analysis of the second generation and their place within discussions of diversity sets a challenge to the contemporary forms of multiculturalism. The second generation live in the interstices that exist between the essentialised and stereotyped notions of ‘the homeland’ and the wider host society, ‘in-between’ nations, constrained by many to a hyphenated existence of neither here nor there (see Mahtani, 2002). This group of individuals is often seen as having a foot in both camps, or more problematically for them, with feet in neither. They can thus be seen in some ways as being exterior to the paradigm of nationhood as espoused within multicultural nations, whilst at the same time being implicitly ‘multicultural’.

They face, on a daily basis, questions of belonging and legitimacy that typify their problematic place in a world that recognises identity predominantly in the form of national identity. From the simple bureaucratic institutions whose systems and forms call for ‘nationality’ through to complex issues of social, political and cultural exclusion within the bounds of so-called multicultural society, failing to conform to a singular national identity can be seen as a threat, as a tacit challenge to the status quo of national discourses of belonging. As such, the children of migrants are uniquely placed to question the importance and relevance of national identities within discourses of multiculturalism, and to allow us to view the role of more complex alternative identities that intersect and coexist with national belonging. For the second generation in this analysis, becoming a viable part of this discourse of belonging may appear to involve a simple choice: am I Iranian, or am I Australian/ British/Canadian (ABC)? Yet, this *instrumentality* of identity is too simple. Individuals do not hold absolute agency over identification. Actions of identity construction act both *through* the individual and *on* the individual, as wider societal forces produce discourses of acceptability. Individuals of ‘Middle Eastern appearance’ may, like Asian migrants before them, be deemed ‘unassimilable’, as separate from the legitimate nation despite their desires or attempts to ‘fit in’. For the second generation their interstitial status allows them some degree of choice. But this choice is limited by social action.

Whilst individuals and groups continue to be subject to social action seeking to define their 'place' in society, multiculturalism does allow more freedom to express national migrant identities. As a result of this, whether intended or not, multiculturalism has forged an important socio-political space for the second generation, the hyphenated identity space of the dual national. The Iranian-Australian, like the now acceptable Italian-Australian or Greek-Australian, is now a possibility. In the political form of national multiculturalisms this hyphenated identity represents a transitory place on the path to eventual integration as a fully functioning national citizen. Despite the toleration of migrant identity through multiculturalism (Hage, 1998), there remains an expectation of eventual integration. Multicultural tolerance has a finite lifespan. In support of this, generational change is assumed as a one way process of change from the undesirable, yet tolerated, migrant identity to the desirable non-migrant national citizen. This process is seen as 'natural', an assumed Darwinian response to the dominance of the core national identity. Multicultural policies, such as those in Australia and Britain, have focused on the settlement of the first generation, and then only for the initial period of settlement because of this biological imperative. The assumption of the natural progression from one national identity to the other, via a hyphenated intermediary, whilst widely recognised as fallacious, has continued to dominate policy (see Baumann, 1999). The limitation to a discourse of national belonging, particularly where underwritten by the assumptions of a natural assimilation, represents a deficiency that needs to be overcome to ensure a productive future for multiculturalism. Whether the national multicultural project has been successful will be examined against the possibilities of hyphenated national identities: the existence of Australian-, Canadian-, or British/English-Iranian identity.

However, it is not merely a decision of whether to choose to be Iranian or Australian or some hyphenated form of the two, or even of being constrained to some national identity space by the actions of wider society. Individuals are also subject to the contingency of history in that they have an 'ethnic' past that makes itself known in the present through the construction of ethnic ties to the 'homeland'. Whilst national identities and their ethnic ties are often reified as discrete entities, it is more correct to think of these entities as social constructions that are made and remade relative to the context that they exist within. As Gerd Baumann (1999) observed, the essentialisation of ethnic, religious and national identities as static and unchanging helps individuals

and institutions to reproduce themselves in the face of temporal reality. Even when these national/ethnic/religious ties are subject to claims as immutable, such as is the case with the so-called ‘core values’³ of nations, the act of expressing them changes with time. As Baumann notes, “To repeat the same statement in new circumstances is to make a new statement” (1999: 69). A more detailed discussion on the social construction of identity will be undertaken below, and in subsequent chapters. How individuals are placed within discourses of a socially constructed national identity is mediated by these several realities of individual choice, societal constraint, and ethnic history. The measure of the success of multicultural policies in constructing viable places for second generation individuals from Iran to express their identities, needs to be measured against the subjective outcomes of personal journeys through these complex negotiations. Choice, constraint and history play themselves out in complex ways for each individual. The narratives constructed through this research help to tease out the different forces that are acting on and through these negotiations.

1.4 Beyond the Nation: Introducing Complexity

The negotiation of national discourses of identity is rendered far more complex when we begin to consider the possible alternates that exist outside the hegemony of national belonging. What (inter)relationships exist that cross (suture) the bounded national identity? What role do religious identities, linguistic identities, gender, political leanings, professional associations, the music you listen to, the football team you follow, play in the way individuals think of themselves as members of societies and communities? For the second generation, multiculturalism goes so far in recognising the so-called hyphenated identities of individuals and groups, conferring legitimacy upon communities, such as the Italian-Australians, or the Indian-Canadians. Yet, the reality of just who these people are is far more complex. Even pan-idealist constructed communities such as the Afro-Caribbeans of Britain or the British-Muslim identity are problematic when set against a backdrop of multiple dynamic identities fixed within an historical context. Thus, as Stuart Hall states:

³ Questions concerning national ‘values’ have been raised recently in Australia and Britain, particularly with regards to the teaching of ‘civics’ in schools. Recent Australian legislation concerning the importance of the raising of the flag and the national anthem in schools emphasise the desire of the present conservative Liberal federal government to implement a program of white/male/Christian/’Anglo-Celtic’ values as fundamentally ‘Australian’ (see Chapter 4).

The temptation to essentialise ‘community’ has to be resisted - it is the fantasy of plenitude in circumstances of imagined loss. Migrant communities bear the imprint of diaspora, ‘hybridisation’ and *différance* in their very constitution. Their vertical integration into their traditions of origin exist side-by-side with their lateral linkages to other ‘communities’ of interest, practice and aspiration, real and symbolic. Individual members, especially the younger generations, experience the contradictory pulls which these different forces exert. Many are making their own, negotiated ‘settlements’ within and outside their communities (2000: 232).

This recognition of dynamism challenges the ‘centre’ – the national pole of the post-colonial condition – demanding recourse to other possible discursive identities. It is this demand and its outcomes that drives much of the discussion of the empirical results of this research. By investigating the different communities that the second generation from Iran are involved in, both consciously and unconsciously, the immutability of national identity is challenged. The crosscutting of alternate identities interrupts the hyphenated national dialectic, recasting national identity as existing in dynamic relations with its Others.

1.5 Religious Identity

In this research, respondents have been selected from two different religious groupings that have different relationships to national identity, the dominant Shi’i Islam and the peripheral Baha’i Faith. Shi’i Islam in Iran is the national religion playing a dominant role in the construction of Iranian national reality since the 16th Century. But most significantly, Iran since the revolution of 1978/79 has been recast as an Islamic theocracy pulling Shi’i Islam to the centre of discussions of Iranian national identity both within and outside Iran. Despite the contemporary constructed congruence of the Shi’a with Iranian identity, a wide variety of religious groups express their indigeneity in one way or another in the Iranian nation, including the pre-Islamic Zoroastrian religion, the Armenian, Assyrian and Nestorian Christians, Jews, Sunni Muslims, and other Shi’i religious groups. The Baha’i Faith with its roots in the 19th Century Babi religion contrasts the national status of Shi’i Islam.⁴ The Baha’i Faith has been the subject of perennial bouts of persecution as an apostasy, a fact that has intensified through the last 25 years of religious rule. The casting of the

⁴ For the remainder of the thesis I shall use Shi’a (noun) and Shi’i (adjective) for the Twelver Shi’i form dominant in Iran (see Keddie, 2003).

Baha'i Faith in opposition to Islam has peripheralised the religion, setting it in opposition to the nation.

Taking religion as a starting point it is hoped to open up the discussion of identity beyond the national hegemony towards the inclusion of more complex associations. The recognition of more complex identity relations serves to interrupt the dialectic of the legitimate national and the migrant by drawing common relationships that cross-cut the divisions between nations. By drawing commonality across the bounds of national difference it may be possible to bring the essentialised national core into a dynamic relationship with the migrant periphery, and thus bring the nation under the terms of multicultural recognition. Through this analysis of complex identity negotiations it is hoped to answer questions about the role of a dominant national identity in discourses of identity and whether the inclusion of more complex identity recognition can provide a path towards possible futures for multiculturalism as policy and practice.

1.6 A Question of Identity?

At this stage, having indicated that identity negotiations are set against the tensions between structure and agency, it may be instructive to clarify my use of the term identity, and further, how debates over the meaning and form of the nation combine to produce a sense of national identity that is the focus of my discussions.

The preoccupation with identity and the locality of the 'self' in late modern times has been increasingly influenced by the processes of globalisation that have undermined the surety of our place in society. Just as I have been stressing the dominance of the nation in discourses of identity other scholars have been pointing to the reification of the nation in order to protect the nation from the destabilising tendencies of globalisation (Soysal, 1994; Hannerz, 1993; Sassen, 1996). As Stuart Hall notes,

We need to situate the debates about identity within all those historically specific developments and practices which have disturbed the relatively 'settled' character of many populations and cultures, above all in relation to the processes of globalization, ... and the processes of forced and 'free'

migration which have become a global phenomenon of the so-called 'post-colonial' world (1996: 4).

The rise of conservative nationalisms across Europe is seen by some as a last gasp for breath from a drowning geopolitical form as the region, transnational forces, and global incorporation all conspire to eliminate the relevance of the nation. Whilst I will talk more of these post-national rumblings in the following chapter, it is these processes of change that have brought a realisation to everyday individuals of the frailty of their 'identity', and the possible complexities that identity relations may involve. The presence of the migrant Other inside the boundaries of the nation leads to the deterritorialisation spoken of by Deleuze and Guattari (1988), where the congruence of the national cultural community is decentred and subject to a reterritorialisation that (re)claims the space of the nation and produces the dialectical opposition of the nation to the (migrant) interlopers. It is this recognition of the dialectical relationship which arouses the need to understand the self. As Anne Kershen notes, without an 'Other' to identify with or differ from, self recognition would be impossible (1998: 2). It is this apperception that has drawn the late modern individual into a more intimate quest for identity, for, as Zygmunt Bauman notes, "Identity comes to the fore when there are doubts about belonging" (1996, quoted in Kershen, 1998: 1).

The fundamentals of identity are neatly summarised by Kershen in her discussion of the features of identification required on landing cards at ports of disembarkation. Our name and gender (Who am I?), occupation (What am I?), place of residence (Where do I belong?), and our place of birth (Where was I born?), are simplistic essential features that can be argued to make up our identity. Expressing as they do basic geographic locality, economic or class divisions, and physiological categories, these features help to mark us as 'insiders' or 'outsiders' from the relative position of particular societal associations. However, identity is more dynamic than this static and quantifiable image, more subject to time and choice. As Tariq Modood *et al.* state, "Identities declare not some primordial identity but rather a positional choice of the group with which they wish to be associated. Identity choices are more political than anthropological, more 'associational', less ascribed" (Modood *et al.* 1997). Whilst I concur with this approach to identity, it is in the realm of 'choice' that we have the

opportunity in this work to investigate. As mentioned earlier, it is not a pure abstract choice, but a choice grounded in the reality of the opportunity for choice, a question brought into stark consideration by the works of scholars like Stuart Hall (1991, 1992, 1996, 2000) and Ghassan Hage (1998, 2003), which are influential in this analysis.

The 'positional choice' of Modood *et al.* (1997) implies a temporal dynamism surrounding the question of identity. Instead of thinking about identities as static constructs that exist as units transferable across time, identity needs to be seen as a transitory relation, a dynamic process of discursive construction where identity is never achieved but instead is in a constant process of becoming. For the purposes of this research I am relying on Stuart Hall's constructivist notions of a discursively constituted identity. Hall notes:

Precisely because identities are constructed within, not outside, discourse, we need to understand them as produced in specific historical and institutional sites within specific discursive formations and practices, by specific enunciative strategies. Moreover, they emerge within the play of specific modalities of power, and thus are more the product of the marking of difference and exclusion, than they are the sign of an identical, naturally constituted unity - an 'identity' in its traditional meaning (1996: 4).

This dynamic process of identification allows the intersection of multiple themes in identity relations: of religion, class, gender, generation, amongst others, with the national theme, across time, so that the supposed dominance of 'national identity' can be interrupted and reconfigured. These multiple identities are not completely 'unfixed', as the play of choice (agency), along with constraint and history (structure) generate specific 'isomorphisms' (Leonard, 2003), or lines of flight, along which identities cohere to (re)produce these multiple 'communities' from moment to moment (see Western, 1992).

1.7 Defining the Nation

As stated above, it is the nation and national identity which is the focus of this discussion of multicultural futures. In order to investigate a future for multiculturalism a different idea of the nation needs to be reproduced at the centre of multicultural debates: one that is inclusive rather than exclusive, one that is intimately involved

with the other trajectories of identity rather than created in opposition to them (where they are even recognised). By looking at the negotiations around and through national identities I hope to advance a future for multiculturalism that extends beyond national discourses of identity.

Since Ernest Renan asked ‘What is a nation?’ in the late 19th Century, scholars have been discussing the origin, form, and relevance of the modern nation. The nation as discourse of belonging is a fact of ‘modern’ existence that is both self-evidently apparent, and yet difficult to comprehend in its intellectual entirety. As Hobsbawm (1992) notes, it is something that is easily understood unless you try to explain it. It is more than merely a political reality as expressed by some scholars (see Breuilly, 1994). It is more than a purely cultural entity, yet the nation has aspects of both. For Homi Bhabha (1990) this intractable difficulty in knowing the nation is a manifestation of its fundamental ambivalence, as a Janus-faced construction that is a progression of dialectical contradictions in action through the process of inscribing the nation as a reality (1990: 2-3). The nation as both process and form (see Chapter 2), as both universal and particular, modern and postmodern, as unitary and diverse, establishes the tensions that gird *and* guide the national space. The nation must therefore be seen as both a fact, and a story being told, a narration that will never truly be completed. In this sense, what belongs to the nation, what is legitimately seen as the ‘locality of national culture’, for Bhabha and others like Stuart Hall (1992, 2000), cannot be simply bounded. Further, the boundaries themselves are Janus-faced as they can neither simply define what is inside, nor keep out what is outside. The ambivalence that drives the process/form of the nation informs a constant process of hybridity that both includes and excludes as the legitimacy of belonging is perennially tested. The boundaries of the nation, or national culture, that would define the nation need to be seen as constantly under terms of contestation, as the borders are cross-cut by alternate associations of belonging; that of “youth, the everyday, nostalgia, new ‘ethnicities’, new social movements, ‘the politics of difference’” (Bhabha, 1990: 3). In this present work, the research seeks to interrogate the nation against these ‘alternates’ in order to investigate the ambivalence over the nation and national belonging and better express this ambivalence in multicultural discourses where the nation as a form is so influential. Following on from Bhabha, I wish to “establish the cultural boundaries of the nation so that they may be acknowledged as ‘containing’

thresholds of meaning that must be crossed, erased and translated in the process of cultural production” (1990: 4).

If we turn to the historical origins of the modern ‘world of nations’ it can help us to establish what the nation is, and thus who are those included in or excluded from the nation. In discussions concerning the rise of nationalism in Europe, Eric Hobsbawm (1992) emphasises the complexity of individual identity and group association as a counterpoint to the reasoning of the rise of an all-consuming national identity. He states that,

Men and women did not choose collective identification as they chose shoes, knowing that one could only put on one pair at a time. They had, and still have, several attachments and loyalties simultaneously, including nationality, and are simultaneously concerned with various aspects of life, any of which may at any one time be foremost in their minds, as occasion suggests. For long periods of time these different attachments would not make incompatible demands on a person, so that a man might have no problem about feeling himself to be the son of an Irishman, the husband of a German woman, a member of the mining community, a worker, a supporter of Barnsley Football Club, a Liberal, a Primitive Methodist, a patriotic Englishman, possibly a Republican, and a supporter of the British Empire (Hobsbawm, 1992: 123).

However, with the rise of democratic institutions, some of these identifications began to be constructed as mutually exclusive. For Hobsbawm, the rise of the nations of Europe rode on the former state forms, which did not hold to an exclusive sense of belonging. The great states of Europe prior to the late 19th Century were not homogeneously constituted entities. They had overlapping loyalties to language, religion and other senses of ‘peoplehood’ as they had within their borders any number of peoples who had accreted to, or been subsumed by, the expansionist programs of the state (Hobsbawm, 1992: 41-3). With the rise of mass politics through the ‘modern administrative, citizen-mobilising and citizen-influencing state’ (Hobsbawm, 1992: 110, 82-88) the central forms of linguistic and cultural nationalisms, such as the ‘national language’ or the flag, began to take hold to the exclusion of others. It was then, when the citizen of the nation was constructed as being a true national only through the speaking of the national language, or of being of the national ‘race’, that the tension between modes of identification turned into conflict. It was the merger of

a post-French Revolution state patriotism with an emergent non-state nationalism that underlay this tension over a newly constructed homogenous national space.⁵

The creation of the nation-state has crystallised the myths and traditions of the people within the national boundaries. As Hobsbawm notes,

Merely by dint of becoming 'a people', the citizens of a country became a sort of community, though an imagined one, and its members therefore found themselves seeking for, and consequently finding, things in common, places, practices, personages, memories, signs and symbols (1992: 90).

According to Anthony D. Smith (1993), the modern nation is a combination of ethnic characteristics and formal institutional/territorial character. This dialectical separation is described by Baumann as a combination of two seemingly irreconcilable philosophies: rationalism, or the appeal to efficiency and purpose, and romanticism, or the appeal to feelings as the basis of action (Baumann, 1999: 18-9; Van De Putte, 2003: 61-8). In his historical analysis of the roots of the modern nation, Smith emphasises that it is possible for a communal group to hold many of the ethnic components of a modern nation without actually constituting a nation. These ethnic communities, or *ethnies*, whilst holding particular common ethnic attributes, do not possess the bureaucratic elements that the modern state utilises to define the nation. Smith (1993) claims an ethnic communal precedence to the modern nation, that the nation precedes the state, as it were. At the same time, others claim that in some respects the state precedes the nation. Authors such as Benedict Anderson (1983), Ernest Gellner (1983, 1998) and Hobsbawm (1992, 1994) highlight the importance of common institutional forms in the processes of popularising the national ideal. These *modernists* point to the rise of state institutions such as the compulsory education system and universal suffrage, as keys to the ubiquity of the national form, both within the nation and in the 'international' arena.

Following on from Smith (1993), Will Kymlicka talks of civic and ethnic nations where:

⁵ For example, the state patriotism of the French Republic produced an inclusive citizenry, whilst the French nationalist project recognized "only those citizens of the French Republic speaking the French language and, in extreme cases, blonde and long-headed" (Hobsbawm, 1992: 93).

Ethnic nations take the reproduction of a particular ethnonational culture and identity as one of their most important goals. Civic nations, by contrast, are 'neutral' with respect to the ethnocultural identities of their citizens, and define national membership purely in terms of adherence to certain principles of democracy and justice (1998: 26).

For Kymlicka (1995) the civic nation, devoid of ethnic bias, becomes the arena for a true liberal equality for individuals. However, he concurs with Holton (1996) that attempting to remove ethnicity from the national character is an impossible task. Kymlicka claims that in fact all nations are to some extent 'ethnic' nations, having institutions and norms that comply to a particular ethnocultural bias. The 'ethnic bias' implicit in the history of nation-states, ties the contemporary institutional structures in society to their immediate past, bringing to the fore the fact that they were built upon particular racialised assumptions that disrupt the clarity of a purely civic liberal equality. By maintaining the impartiality supposedly inherent in liberal equality, the nation fails to engage with its own colonial bearings, remaining in a state of postcolonial denial that seeks to eliminate the Other from view.

In this thesis I shall be utilising the term nation to refer to, not merely the ethnic community at the core of the nation, nor the institutions of the nation, the common forms of economy, rights and duties, and territory, but to a combination of these. The modern nation is both a state-based territorially bound entity *and* an enduring emotional attachment to the territory, myths and symbols that tie the community together. As such, I shall use the term nation throughout to signify the community of the nation, both emotional and institutional, set down on the territory bounded by the contemporary state borders. It is this nation that is the subject of most everyday discussions of identity; the nation in a 'world of nations' each with its defined borders, its sovereign citizens, its flag and historical myths, its head of state, its team in the Olympics and in the World Cup, and its seat in the United Nations. It is my contention that the nation as an entity of emotional attachment bounded by modern state borders is a hegemonic⁶ discourse in identity relations.

⁶ The use of the term 'hegemony' does not intend to infer that the nation exists to the exclusion of other possible alternate forms of identity, but that it is the dominant form in discursive identity relations, the default form of recognition of belonging in contemporary society.

Having defined what I have called the nation we can now think of national identity as the everyday negotiations over the ambivalence that surrounds the process and form of the nation, in a world of similar nations. The territorially bounded and historically set national ethnicity exists in dynamic tension with itself as a changing entity, the nation versus the nation in becoming. To understand national identity is to recognise the nation as existent *and* as an incomplete reality, bounded and unbound, rendered true by its reality as a unit in the world of nations, but challenged by its alternates. All of this is contested across time as a process that exists in contradiction to the exclusivist claims of the hegemony of national reality as expressed through modern nation-statehood.

1.8 Geography of Fear

A common feature of multiculturalism often mentioned by its detractors is the fear of the migrant Other in the national space which embodies a fear of the loss of 'national identity', a fear that serves to normalise 'us' and 'them' relations within the territorially defined nation.⁷ Fear is generally seen as a disruptive force that needs to be extinguished, and multiculturalism, which purportedly engenders fear over the loss of national identity, has become a focus of popular critique (Blainey, 1984; Bissoondath, 1994, Schlesinger, 1992). Through its recognition of difference, multiculturalism brings into the open something denied under alternate programs of migrant incorporation, that society is built on difference. For this reason multiculturalism is associated with the fear of loss, because it asks us to recognise that suppression of difference is a denial of identity. However, if the fear of the Other is a necessary result of the constitution of self-identification, then perhaps we need to think of the relations over fear in another way. In this analysis, rather than seeking to alleviate fear through multiculturalism, I shall approach fear as a *necessary* part of societal dynamism. Whilst fear is not an explicit feature of this thesis, the discussion of fear is implicit in the separation of the national 'us' and 'them'; by seeking to overcome the centrality of discourses of national belonging this analysis is involved in attending to the exclusive fear of the national Other.

⁷ Ghassan Hage (1998, 2003) and Leonie Sandercock (2003) attempt to engage with the questions surrounding the fear of the Other in multicultural societies, and these are referred to throughout this analysis.

When in trying to escape the fear of change we construct national identity as immutable we cast national identity as the 'natural' state of identity relations. Under these conditions, the 'denial of difference', typified by older assimilationist policies, the nation and national identity are constructed as secure, free of the fear engendered by dynamism and change. However, this is hardly a natural state. The denial of dynamism and the construction of the essential national culture obfuscates the reality of complex processes of 'give and take' that surround negotiations of multiple and complex identities. Hence, it may be better to think of a 'political economy of fear' where the insecurities and the opportunities inherent in dynamic constructions of identity are realised as enmeshed in relations of power.

If, as I am contending, you cannot remove fear from society, because there will always be an Other against which we measure ourselves, then we need to embrace fear as an opportunity for change. As Ghassan Hage (2003) notes, we need to move away from a disabling hope for a future to save us from the present, to an enabling hope that asks us to engage in the present for the future. In this sense we need to engage with the fear of the Other as a dynamic possibility, as a productive force brought to bear through multiculturalism, rather than a destructive force which alienates an imagined national 'us' from 'them'.

1.9 The Structure of the Thesis

Following on from these introductory comments the aim of this thesis can be summarised as an investigation of how 'the nation' interrupts the potential of multiculturalism. Taking this as the starting point, Chapter 2 interrogates Stuart Hall's (2000) 'multicultural question' as a central feature of the theoretical debates surrounding a future for multiculturalism. Hall's contention is that the unity in diversity relation is a manifestation of the debates concerning the dialectical relationship between the universal and the particular. Just as universal modern sociological structures are unable to account for the totality of postmodern particular relationships, the universal ideology of multiculturalism cannot account for the diversity of the poststructural individual. These positions of the top down universal and the bottom up particular are investigated through the context of the structuring potential of the nation and the potential for agency in the individual. The ensuing

discussion of the irreconcilable nature of this problem leads us on to a partial resolution pointing to the need to investigate the potential to decentre the nation in discourses of identity. Chapter 3 deals with the range of methodologies used in the thesis covering the use of ethnographic and visual methodologies and the opportunities and limitations these afforded. The following chapter, Chapter 4, follows on from the structures of the analysis set out in Chapter 2 and defined in Chapter 3 to detail the structural limitations that work to limit the recognition of difference through multiculturalism. Multicultural policies in the three national sites are investigated for their national contextual limitations that serve to reproduce national discourses of belonging as central, setting up diametric oppositions between the core identity and the essentialised Iranian migrant communities. Following this the structuring power of the mainstream media is briefly examined, outlining the way newspapers represent Iran and Iranians in order to construct a preferred meaning (Hall, 1979, 1980, 1981, 1996). Mainstream media are very influential in the construction of negative representations of migrants that drive popular critiques of immigration and migrant community formation. In Sydney, Jock Collins (2000) has highlighted the way the media construct deviant communal attributes. In Britain, recent research by John E. Richardson (2004) into the representation of Islam in British broadsheet newspapers also stresses the role of the mainstream media in reproducing negative sentiments about particular groups, in this case a religious group that has come under pressure in Britain, as well as Australia and Canada. The media essentialise communities of belonging, representing them through their most basic character traits, as national migrant groups or religious groups, without leaving room for the recognition of further complexity.

In Chapter 5 we step back from these structuring agents that define (Iranian) ‘community’ to look at some of the history, and quantitative and qualitative information available on the Iranian diaspora. The current state of the knowledge about ‘Iranian communities’ in SVL are reported in order to lay a context against which the following chapters are set.

Chapter 6 through 8 cover the ‘bottom-up’ ethnographic analysis of the lives of the second generation Muslims and Baha’is from an Iranian background that formed the focus of the analysis. Investigating the negotiations around and through national

identities opens a space for the discussion of possible futures for multiculturalism that extend beyond national discourses of belonging. To achieve this I will discuss the recognition of individual and communal relationships that centre on national discourses in Chapter 6 and the recognition and realisation of alternate communal forms in Chapters 7 and 8. The complex questions concerning national identity faced by the second generation from Iran centre on the decision to deploy Iranian or Persian identity in different situations and the limitations that serve to structure these choices. In Chapter 7 we take religion as a starting point for discussions of complex identities that can possibly decentre the dominance of national belonging. I hope to draw a relationship between national discourses of identity and its possible alternates that helps to decentre the nation and bring it into multicultural relations. The final chapter in this analysis, Chapter 8, looks at possible alternate identity forms that interrupt and cross cut the nation, including class, gender and linguistic affiliations, as well as other less apparent affiliations such as those around the playing and following of football and the role of music and dance as a mode of identification. This chapter points to the study of the actual and emergent communities of the second generation as challenges to the surety of a static national identity, thus engaging national belonging within a wider set of relations. As discussed at the beginning of this chapter, one aim of this thesis is to investigate how these relations can be seen on the one hand as a hierarchy of scales and also as a network of interrelations: the nation is reterritorialised as a geopolitical reality embedded within a hierarchy of scales from the local through to the global, and the national identity is reterritorialised as but one trajectory along which identity may be mapped across and through these scales. This decentring of the nation reproduces the nation as a dynamic entity engaged with the other in a more inclusive politics of difference. These alternate affiliations are made all the more apparent through the facility of photographs produced by respondents in the visual ethnography phase, which is discussed more fully in Chapter 3. The thesis concludes with a brief discussion revisiting these discussions in Chapter 1 and the wider issues highlighted in Chapter 2 to end with a position on a future for multiculturalism predicated on the continual questioning of the postcolonial assumptions inherent in multicultural realities.

2 THE MULTICULTURAL QUESTION

It is when the western nation comes to be seen, in Conrad's famous phrase, as one of the dark corners of the earth, that we can begin to explore new places from which to write histories of peoples and construct theories of narration. Each time the question of cultural difference emerges as a challenge to relativistic notions of the diversity of culture, it reveals the margins of modernity

(Bhabha, 1990: 4).

Racism is the hatred that dares not speak its name. Instead, it finds its voice in propositions of sweet reasonableness in which the message of exclusion hangs only by implication

(Editorial, *The Observer*, April 22, 1990).

As mentioned in the conclusion of Chapter 1, the aim of this thesis is to investigate how 'the nation' interrupts the potential of multiculturalism. In this chapter this starting point is taken further to look at how a specific theorisation of multiculturalism called 'the multicultural question', can aid in better understanding how to attempt to find new ways of thinking about multiculturalism as theory and praxis. With regards to the question of theory and praxis, the value of a geographic analysis of the possible futures for multiculturalism lies in the application of an empirical multi-sited analysis in order to better interrogate the theories of multicultural inclusion. That is, geography allows us to attempt to reconcile theory and the empirical. In this chapter we will investigate the theoretical challenges of multiculturalism and how the dialectic of unity in diversity structures the unique geographic analysis of this research, and hence the remainder of this thesis. Looking first at the theoretical underpinnings of the unity in diversity relation we will begin by deconstructing multicultural ideology and then building from these basic components of multiculturalism a sense of future direction based on a better understanding of the place of the nation in contemporary multicultural discourse.

2.1 *The Multicultural Question*

The fundamental difficulties faced in attempts to include difference at the level of policy are covered by what Stuart Hall (2000) has called 'the multicultural question', that is, how do the universal concepts of multiculturalism that have become the vogue

for nations such as Australia, Britain and Canada actually hope to encompass the diversity of experience within the nation, and how do individuals, newly configured as postmodern, dynamic entities, negotiate their place as multicultural citizens within the nation? As the world has become increasingly 'globalised', the place of the nation and its legitimate citizenry has become the centre of discussions in academia and the wider popular community (R. Cohen, 1997; Holton, 1996; Ip, Inglis and Wu, 1997; McCrone and Kiely, 2000; Ong, 1999; Skrbis, 1999; S. Smith, 1993; Staeheli and Thompson, 1997).⁸ As Western liberal democracies moved into the last decades of the 20th century the growing awareness of the 'facts' of globalisation - the subversion of national boundaries by the increasing mobility of both economic and human capital and the concomitant resurgence of nationalisms - has produced a discourse of investigation of the nation within the new global environment amongst geographers (e.g. Johnson, 2002; Johnston *et al.*, 2002; Jackson and Penrose, 1993; Penrose, 1993; Taylor *et al.*, 2002) and others (e.g. Sassen, 1996; Soysal, 1994; Hannerz, 1993). This rocking of the stability of the nation-state, the dominant political model of the last few hundred years, has shaken ideas of how to think about 'the nation' and who belongs to the nation. One result of the resulting introspection has been a realisation of the need to recognise the legitimate⁹ diversity within the nation. It is this recognition that is the centrepiece of multiculturalism.

Yet how do we recognise the legitimate diversity within the nation? This simple question quickly reveals the complexity of 'the multicultural question'. Many difficulties are inherent in attempts to legitimise diversity in the national context, which have been the focus of much work in the fields of political science, cultural theory, sociology and human geography in recent times.¹⁰ Who or what are we

⁸ The changing roles of national identities within global fields has also been the subject of debates in the transnationalism literature and diaspora studies (see Schiller *et al.*, 1992; Clifford, 1994; Guarnizo and Smith, 1998; Vertovec, 1997, 2001; Tseng, 2002; Brown, 2000; Butler, 2001).

⁹ The recognition by the state of the rights to express individual and group difference confers legitimacy on diversity. Diversity that is not recognised by the state as constitutive of a productive society tends to be constructed as illegitimate. For example, the (lack of) rights of onshore asylum seekers in the contemporary Australian immigration environment construct the differences between 'good' and 'bad' diversity; or the racialised nature of earlier Australian immigration policies which recognised 'good' and 'bad' migrants based on colour. In this case I use legitimate with an ambivalence that refers to officially sanctioned diversity whilst alluding to wider possibilities of difference.

¹⁰ Harvey (1997) notes the importance of context to the analysis of urban space and 'community'. Hall (1996) sees the question of identity as centring on Foucault's (1979) ideas of a theory of discursive practice, where the 'position' is paramount, thus reducing all questions of identity, including national

looking for when we try to legitimise the diversity within the nation, or more significantly who has the right to define what is legitimate within the nation? Within these two questions lies the difficulty in reconciling policy constituted at the national level with diversity realised ‘on the ground’. This is a difficult if not fundamentally impossible problem about the relationship between the diversity as sanctioned at the level of government control and how this relates to the constitutive diversity of the ‘community’ as a place of complex individual experiences. However, it is to this question we must attend if we wish to formulate possible futures for multiculturalism. In this chapter we will outline the current debates surrounding multiculturalism, and develop an understanding of the limitations imposed by discourses of ‘the nation’ and how this knowledge may take multiculturalism forward. In attending to the multicultural question in this chapter we will first briefly look at the interactions between race theory and the rise of a critical multiculturalism before turning to contemporary debates over multiculturalism. We then turn to a discussion of the universal and the particular as a representation of modernist and postmodernist critiques of difference and the place of the individual in society. Following this we will discuss the limiting nature of universal national discourses on multiculturalism and the complexities behind recognising particularistic identity relations before turning to the theoretical construction of *national multiculturalisms* and the fixing of spatial context at the scale of the nation. We will then discuss the place of the second generation as interstitial actors that interrupt national discourses of belonging before discussing the impact of religion and other forms of ascription that serve to decentre the nation. Finally we will look at the suitability of cultural geography for the study of multicultural futures.

2.2 *Race Theory and Multiculturalism*

The rise of critical studies of multiculturalism in the late 1980s and early 1990s related to the critical advances being made in studies of ‘race’. As Stuart Hall notes as far back as 1988, the essential black subject, the ‘good black subject’ which was set in dialectical opposition to the ‘bad white subject’ has passed, or rather, been transformed into a critical politics of race (Hall, 1992). The ‘necessary fiction’ of the

identity, to the relationship to context. (See also Jackson (1994) on linguistic communities; also P. Cohen, (1997)).

'black experience' has moved on to a more complex politics of the 'positionality' of black subjects. This new phase, Hall states, "entails the movement of black politics, from what Gramsci calls the 'war of manoeuvre' to the 'war of position' – the struggle around positionalities" (1992: 255). Similarly, for the essentialised migrant subject that is the object of multiculturalism, the critical politics of identity, set in train by Hall (1978 [*et al.*], 1979, 1981) and Gilroy (1987, 1992) with regards to black identity and carried forward first by Young (1989, 1990), and then by Taylor (1992) with his 'politics of recognition', has challenged the positionality of the essential 'cultural' migrant set in dialectical opposition to the dominant cultural manifestation of the (white) nation.

In terms of the new politics of race, the demise of more overt racism from public discourse has led to discussions of the inherent structures of racism in society through which, according to Gilroy (1992), black positionality has been continuously forced to the periphery as a 'coat-of-paint' that overlays 'real' issues of continuing racism. Despite recognition of the negative aspects of racism, institutional racism is still present. In explanation it serves to turn to one of the quotes that opened this chapter. The Observer editorial notes that racism "finds its voice in propositions of sweet reasonableness in which the message of exclusion hangs only by implication" (April 22nd, 1990). The critical appraisal of this 'new racism', whilst by no means 'solving' racism, has succeeded in drawing, at least in the British case, the ubiquity of 'institutional racism' into the public domain and onto the political agenda.¹¹

For migrants the changes wrought by a new critical politics of multiculturalism appear not to have gone beyond the ivory towers of academia and into the public/political domain (Bannerji, 2003). The highlighting of the weaknesses of an 'ethnic absolutism' (Gilroy, 1987, 1992: 50), or the 'culturalism' that lies behind the 'new cultural racism' (Barker 1981 in Hall, 2000: 224; Modood *et al.*, 1997), that have been in circulation since the late 1980s remains muted in both public and academic

¹¹ A critical moment in this latest phase in the politics of race was the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry conducted by Lord William Macpherson and tabled in 1999 into the racist killing of 18 year old Stephen Lawrence which highlighted the deeply entrenched racialised structures of the British police forces and wider society. Following this report, the death of 10 year old Damilola Taylor in South London in 2000 and the 2001 riots in the north of England in Bradford, Burnley and Oldham between 'Asian' and 'white' youths, added to the public critique of the institutional and entrenched nature of racist tensions.

discourses primarily due to the inertia of the structures which generally define these culturalisms – nation and nationality. Despite an understanding of a complex politics of identity that challenges the essential migrant subject, the nation and national belonging are continually (re)produced in and through the discourse. Even critical analysis of the positionalities of identities is predominantly spoken through the language of national belonging. The very ontology of migrancy in contemporary debates remains centred on nationality as discussions continue to focus on international movement- from one country to another (Nederveen Pieterse, 2003). Even in contemporary discourses of transnationalism the centrality of the transcendence of national borders structures the language of the debate. Thus the language of academic discourse constructs migrant *nationals* within the nation – setting the national ‘us’ against the nationally constituted ‘them’.

The rise of a cultural politics of identity centred around discussions of the power of multiculturalism to recognise difference has occurred simultaneously with the decline in popularity of multiculturalism as a policy program. As will be shown in Chapter 4, in Australia the word is barely spoken in the contemporary political realm. In Britain multiculturalism is being threatened with rebranding under the (problematic) term ‘integration’ (Philips, 2004). In Canada, where legislation has formally entrenched the structures of recognition through the provisions of the 1988 Multiculturalism Act, the funding of exclusive projects is being cut and departments restructured as part of the process of mainstreaming that works to deny the continued possibility of institutionalised racism.

In all these cases the decline of public discourse at a time of critical reflection poses challenges for a theoretically driven multiculturalism. Here we need not only to ask how do we think about a future for the theories of recognition, but also how do we more successfully make the transition from theory to praxis to (re)produce and (re)invigorate an active politics of recognition – a future for multiculturalism – the question that lies at the centre of this thesis.

2.3 *Theories of Multiculturalism*

In order to attend to the multicultural question, it is necessary to further investigate what we mean by multiculturalism. Multiculturalism as a policy program plays itself out in a multitude of contexts. Indeed, Pnina Werbner notes “there are as many multiculturalisms as there are political arenas for collective action” (2003: 50). Multiculturalism as a policy is not settled (Hesse, 2000). Rather, it is an unsettled process that “is not a single doctrine, does not characterise one political strategy, and does not represent an already achieved state of affairs” (Hall, 2000: 210). As can be seen in Table 2.1 below, there are many different ‘multiculturalisms’ in the political realm.

Multiculturalism defies simplistic definition. It is a term that has multiple meanings to different actors. As Fleras and Elliot note, a partial list of definitions would include a descriptive definition of who are different (and who wish to remain so); a prescriptive definition that promotes diversity as normal, necessary and acceptable; a political definition that structures political action and rhetoric; and a practical definition that can be utilised by minority groups (2002: 15). Katarina Longley notes that, “if the word multiculturalism is harder than ever to contain or pin down, it is because it has been very busy on many fronts and is now being changed, by its triumphs, by its failures, but also by changes occurring around it” (1999: 79). Indeed, if the word ‘culture’ is regarded as one of the most complex in the English language (Eagleton, 2000) then it is not surprising that defining multiculturalism is such a complex task (Fleras and Elliot, 2002: 14).

The potential of the ideology of multiculturalism lies in the power to recognise difference rather than deny the existence of difference. If we step away from multiculturalism in its political form and look at the theoretical possibilities of multicultural discourse we find as an underlying premise the potential for the recognition of difference in all its forms.

However, when we move from the abstract, multiculturalism becomes enmeshed in what Charles Taylor calls the politics of recognition (1992). Within this politics the differential power of different groups in a given society preferences certain forms of

difference over others. As Taylor points out, for example, the Quebecois, as a political community, were successful in redressing what they saw as historically embedded inequities in Canadian society whilst at the same time continuing to deny the indigenous people of Quebec the same rights to which they were laying claim.

Table 2.1: Different forms of multiculturalism (based on Hall, 2000: 210-11).

MULTICULTURAL THEME	DEFINITION
Conservative Multiculturalism	Insists on the assimilation of difference into the traditions and customs of the majority
Liberal Multiculturalism	Seeks to integrate the different cultural groups as fast as possible into the 'mainstream' provided by a universal citizenship
Pluralist Multiculturalism	Formally enfranchises the differences between groups along cultural lines and accords different group rights to different communities within a more communitarian political order
Commercial Multiculturalism	Assumes that if the diversity of different individuals is recognised in the marketplace, then the problems of cultural difference will be (dis)solved through private consumption
Corporate Multiculturalism	Seeks to 'manage' minority cultural differences in the interests of the centre.
Critical or 'Revolutionary' Multiculturalism	Foregrounds power, privilege, the hierarchies of oppressions and the movements of resistance
'Boutique' or 'Soft' Multiculturalisms or 'Pretend Pluralism'	Celebrates difference without making a difference

Leonie Sandercock (2003) asks us to see the politics of difference as an ongoing management process, an 'agonistic' view of democratic politics where, as Ash Amin

notes, 'fragile and temporary resolutions spring ... from the vibrant clash between empowered publics' (Amin, 2002: 960). In many ways, Sandercock's work is instructive on how to deal with the challenges of a future for multiculturalism through a perpetual politics of difference that demands an active engagement with the postcolonial context of society. She states,

Becoming a multicultural society ... is a long-term process of building new communities, during which such fears and anxieties cannot be dismissed but need to be worked through (Sandercock, 2003: 137-8).

This is not a simple path, as Sandercock notes. She faces this process of 'working through' by employing Ash Amin's 'micro-publics of banal multiculturalisms' (Sandercock, 2003: 94) that operate in the everyday. This micro-case study analysis looks at how specific planning mechanisms at work in different cities around the world can and do deal with both the acceptance of difference and the extant structures of repression in society. In particular, she points to the danger of limiting discussions of identity in multiculturalism to ethnicity. As an important step towards a multiculturalism for the 21st century she claims we need "political community, rather than ethno- (or any other sub-) cultural identity as the basis of a sense of belonging in multicultural societies" (Sandercock, 2003: 87). In recognising the inherent human need for community and belonging, she sees a need to move from an ethnic to an 'ethnically neutral' political community, that will give us belonging without the disruptions of ethnic or cultural difference.

For Sandercock,

A sense of belonging in a multicultural society cannot be based on race, religion, or ethnicity but needs to be based on a shared commitment to political community (2003, 103).

Her aim is to transfer this sense of ethnic belonging to an enduring attachment to the political community through the micro-politics of recognition. She recognises the need for a 'common good' that is vital to any political society, but understates the importance of ethnicity, and therefore elides her vision of ethnocultural content. This rejection of ethnicity is not only, I believe, unrealistic and would form a barrier to a successful application of multicultural programs, it also has specific implications for

how to strive to overcome the negative aspects of the fear of loss of ethnic identity and ethnic space. As discussed in Chapter 1, this research aims to engage with both the political and the ethnic and to bring these two fields of identity together into an intercultural engagement that also engages with the other possible identities (class, religion, gender, subcultures, etc.) to better account for difference in society.

As we move from the abstract to the practical application of the concept of multiculturalism we become involved in new and different forms or fields of ‘multiculturalisms’. These different fields reflect the tension underlying attempts to negotiate the closure of the multicultural question, which has led to the formation of many different ideological forms (Bonnett, 1993: 84).¹² Bonnett is careful to note that there is an inability, even from a theoretical perspective, amongst multicultural writers of the 1970s and 1980s in Britain, to commit to an ideologically complete notion of multiculturalism. In each case, subversion of the ideology is admitted, as interaction with economic, social or cultural imperatives in ‘real life’ are recognised as limiting factors to practical success. Bonnett thus proposes that ideology, particularly in the case of multiculturalism, “is not always characterised by the complete closure of contradiction” (1993: 97). Ultimately, despite this inability to commit to an ‘ideological closure’, Bonnett advocates a process of reform within the context of a modernising, rapidly changing Britain, set as it is in contrast to conservatism through a commitment to progressive, egalitarian change, and in contrast to radicalism through a commitment to change within the existing socio-economic framework (1993: 84). This observation, made more than 10 years ago, may need to be revised in view of the changing political environment presaged in Britain by the announcements of the move towards ‘integration’ mentioned previously. However, Hall (2000) too talks of the importance of attacking the multicultural question through working ‘within’ multiculturalism, for

The term ‘multiculturalism’ is now universally deployed. However this proliferation has neither stabilised nor clarified its meaning. ... Nevertheless, since we have no less implicated concepts to think this problem with, we have no alternative but to go on using it and interrogating it (2000: 209).

¹² Bonnett identifies five ideological strands in the British context: reformism, consensus-seeking, individualism, educationalism and professionalism (1993: 84)

Like Bonnett, he sees the possibility for reform of the existing structures and processes of multiculturalism as a necessary starting point and this reformist multicultural project will also be the focus of this research.

Following Hall (2000), we can think of the attempts to include difference through policy as *multiculturalism* and the lived reality as *the multicultural*.¹³ With regards to these two terms the multicultural question can be stated as, how do we reconcile the differences between multiculturalism and the multicultural? Stuart Hall, in attempting to approach this slippery issue in the British context, advocates the need for ‘a more accurate picture’ (2000: 220). He states,

(We) would have to begin with the lived complexity emerging in these diaspora communities, where so-called ‘traditional’ ways of life derived from the cultures of origin remain important to community self-definitions, but consistently operate alongside extensive daily interaction at every level, with British mainstream social life (Hall, 2000: 220).

Werbner, too, advocates the retention of multiculturalism seeing the ambiguities at the centre of the multicultural question as valuable, stating that she “want[s] to suggest that we cannot do away with multiculturalism precisely because it is inherently ambiguous and thus allows for local evolved, pragmatic negotiations” (2003: 52). Yet these same ambiguities and the failure to obtain ideological closure create a range of fears and misunderstandings that form the basis of popular (and academic) critiques.

2.4 Critiques of Multiculturalism

The debate over multiculturalism from within the liberal Western tradition is often ruled from two ends of the political spectrum within the context of the nation-state. The view of multiculturalism from the conservative side of politics is that it is a

¹³ Stuart Hall has described the difference between ‘multiculturalism’ and ‘multicultural’ as being rooted in the grammatical difference. ‘Multicultural’ is an adjectival term used to describe the social characteristics of individuals and communities in their relations with the powers of governance, where difference is recognised as a problem that needs to be attended to in order that society function as a common ground that also allows the retention of some sort of ‘original’ identity. Whereas ‘multiculturalism’ is substantive in that it, “references the strategies and policies adopted to govern or manage the problems of diversity and multiplicity which multi-cultural societies throw up” (Hall, 2000: 209). The multicultural is the signifier and multiculturalism is the signified (Hesse, 2000: 2; Hall, 2000: 209).

“radical conspiracy, promoting the interests of ‘ethnics’ above those of the Australian- [or British-, or Canadian-]born” (Collins, 1991: 227). The Left of the political spectrum often view multiculturalism with suspicion born of the belief that multiculturalism’s function is to place migrants in a marginalised position with respect to wider ‘mainstream’ society through promotion of ethnic ‘communities’, which result in the denial of difference within the bounds of the ethnic community, (re)producing essentialised notions of ‘the Other’. These goals are achieved, in the eyes of the Leftist critique, through the tacit support of conservative elements of ‘ethnic groups’ at the expense of more radical groups and individuals, and through emphasis on peripheral ‘cultural’ elements to the neglect of institutionalised economic and political inequalities (Werbner, 2003; Collins, 1991: 227; Jakubowicz, 1984). Fleras and Elliot call this type of multiculturalism a ‘happy face’ multiculturalism, that is similar in meaning to the boutique multiculturalism mentioned by Hall above (in Table 2.1), “which cannot possibly resolve society’s deeper inequalities” (2002: 19). In a similar manner, Hage (1997) describes a ‘soft multiculturalism’ that fails to engage with inequitable power relations, relying instead on a type of ‘food and dance’ multiculturalism (see Davidson, 1999).

Fleras and Elliot (2002: 13) summarise some of the possible seemingly ‘negative’ consequences of multiculturalism typically found in academic and mainstream critiques:

- Securing social control;
- Cultivating social divisions;
- Encouraging ethnic conflict;
- Fostering ‘slow motion’ assimilation;
- Entrenching inequality;
- Fomenting racism;
- Creating the illusion of progressive and planned change; and,
- Dismembering a country.

bell hooks sees multiculturalism as monoculturalism in disguise stating that

Positively, multiculturalism is presented as a corrective to Eurocentric vision of model citizenship wherein white middle-class ideals are presented as the norm. Yet this positive intervention is then undermined by visions of multiculturalism that suggest everyone should live with and identify with their own self-contained cultural group. If white supremacist capitalist patriarchy is unchanged then multiculturalism within that context can only become a breeding ground for narrow nationalism, fundamentalism, identity politics, and cultural, racial, and ethnic separatism (hooks, 1994: 201).

She places multiculturalism as a tool in the hands of the ‘white supremacist capitalist patriarchy’ due to the incipient power relations that drive ethnic separation. However, hooks denies multiculturalism, as an ideology, the agency to affect change (or to produce the conditions for change) to the structural inequalities in contemporary society. She goes on to claim for the particular United States context that the future numerical presence of non-whites “will in no way alter white supremacy if there is no collective organising, no efforts to build coalitions that cross boundaries” (hooks, 1994: 202). In dismissing the possible transfiguring power of multiculturalism to bring these cross boundary relations into public discourses she takes a particularly negative position. In the US context, the ‘cultural pluralism’ that subordinates public expressions of difference to the centrality of a ‘WASP-ish’ ‘American’ ideal, the possibilities for affecting multicultural recognition are all the more relevant.

Charles Taylor’s recognition of the politics of difference alluded to above has been influential in the development of a critical multiculturalism. However, it is not without its detractors. Himani Bannerji (2003) claims Taylor’s politics speaks from within the ‘in-group’ to the other group members, trying to persuade them to accept the lesser evil of ‘recognition’ rather than ‘equality’. It is useful to quote Bannerji who paraphrases Taylor’s argument as:

If we want to avoid constant fights we should tolerate *their* practicing *their* cultures. *We* should do this on principle – even when, and mostly always, *they* are inferior. However, this cultural presence should not be *their* ‘right’, but rather an obligation for *us* to recognise *them* (2003: 41, emphasis added).

The argument of Taylor as laid out by Bannerji is that if liberal equality is called upon to abstract us from all difference to “render us into creatures of equal political rights or citizens ... then we can’t use the principle of difference in another instance – namely of culture – to now demand rights on that ground” (2003: 39). Van De Putte

further notes that Taylor sees liberalism as “deaf to the protection of cultural ways of life and cultural identities” (2003: 74). For this reason Taylor needs to supplement what he calls ‘Liberalism 1’ with ‘Liberalism 2’ where “in certain cases individual and collective rights can balance each other out” (Van De Putte, 2003: 75). Taylor’s tweaking of the system of liberal equality in order to account for communal cultural integrity weakens his argument for a politics of recognition. Kymlicka, in contrast, grounds his model of ‘group rights’ in the rights of the individual ensuring that questions of cultural inequalities (even when based on oppression of the group/community) rest on the individual’s legitimate claims to equal freedom and not from questions of the ‘value of the culture’. This avoids the unfortunate conclusion of Taylor that Muslims are a group to whom a politics of recognition cannot be extended in a liberal polity (Modood, 1997: 390-1).

Kymlicka (1995) discusses the ‘limits of multiculturalism’ as a limit to the fear of change and the power of multiculturalism to ‘erase the nation’. Hence, Kymlicka calls for the maintenance of the limit of multicultural policy to group rights for (nationally configured) migrant groups in the Canadian case. Other disadvantaged groups, such as homosexuals and the disabled, are excluded from possible multicultural intervention in order to preserve national integrity from the possible destabilising effects of potential programs of wider ranging multicultural policies. Kymlicka points to the unity in diversity relation to emphasise the importance of not only recognising diversity, but also ensuring that the unity of the national community lies at the centre of discussions. Unfortunately, by limiting multiculturalism arbitrarily to the management of national ‘migrant’ experiences, Kymlicka’s argument reads more like a cautious response to the conservative critique of Canadian multiculturalism brought to prominence by Neil Bissoondath (1994) which casts the policy as a threat to national stability. This argument, popularised by Bissoondath and alluded to by Kymlicka, dismisses the incipient postcolonial fortitude of the nation-state. To claim that multiculturalism will somehow lead to inequities that threaten the very existence of the nation-state neglects the power relations that work to reproduce the nation and its state from one moment to the next through the reinforcement of the superiority of an essentialised (white) national character (Bissoondath, 1994; Hage, 1998, Gagnon, 2000; Gunew, 1999).

For some critics of multiculturalism, this essentialised white core at the ‘centre’ of the nation produces a notion of ‘culture’ in multiculturalism that is a “reified and politicised imagined entity” (Werbner, 2003: 48) that resembles a ‘museumised object’ (Friedman, in Werbner, 2003: 48). However, in the face of the essentialising forces of racist and assimilationist policies, many minority groups see their constructed community as a very real entity of great importance to their sense of identity (Modood, 1997). How these constructions of universal ‘cultures’ interact with the realities of individual difference, and whether multiculturalism can resolve the tensions between them, are the focus of the bulk of the remainder of this chapter.

2.5 The Universal and the Particular

The multicultural question in the form presented here is an expression of discussions regarding progression from a modern to a postmodern analysis (or a structural to a poststructural analysis).¹⁴ With the rise of postmodernism as a philosophical tradition challenging the structuralism of modernist perspectives, the grand meta-narratives, which hitherto held sway, have come under pressure from individualistic approaches to analysis, particularly in the social sciences. This debate of universals versus particulars, of scientific modernism versus cultural postmodernism,¹⁵ has been a difficult and ongoing process. It has certainly not been merely a case of supplanting old ideas with new, and the negotiation of the spaces of interaction between these two ‘perspectives’ is a fertile space to position the debates covered in this work.

Modernism as an ideology is grounded in universalism. The grand meta-narratives which have been the background of the scientific age of the 19th and 20th centuries are the ultimate universals, based as they are on axiomatic ‘rules’ which govern social, political and scientific interactions within (and beyond) the world: rules that are transferable from one example to another, from one society to another. As such,

¹⁴ In this thesis I take modernism as a mode of thought and practice that relies on rationalist Enlightenment thought and is interchangeable with the notion of structuralism. In this sense, I would include a structuralist Marxism within a modern paradigm that precedes the postmodern/poststructuralist critique (although this may not strictly be true in a temporal sense).

¹⁵ ‘Culture’ is not by definition postmodern. It can be, and is, used in a structured manner such as is the case with ‘culturalism’ explained above. However, the centrality of a flexible cultural perspective (Werbner, 2003: 48) following the ‘cultural turn’ in the social sciences produces a cultural subject that reflects the postmodernist/poststructuralist critique.

modernism is based on an ahistorical world where the strength of the rules transcends the vagaries of difference over time and space.¹⁶ It is within this philosophical tradition that ‘the nation’ and its congruent state as unquestioned socio-political realities, have gained their theoretical and practical credence, helping to make the world understandable, whilst at the same time marginalising the question of the place of difference within society. Attempts to understand the place of the ‘individual’ in ‘society’ as a dynamic entity, led to, and are the basis of, the rise of postmodernism as a possible philosophical heir to modernism.

This transition is a process which appears to have no resolution. It has not taken the form of Karl Popper’s ‘paradigm shift’ (i.e. postmodernism has not ‘replaced’ modernism) simply because the grand meta-narratives have such strength in their internal logics that they remain the standard philosophical perspective underlying (scientific) knowledge. Moreover they still resonate with contemporary relevance through their powers to structure and ‘explain’ our world. However, the universalist paradigm of modernism remains partial in its ability to comprehend difference from the structured norm or the totality of the individual’s multiple forms. Postmodernism has attempted to attend to these limitations imposed by rationalist thought (Derrida, 1972; Deleuze and Guattari, 1988; Foucault, 1979).

The dualism of the universal and the particular and the arguments regarding how to reconcile the two have taken many forms. Turning to one of the terrains of investigation of this thesis, ‘the city’, as a key reception centre for immigrants and the focus of multicultural policies, is an important site of tensions between universals and particulars.¹⁷ David Harvey (1997), in attempting to understand ‘the city’ as a contested space, looks at the dialectical relationship between social process and spatial form. He goes beyond dealing with urban space (the city) and community as ‘things’, instead relating them to the processes involved. Yet to say that they are merely process is to deny their existence, hence he puts forward the idea of process *and* form interacting in the city as a contestation over space and place. Through this,

¹⁶ In contrast, the ‘modernist project’ is inherently historical, as in the 19th and 20th Century projects to form modern nation-states. However, once achieved, the success of the modernist paradigm is based on a *static* national form whose structure is determined inviolable across time.

¹⁷ For this reason it is important to recognise the analysis as a multi-site investigation of SVL as well as ABC (see Chapter 3).

Harvey begins to relate how the processes of policy and media representations can be reflected in the spatial relations of 'communities', which in turn feed back into the constitution and re-constitution of policy and media representations in an ongoing dialectical relationship between process and form. This challenges the essential notion of community as fixed in space and time, introducing the impact of scale and other communal forms as transformative relations. Phil Cohen (1997) also sees urban space as the academic battleground upon which ideas of process and form take place. He summarises one of the current arguments as:

that globalisation can only be understood as part of a larger discourse of post/modernity of which the metropolis is a key symbol and site. It is here that Difference and the Other - other sexualities, races, nations and peoples - are both concentrated and dispersed, contained and marginalised within the framework of homogenising technologies of power (1997: 74).

The inclusion of difference is again at the core of the accommodation of the modernity versus postmodernity debate, leading Cohen to Richard Sennett's 'multicultural city' which aims to overcome the split "between the secular and spiritual city" (1997: 74) through recourse to a "prosaic poetics of difference 'made by all'" (1997: 75). Here the universal/structural city is countered against the particular/cultural city through the division of sacred and profane space as can be described through what he calls the prosaics and poetics of socio-spatial analysis. The main problem Cohen identifies with Sennett's ideas of how to negotiate the universal/particular argument through the recourse to his 'multicultural city' is that he does not actually outline how this prosaic poetics of difference might work in practice. He notes:

his whole argument about urban multiculturalism, like so much else in the debate about the local/global city, rides at a hyper-real level of generalisation, propped up by a few quasi-normative examples, but effectively immunised from detailed empirical research (1997: 75).

Here again, as for Hall above, there is a clear call for empirical research concerning the actual outcomes of arguments of process versus form, of structure versus culture, of modernity versus postmodernity, of multicultural theory versus praxis, through the terms of the multicultural question that presages this present research.

The postmodern sense of the particular is grounded in subjectivity with an openness or permeability of cultural boundaries, where the particular is constituted as a temporally discursive moment always in process. The difficulty of this postmodern particularism, which celebrates ‘culture’ that is not ‘fixed’ in space or time, is that it “runs the risk of effacing real difference and losing the subject into a global matrix of symbolic exchange” (Chicago Cultural Studies Group, 1994: 121). That is, the recognition of ultimate difference produces effective inaction in an ‘option paralysis’, where too much difference inhibits the engagement with difference. From this, we can say that both the arguments of the universalists and the particularists are inadequate by themselves to deal with diversity and urban space.

We must move beyond these analyses to a place between the universal and the particular where these two paradigms interact in order to better match a reality which is at once built of both universals *and* particulars, and yet not exclusively contingent upon either universals *or* particulars. In terms of the multicultural question, multiculturalism is an example of a universal concept in that it represents the broad sense of attempting to understand and include a diversity of ‘cultural’ experiences (the multicultural) through policy within the one space. However, one cannot have a broad universal approach to the understanding and inclusion of diversity, as this can only be achieved case-by-case in a particular manner. This is the double bind that is at the core of arguments of universalism versus particularism, where any sense of a universal approach that helps us to understand and account for difference denies some of the possible particular differences. To attempt to know all possibilities of the particular removes this understanding from the possibilities of praxis; the universal cannot know and account for the particular (in its totality), and the particular cannot be universally understood through structured reasoning (whether through laws or models of knowledge). That is, no policy program (built in a rationalist solution-based framework) can account for *all* difference, and any difference can only be partially understood by a policy program.

It is in this field of irreconcilable difference, between the universal modern structures of national law and policy and the particular difference embodied in the post-‘cultural turn’ individual, that the policy program of multiculturalism seeks to operate. From this deconstructed theoretical position we can now introduce the geographical and

socio-political specificity of national discourses that dominate the reality of contemporary multiculturalisms that, in this thesis, work to structure Iranian (and hence, ABC) communal forms.

2.6 *Multiculturalism and the Nation*

As stated in the introduction to this chapter, globalisation has not led to a post-national era but has deterritorialised the nation, drawing it from its hegemonic modernist position into a relational positionality within a hierarchy of geopolitical scale from the local to the global. It is this new positionality that lies behind the current crisis in national identity (Hall, 1997: 178; 2000). For example, Werbner (2003: 49) points to the tensions implicit in the growth of European regional identity that have led to a pooling of national sovereignty and ‘culture’ represented through the (re)invigoration of ‘virulent forms of nationalism’. As de Costa (2000) notes for the Australian case, in a similar vein to the musings of Hall (1997) over tensions surrounding English identity, “the deeply felt anxiety of nationalist fantasy is erupting against the perception of global change, and it underlies the political realisation that different modes of Australian identity are being asserted. Moreover, it sponsors strategies to deny any loss of control – the last stand for an Anglo-Australian essence” (de Costa, 2000: 284).

Under these conditions of global change and national anxiety, each of these deterritorialised/reterritorialised nations has their own contextualised relationship to multiculturalism. In the British case, McCrone and Kiely note that, unlike the US or French examples, Britain’s long history of *laissez faire* and civic tolerance has created a multicultural society, which, although in many respects a deeply racist society reflecting its colonial history, is also one of significant cultural mixing (2000: 31-2). Hesse notes with respect to the infamous Tebbit ‘cricket test’¹⁸, that Tebbit’s diagnosis of multiculturalism as a threat “is striking because in stating that indivisibility and particularity of the British nation needs to be preserved, it cannot avoid recognising the difficulty of disentangling the nation from the formation of its

¹⁸ The ‘Tebbit Test’ is attributable to the former British Conservative Party Leader, Lord Norman Tebbit, who claimed that an individual can only be called British if he or she cheers for the English cricket team, and by extension all other English/British sporting teams (see <http://observer.guardian.co.uk/race/story/0,11255,605344,00.html>).

own cultural diversities” (2000: 4). In recognising the threat Tebbit also unconsciously recognises the implicit nature of multiculturalism in contemporary Britain. Hesse explains Tebbit’s position as

Multiculturalism cannot be eliminated but it can be repressed. Hence it cannot be ignored because it refuses to go away. But it must be feared because it can re-emerge at any time; and consequently it must be condemned because it has the capacity to unsettle what has been and needs to be settled (2000: 5).

Similarly, Australian and Canadian multiculturalisms are the product of their unique historical socio-political contexts (see, for Australia – Australian Council on Population and Ethnic Affairs, 1982; Borowski, 2000; Collins 1991; Davidson, 1999; Jupp, 2002; Lopez, 2000, 2000a; Smolicz, 1997; for Canada – Das Gupta and Iacovetta, 2000; Fleras, 1989; Fleras and Elliot, 2002; Harles, 1998; Howard-Hassman, 2000; Kymlicka, 1995; Kobayashi, 1993, 1999; Li, 1999; Mahtani, 2002; May Jones, 2000; Panagakos, 1998). One thing that is common amongst these theorists is their recognition of the importance of national contexts in the progression from an abstract multiculturalism to a politically viable form of multiculturalism tied to a particular context. These ‘multiculturalisms’ are intimately tied to the contemporary histories of the nation. Indeed, Audrey Kobayashi calls Canadian multiculturalism a ‘national discourse’ (1999: 33). Borowski notes in the Australian case that “there is much in the theory, policy and practice of Australian multiculturalism that can be constructed as contributing to national reproduction” (2000: 461). The Australian Council on Population and Ethnic Affairs goes further to state that “the Australian brand of multiculturalism will enrich the significance of what it means to be an Australian” (1982: 7). Even when multiculturalism takes a more ‘local’ form the national context dominates. For example, local politics in some areas of Japan are utilising multicultural models in order to understand the dynamic reality of the local populations, whilst the government at the national level continues to claim that there are no foreigners permanently residing in the nation (Edgington, 2002), helping to structure ‘Japanese’ in opposition to the dialogic national Other, even in the absence of a national discourse of recognition. The implication of this contextual affinity between the nation and multiculturalism is that there can be no universally applicable multiculturalism because each ‘multiculturalism’ is rooted in

context. The very notion of multiculturalism is in a sense relative to the nation (Bhabha, 1994; Hall, 2000; Hesse, 2000; Holton, 1996; Gilroy, 1992; Werbner, 2003).

2.7 *National Multiculturalisms*

The strength of nationalist discourses and the degree to which national identity is conflated with other components of identity as a dominant discourse of identity is found in the work of many. Much research treats national identity as an uncontested starting point, thus further informing the dominance of national discourses of belonging. Research into Italian or Mexican migrants or Filipina domestic workers, all take national identity in its received form as a geopolitical and sociocultural given (e.g. Winter, 2001; Kivisto, 2002). Others have tried to investigate the relative importance of national identity within and across other identity ascriptions. Modood's (1998; see also 1997) work with ethnic identity in Britain has found that the importance of nationality is still paramount amongst 'ethnic minority' groups, whilst Dwyer's (1999, 1999a, 2000, 2002) research with young Pakistani women in Britain has found a significant conflation of national and religious identity where the sense of being Pakistani for the young women is synonymous with Muslim identity (see also Jacobson, 1997; also Stratton (1996) concerning Jewish identity). Whilst these studies too confirm the dominance of national forms, they at least recognise the need to undertake a postcolonial investigation of the centrality of the nation. More explicit challenge to the dominance of national discourses is seen in research on mixed-race and hyphenated identities (e.g. Mahtani (2002); Caglar (1997)). In taking these positions postcolonial research challenges the unquestioned status of 'national identities', drawing these identities into engagement with their Others.

Whilst the centrality of 'the nation' as context for multiculturalism is as ubiquitous as the nation-state form itself, the impact of this spatial fixity on multicultural praxis, with the exception of Werbner's (1997, 2003) European research, remains relatively under-investigated. This current research aims to investigate this scholarly shortfall through an investigation of the unquestioned status of the 'Iranian migrant

community', as well as the homogenously constructed Iranian nation, in academic,¹⁹ political and public discourses. This research challenges the exclusivist understandings of national identity and national community, decentering national discourses of Iranian-ness, and as a consequence the 'whiteness' at the centre of ABC that fixes the nation as both context and core against which 'difference' is measured. The empirical focus in this research on the second generation from an Iranian background uniquely positions this research to take advantage of a distinctively geographic cross-comparative analysis.

In order to investigate the theoretical and empirical implications of the reliance on national context this research will move beyond the single national example. By looking at different *national multiculturalisms* it is possible to examine how the difference within the nation is contained within the processes of the nation/nation-state. Through an investigation of the second generation from an Iranian background in the three cities, this research endeavours to investigate instances of convergence between the universal and the particular, between multicultural policy and the lived experience, across the different national examples.

The concept of 'national multiculturalisms' may at first appear tautological as the origins of multicultural theory and praxis are enmeshed in the political manifestations of national multicultural policies. However, the tautology is deliberate, as a signifier of the unquestioned role of national context in setting the limits of multicultural praxis. Thus, the national limits of multiculturalism are implicit within multicultural policy and the unity in diversity relation becomes the protection of the unity of the nation from the diversity of national migrant groups (hooks, 1995: 201). Even where groups are not necessarily nationally configured, as in the case of British-Muslim identity, these categorisations become surrogates for national identities, where British-Muslims are 'Bangladeshis' or 'Pakistanis' in Britain, but not 'Iranians' even

¹⁹ Whilst Iranian research is often limited to national discourses some notable exceptions exist. Both Bozorgmehr (1992) and Bozorgmehr, Sabagh and Der Martirosian (1993) detail the necessity to consider the internal diversity within the Iranian experience through the lens of religious and ethnic difference. Similarly, Mirkahraie (1999) discusses the fragmented nature of Iranian society in Canada along ethnic and religious lines. Feher (1998) studies the adaptation of Iranian Jews in Los Angeles as a sub-category of the Iranian community. This internal diversity is a key theme in this research and will be discussed further.

though these individuals are also theoretically British Muslims (see Chapter 7 for a full discussion of this example).

The success of the political idea of national multiculturalisms lies in the understanding that multiculturalism can aid in the inclusion of (migrant) difference within the nation *without changing the nation*. The politicising of threat at the national scale and the subsequent partial implementation of multicultural programs have meant that national multiculturalisms fail to meet their ideological objective and instead become another means of enforcing the static ‘modern’ nation. This manifests itself in the creation of the dialectic of the homogeneous nation and the homogeneously constituted Other within the bounds of the nation – the reproduction of national ‘culturalisms’ as national ethnic absolutes (Parekh *et al.*, 2000: 27, Kymlicka, 1998). Gilroy (1992) points to a ‘new nationalist racism’ where the racialised subject is conflated with the nation as an essential subject. In response to this the rise of an oppositional multiculturalist or antiracist orthodoxy tends also to an essentialised construction of national racial bodies that need protecting, serving to reinforce a “*volkish* new right sense of the relationship between race, nation and culture – kin, blood and ethnicity” (Gilroy, 1992: 53-57) that helps to entrench national discourses of identity as hegemonic.

The diversity intended to be understood through the terms of national multiculturalisms have become visions of homogenous communities within the bounds of the nation; bounded, static and created in opposition to the national identity. Dwyer has seen in the British context how,

For the project of multiculturalism, ‘minority communities’ were recognised as having a shared culture, customs, and place of origin and were defined in opposition to an assumed homogeneous hegemonic national community (1999: 53).

Dwyer sees the racialised and exclusionary discourses of national belonging, which were embodied in the British case within the national politics of multiculturalism, as opening up a challenge to produce an alternative politics of identity which embodies the warnings of ethnic absolutism (Gilroy, 1987, 1992). In this discussion the

dominance of *national* culturalisms, and in particular, the dialectical construction of ‘Iranian (migrant) communities’ and ABC core identities, are central.

2.8 *The Nature of Identity*

Identity does not exist under conditions of absolute choice. The structuring of individual and group identification interrupts conditions of absolute agency over self-identification such that the flexibility of choice is partial. Without slipping into a reductionist understanding of identity it is useful to separate these spheres of influence over the negotiation of identity. As was alluded to in Chapter 1, the agency to choose the mode of self-identification and to be able to express this identity can be thought of as ‘instrumental identity’. This notion has its antecedents in the work of Ip, Inglis and Wu (1997) who discuss an instrumentality over citizenship that confers a ‘use value’ on citizenship beyond the traditional associations of national belonging. This agency was generally related to the ability to accrue cultural capital through the attainment of dual or multiple citizenships, allowing access to more secure lifestyles²⁰ (see Bourdieu, 1986; Kastoryano, 1998; Waters, 2003). Waters (2003: 221-222) separates citizenship into its constituents of legal status, rights, participation and *identity*. The ability to express agency over the attachment to national identity relates directly to notions of a flexible (Ong, 1999) and instrumental citizenship. *Instrumental identity* reflects the decision to self-identify and to embody particular identities as an affective positionality in everyday interactions. However, two general types of social structuration work to limit the embodiment of affective instrumental identity. Firstly, identity is *structured from within* through the setting of boundary markers of identity and group belonging. For minority groups such as migrants, codes of behaviour that differentiate the group from wider dominant publics may become reified as ‘national cultural traditions’. Expectations of endogamy, or attendance at religious or cultural events, or the extent of kinship ties all become markers of inclusion/exclusion subject to the decisions of key guardians of group identity. The embodiment of these signifiers of group belonging ‘allow’ inclusion as an insider. In contrast, identity can be *structured from without*, as dominant publics essentialise the character of minority

²⁰ Even when migrants forego citizenship rights in the homeland for citizen rights in the new country (i.e. citizenship succession, rather than dual or multiple citizenship) this needs to be viewed as a social transaction over the relative social, political and economic costs and benefits.

groups (re)producing the minority individual through the discourse regardless of their decisions. The processes of categorisation of the individual and groups originate in the dominant signifying practices of the mainstream media, the state, and other groups (such as other migrant groups, and particularly the dominant ethnic group). At its worst this structuring of essentialised identity produces racist discourses of difference and manifests itself in irrational fears of the Other.²¹ Each of these two structuring narratives of belonging impinge upon the ability to express instrumental identity in the negotiation of identity. From this discussion the choice, constraint and history that impact on identity negotiation from Chapter 1 can be thought of as agency (instrumentality), structure (from within and from without) and the enduring attachment of national belonging. All of these have a part to play in identity negotiation as will be shown through the interaction of multicultural policies, the media (see Chapter 4) and the second generation from an Iranian background in this thesis (see Chapters 6 to 8). How national multiculturalisms structure and limit identity in multicultural praxis is discussed in the next two sections.

2.9 Grounding Multiculturalism: from the top down

Two possible trajectories for dealing with the limitations of universally deployed national multiculturalisms in understanding and recognising individual (and group) identity are that we can attend to the weaknesses from the top down or from the bottom up.²² We can look towards making the universal nature at the base of national multiculturalisms ‘more particular’ and making the individualistic analysis of the particularist analysis ‘more universal’. That is to say we can move into an analysis of the space of negotiation of universalism and particularism through the multicultural question in an attempt to reach a greater sense of ‘ideological closure’.

²¹ See Collins *et al.* (2000) on the demonisation of Lebanese youth in the Sydney media, or Anderson on the Chinese in Vancouver (1991).

²² The sense of talking about a universalism which works from the top down and a particularism that works from the bottom up are traditional ways of conceiving the relationship between the two. However, this implies a linear relation between them and a spatial positionality which is misleading. The zone of negotiation between the universal and the particular is a polyvalent space which cannot be negotiated simply by moving from one to the other. They are fundamentally different in their constitution, operating on different planes: the one ahistorical and unconcerned with social and political fact, the other, temporally and socially bound. For the rest of this thesis I will be using the traditional sense of up and down as a heuristic model to relate to the movement of one towards the other, but it must always be realised that this is a ‘moving towards’ in a multidimensional space rather than a linear progression.

In order to better understand how the abstract universal form of multiculturalism has been grounded in national contexts as ‘national multiculturalisms’, that is, how the abstract has progressed from the top down towards a more functional and engaging multiculturalism, we can refer to recent work by Carol Gould. Gould (2001) notes that there has been a philosophical counter to the late 20th century move to a more particular analysis of cultures and needs in the work of academics such as Nussbaum *et al.* (1995) and Sen (1995), writing in the fields of development and human rights. In response to the impacts of cultural relativism these writers have made a call to return to a more universal notion of rights to avoid the dangers faced by disadvantaged people, ‘cultures’, and nations, in the power relations of global development policy and in the difficult realm of recognising and applying human rights. According to Gould, these writers emphasise that particularism allows powerful Western liberal democracies to refuse to aid disadvantaged people, in particular women and the poor, on the basis of the right to ‘cultural difference’. Gould sees this call for a return to universalism to counter the problems of cultural relativism as too simple: a treading of old academic ground already shown to be inadequate. She sees this work as steeped in *abstract universalism*, where there is an active disengagement with the realities of lived existence. It is ahistorical and unconcerned with social and political facts, insensitive to unequal relations of power.

In response to this, Gould (2001) investigates the idea of *concrete universalism*,²³ a universal view grounded in the context of social reality, taking into consideration a temporal perspective to allow for the vagaries of lived existence. For her, the strength of a new concrete universalism is that the abstract norms associated with an abstract universalism as proposed by Nussbaum *et al.* and others, allow us to deal with the effects of injustice, but not with its causes, whilst concrete universalism aims to go beyond to deal with both the effects and the causes of injustice. Gould criticizes the proposed abstract universalism in that it fails to take into account the fact that attempts to institute universalisms, such as universal human rights, are not undertaken in a value-free environment, but actually occur in, and are influenced by, a value-laden environment, reflecting the interests, needs, and prejudices of particular social groups (Gould, 2001: 72). For her, a concrete universalism, grounded in the

²³ This term is also mentioned briefly by Hall (2000: 233) with regards to ethnicity as a ‘universal particular’.

recognition of the role played by these social actors in the production of universalisms is a more acceptable path, offering the opportunity to,

Provide a helpful corrective to the potentially one-sided concern that groups tend to have in the satisfaction of their own needs and interests and the distortion in their outlook that this may entail. ... (With) consensus and communication as a source of norms, universalisation is often thought to play a role both in assuming that everyone may enter into the dialogue and in the ideas that norms to be adopted should be agreeable to all affected by them (Gould, 2001: 80).

Taking this concept of concrete universalism and combining it with the conception of multiculturalism we can produce a notion of *concrete multiculturalism*. This new notion represents a progression from a broad interpretation of multiculturalism as an abstract universalism, recognising it as a flawed concept (as has been outlined above). This can be seen as moving towards a more representative multiculturalism grounded in temporal and social existence, which allows us to move beyond broad abstract multiculturalism towards praxis. If we then consider the nation as a scalar relation it can be seen as existing between the more universal global community (society as 'humanity') and the more particular individual in their 'local' communities. Thus national multiculturalisms, grounded in policy in their attempts to recognise difference, are concrete multiculturalisms, abstracted from theoretical potential into the temporal realm of national politics and the realities of migrant difference. It is this 'coupling' to the national context which is both the embodying sense of concrete multiculturalisms, and the limit of the extent of a concrete multiculturalism in the project of the inclusion of the multicultural.

The main criticism that Gould herself notes with the concept of a concrete universalism is that its success is dependent upon a state of equal agency amongst the actors involved in the production of such pseudo-universal concepts. With regards to the question of the agency of the actors, the success of concrete multiculturalisms in engaging with the multicultural is a major limiting factor. However, the unequal status of the actors involved in national multiculturalisms, the overriding dominance of the discourse of the nation, limits the progression towards the multicultural.

There is value in this concrete form of multiculturalism as a means of recognising difference. Over the last thirty years in countries like Canada and Australia multicultural policy has achieved great advances in the acceptance of migrant difference in society.²⁴ However, these achievements have always been partial with the dominance of national forms reifying the difference between the migrant ‘difference’, and the national core whiteness against which this difference is measured, not only essentialising migrant difference, but denying the existence of hybridity (Bhabha, 1994, 1994a). Therefore, in order to move beyond we need to ‘decentre’ the nation from multiculturalism. The only way, according to Gould’s concept of the concrete universal, to approach some level of the difference reflected in the multicultural is to attempt to equalise the agency of the actors - to remove the foundational nature of the nation in multiculturalisms (without removing it altogether). Following Gould, it is desirable to include the ‘values’ of all actors in the concept of a concrete multiculturalism, in order to move beyond the inherent limitations of nationally enshrined policy-based multiculturalisms.

An alternate call to decentre the nation is put forward by Stam and Shohat (1994). For Stam and Shohat multiculturalism is actually an assault upon Eurocentrism as the discursive residue of colonialism, under whose terms the geopolitical bifurcation of the world into “the West and the Rest” has come to pass. They see a necessity to formulate a radical and relational ‘polycentric multiculturalism’, which aims to globalise multiculturalism. The ultimate aim of this theoretical form of multiculturalism is to form connections in temporal, spatial/geographical, intertextual, and conceptual terms, that transcend the need to be located within a pre-existent field of power centred on ‘the nation’. It claims to do this through focusing on the voices of the marginalised from the outside in, rather than accreting ‘interest groups’ to a pre-existing nucleus (the Western Eurocentric nation).

We can look to Ghassan Hage’s (1998) critique of the agency of the dominant national majority to further understand the weaknesses of multiculturalism tied to the national context. Hage (1998) sees the discourses of belonging within the nation as controlled by those individuals and institutions who belong ‘beyond question’ as the

²⁴ The policies of multiculturalism shall be discussed further in Chapter 4.

natural inheritors of control over the national space. These 'nationals' are (re)produced as the dominant identity in the national space through the association of 'their' identity with the trappings of political and cultural belonging. The flag, anthem, laws and legislation, sporting teams and cultural products, become the progenitors of contemporary legitimacy conveying the 'natural' right in the present for a group to assume the dominant position as the community of the nation. This national belonging may not fall to one 'community'. In Canada, the British and French communities share national status as the two 'Charter Groups' whose communal rights and languages have been given 'national' stature through legislative recognition (e.g. Official Languages Act of Canada, 1988). In other countries, such as Belgium and Switzerland, this sharing of national dominance is also the case. However, in the bulk of modern nation-states, national identity embodied in a unitary national community, partially real but mostly imagined, is congruent with the territory of the nation-state.

According to Hage (1998) these natural inheritors of national belonging are ultimately 'passive and disinterested' due to their high degree of 'governmental belonging'. They need not act out the defence of the nation (either as an idea or as a physical space), from the threats of the Other, as the state will act out their violence for them. The degree of institutional violence associated with policy based multiculturalisms represents the extent to which these multiculturalisms fail to escape from the exclusionary discourses of a homogeneously constituted essentialised nation. Conversely, any success in attempting to engage with the diversity of the discursive multicultural experience of individuals within the nation can be seen to unsettle the field of national power as defined by Hage. This destabilises/deterritorialises the natural citizens in their role as the disinterested managers of the national will and places them in the position of having to act out their own violence 'in defence of the nation' in order to reterritorialise the nation. Under these terms, Hage sees the attempted application of an abstract multiculturalism through national policy forms, as a process doomed by its very project. In failure, the rights of the Other within the nation are obliterated as questions of the right to exist as nationals, to accumulate cultural capital to be deployed in an attempt to enter the national field of power, is controlled by the disinterested nationalist through the actions of the state. In success,

the disinterested nationalist is forced to violence in protection of the nation as the nation is itself removed from a position of imagined national order.

For Lacan, according to Hage (1998), to achieve the goal is to die, therefore nationalism sets the nation building process as achievable, and yet never achieved. Here the role of the Other is to obstruct this achievement of the homely nation, therefore justifying its non-achievement. Ultimately, Hage's critique of the 'white nation' sees multicultural policy as constructed as having a purpose as a flawed or failed process in order to deal with the paradox of a Lacanian conception of goal based existence (Hage, 1998: 71-4). National multiculturalisms have an important place then in this process, as the policy bases of dealing with both the danger and necessity of the Other, but without engaging with difference beyond the essentialised national cultures. Through multiculturalism the Other is tolerated within the nation, but to say that someone is tolerated always implies a rider, that those who tolerate have the choice of toleration over someone who does not have these choices, someone who is not a natural disinterested member of the national polity. For Hage, multiculturalism places the Other in a position where they are the dominated - they do not tolerate, they only endure (Hage, 1998: 88). Therefore, multiculturalism is, like the nation, an unachievable goal used to manage inclusion, and yet not truly engage with the multicultural.

This critique of national identity and its relationship to multiculturalism is a persuasive, if dark, vision. The 'violence' visited upon the Other is either framed in an institutional sense through the actions of the government, or in absence of this, through the actions of 'the nationalist'. Hage's critique does reflect the inadequacies of multiculturalism based in the national context, but he fails to deal with the possibility of moving beyond the national. He ultimately believes in the hegemonic dominance of nationalisms, rather than allowing a vision of the nation as merely the dominant vision in a discursively constituted sense of belonging. Hage's critique sees no possibility for a productive reflection on the appearance of the dialectical Other, instead seeing only a destructive fear of the loss of the nation in the embodiment of the Other. When the Other 'appears' in the national space, the formerly disinterested national, protected from activity through the violence of the state, is moved to violence through the newly realised fear of the Other. However, to imply that our only

response is to react with a destructive fear denies the possibilities inherent in the appearance of 'the stranger' in 'our' society.²⁵ In addition, Hage's argument, so focused on the hegemony of national power, leaves little room to move towards a relativistic positioning of the nation and national identity within wider discourses of belonging. If we are to find a multiculturalism which goes beyond the concrete national multiculturalisms we need to attend to the decentring of national hegemony, to make the geopolitical scale more fluid and to engage other identities (through class, gender, religion amongst a myriad others) in order to bring the (statically conceived) nation into dynamic engagement with its Others.

2.10 Seeking the Multicultural: from the bottom up

In looking at the postmodern sense of the particular, individual relations are built upon to form critiques of difference rather than commonality, leading most practically into considerations of the perspectives of 'Otherness'. Hall talks of a struggle around positionalities in which the discursive position of the individual marks out a momentary relation underlying a new identity politics, that he terms 'new ethnicity'. He notes with respect to black politics in Britain that it is inadequate to rely on a "strategy of a simple set of reversals, putting in the place of the bad old essential white subject, the new essentially good black subject" (Hall, 1992: 254). For this reason he directs us to look towards difference itself, rather than the essentialised group/community. Yet any attempt to bring about a politics based on the discursive individual is challenging. His starting point is to try to attempt a politics which,

works with and through difference, which is able to build those forms of solidarity and identification which make common struggle and resistance possible but without suppressing the real heterogeneity of interests and identities, and which can effectively draw the political boundary lines without which political contestation is impossible, without fixing those boundaries for eternity (Hall, 1992: 254-5).

²⁵ The concept of 'the stranger' is central to discussions of cosmopolitanism that will not be dealt with in any depth here. Suffice it to say that the appearance of the stranger is debated as both a threat and a possibility, not merely negative, but also positive. This ambivalence over the appearance of the stranger in cosmopolitan discourses tends to map onto the ambivalence surrounding the 'migrant' Other in multicultural discourses. This ambivalence denies Hage's absolutist perspective on the production of a destructive fear in the face of the appearance of the Other.

Dwyer sees Hall's new ethnicities argument as a "careful deliberation of possibilities beyond the opposition between essentialism and social construction" (Dwyer, 1999: 65), where the essential is the generalised universal and the particular is socially constructed, never complete.

In reality Hall notes that "the margins could not speak up without first grounding themselves" (1997: 185). But these grounded ethnicities need not be the rarefied 'cultures', homogenised and essentialised, that dominate discourses of ethnic absolutism. Rather, the 'identities of specific places' have been destroyed by the potential of the 'global postmodern' to reconstruct the imaginary, knowable places of ethnic attachment. The new ethnicity is "the moment when people reach for those groundings" (1997: 185). For Hall it is the act of reaching to seek a necessary place from which to speak that is ethnicity: not something fixed and known but something partially seen and sought. These moments of being and becoming can still be fixed. Hall states, "when the movements of the margins are so profoundly threatened by the global forces of postmodernity, they can themselves retreat into their own exclusivist and defensive enclaves. And at that point, local ethnicities become as dangerous as national ones" (1997: 184). We need to work to destabilise the nation through 'new ethnicities' in order to challenge the unquestioned status of the nation, and its dominance of the discourse. Through this we can begin to apprehend possibilities which we can bring to bear upon current ideas of multiculturalism in order to find a more 'polycentric' frame which decentres but does not disregard the nation. Through this understanding of a top-down/bottom-up analysis, a format mirrored in the structure of this thesis (see Chapter 1), we can 'move towards' a more productive analysis and hence a more inclusive multiculturalism, without getting lost in the impossibility of working in the purely relativistic world of the particular.

The decision to investigate a national community, the 'Iranian' community, in this thesis may at first appear to constrain the respondents to the discourse of the nation, reifying their national culture through the act of research. However, it is through the apprehension of the different 'Irans' through the eyes of the different individuals as related to their various other associations – 'ethnic', religious, social, communal – that we can analyse how the different multi-stranded 'identities' at work within the discursive individual interact with the idea of the nation. In this way we can look at

identity as individually constituted within a framework of dynamic polyvalent fields and how these interact with the dominant idea of the nation, without being limited to the nation by discourses of nationhood. For this reason, I have worked with people from an Iranian background – the second generation – in the immigrant reception cities of SVL, but have framed the analysis to focus on two groups who exist within and beyond this sense of ‘Iranian-ness’, based on religious ascription – Muslims and Baha’is. These religious differences will be important nodes of difference around which the following analysis shall turn. Before discussing the place of religion in this analysis we should investigate the other important positionality with respect to the nation that contextualises the analysis – the second generation.

2.11 Placing the Second Generation

It is through the lived experience of the children of migrants, the second generation, whose everyday existence is placed in the meeting place between ‘mainstream’ society and the familial expectations of the ‘community’, that we find one possible starting point in attending to the multicultural question. In this research, the national expressions of multiculturalism are investigated through the eyes of the second generation as members of different ‘communities’ - national, religious, social/cultural, among others – that challenge and cross-cut traditional national boundaries (Chapters 6 to 8).

For many of the children of migrants, their institutional position vis-à-vis the new nation-state is assumed to be clearer than is the case for their parents, as they take advantage of educational and language skills, leading to the possibilities of social mobility, that their parents as new migrants may not have been able to access. As such, the second generation are often separated from the migration experience in academic work. Similarly, multicultural policies generally fail to include the second generation as they are beyond the migration experience.²⁶ The assumption is of a ‘succession’ from migrant to national citizen that places ‘the homeland’ *behind* them as they move *towards* integration in the host society.

²⁶ An exception to this is the Canadian policy concerning the recognition of ‘visible minorities’ which extend to inclusion beyond the first generation and their settlement experience and is closely aligned with multicultural policy and praxis.

Much of the research to date involving the second generation has been focused on the successful integration of the second generation as a group and relies on discussions of the quantitative measures of success – levels of language usage, endogenous versus exogenous marriage practices, educational success, amongst others. The mandate of much of this work is to ensure that integration is ‘working’ and that groups under conditions of difference, such as the second generation, are on the path of ‘becoming’, of evolving into a productive ‘national citizen’; an ‘insider’ rather than someone ‘in-between’. Research in the fields of education, sociology, linguistics, economics and political science concerning the second generation tends to focus on this rationalist developmentalist approach, pointing to issues of educational and occupational achievement, linguistic succession and cultural acquiescence as the models of success (Chiswick, 2003; Constant and Zimmermann, 2003; Hagy *et. al.*, 2002; Inglis, Elley and Manderson, 1992; Isaacs, 1981a, 1981b; Perlmann and Waldinger, 1997; Portes and MacLeod, 1996; Portes and Schauffler, 1994; Portes and Zhou, 1993; Rumbaut, 1994; Zhou and Bankston, 1994; see also Hanassab and Tidwell, 1998 for the Iranian case). Models of immigrant adaptation and ‘psychological acculturation’ have been developed in psychology and have been extended to the second generation where the success or failure of the immigrant experience is measured against their ability to adapt/assimilate to the dominant host culture (e.g. Kondo, 1998; Berry, 1997; Tonks and Paranjpe, 1999).²⁷ In a therapeutic sense, success or failure in the acculturation process is normatively aligned to a sickness-health dialectic whereby successful acculturation/assimilation into the host society as measured through models of adaptation is ‘healthy’ whilst immigrant resistance, perhaps through endogamy or bilingualism, is not.

Some more qualitative ethnographic research is concerned with the complexity of the processes of negotiation over mutable identities (e.g. Baldassar, 2001). These works tend to focus on the difficulties of negotiating between national identities and place the emphasis on subjective individual experience, rather than on the intergenerational success of the group, in trying to become a part of the national society. However, this

²⁷ Tonks and Paranjpe (1999), following from the work of Berry (1997) on acculturation under a multicultural framework, have attempted to bring their analysis to bear upon the second generation in Canada. According to Tonks and Paranjpe the difficulty of considering multiple identities needs to be taken into account in the multicultural Canadian context. This can be considered an advancement on more restrictive nationally inscribed research.

research places the second generation individual along a continuum leading from the nation of their parents towards successful integration into the nation in which they have lived their lives. Many, but not all of these studies, are generally wedded to national discourses to the detriment of other possible identities and as such many often fail to recognise members of the second generation as being capable of complex identity associations beyond national identities.

There has been a paucity of ethnographic research on the children of migrants in geography, which this research aims to correct (McHugh, 2000). A notable exception to this is Dwyer's (1999, 1999a, 2000, 2002) work with the second generation from Pakistani background in Britain. Also Farley's (1996) work with second generation Indonesian migrants in Sydney questions "whether ethnicity or religion will predominate in the identities of the second generation Muslim Indonesians or whether they have some way of combining these elements of identity into some unique form" (1996: 45).²⁸ Both these authors stress the importance of religion as a disrupter of essential national belonging. In this thesis, religion is also central as both convergent with, and a challenge to, constructions of static national Iranian identity. Yet, it is but one form amongst innumerable other forms of identity (see Chapter 8).

In contrast to developmentalist models, the research of Zlatko Skrbis (1999), which built on Anderson's notion of *long-distance nationalism*, on the second generation from Croatian and Slovenian background in Australia, attends to the differential manner in which these second generation groups imagine the 'homeland' and their relationship to it. Skrbis finds a differential relationship to the homeland between the two groups, particularly concerning political involvement, with the second generation Croatian youth having a much more visceral imagining of their homeland than their Slovenian counterparts. Their involvement in the contemporary politics of the homeland is but one way this imagining is made 'real'. Like that of Skrbis, this research on the second generation from Iran will investigate issues surrounding long-distance nationalism amongst the different Iranian groups/communities, investigating the differential experiences both within and between these 'national communities' but also going beyond to other forms of affiliation and hybridity.

²⁸ See also Kalan's (1991) work with White Russians in Sydney.

The aim of looking at the second generation is not to deny their hybridity or in-between-ness, and to fix them in place, but to see in them a reflection of ‘our’²⁹ in-between-ness, albeit writ large as it challenges the dominant national form, to which ‘our’ hybridity may not explicitly attend due to its positionality relative to the nation. The second generation enable the possibility of seeing national communities “no longer as a homogenous substance, but as the ‘people in conversation’, the people in their heterogeneity and variousness, the ‘people’ that ... never coincide with themselves but always remain somewhat foreign to themselves” (Van De Putte, 2003: 77). The discussions in Chapters 6 to 8 of the ‘conversations’ that inform the day-to-day negotiations of communal identities amongst the children of Iranian migrants aid in seeing how national identity is positioned relative to other communal affiliations, and whether there is an engagement that decentres the nation.

2.12 Decentring the Nation

In seeking to understanding the common narratives that join people in conversation we need to cast our net wider than a simple focus on national identities. It is necessary to look at alternative identity ascriptions that “create bridges across cultures” (Werbner, 2003: 48) in order to decentre the nation. The common ethical and political views that transcend national delineations, such as a commitment to human rights, are as important as the common class and gender relations that bring people from diverse national groups into confluence. Other ‘identities’ and commonalities that tie people into communities of interest or concern, which will be the focus of later discussions on the identities that challenge national hegemony, include religion, education, profession, and subcultural affiliations to music cultures or to sport. In particular, this analysis takes religious identity as a significant starting point for discussions of complex identity.

As mentioned, the bulk of research neglects to take seriously the alternatives to national identity ascription. Modood (1998) notes that

²⁹ Those of the dominant public whose position is less contested.

Most theorists of difference and multiculturalism exhibit very little sympathy for religious groups; religious groups are usually absent in their theorising and there is usually a presumption in favour of secularism (1998: 390).

Kymlicka notes that the dominance of national identity is only partial as most people do not share “the same substantive conception of the good life” (1995: 86). Being a fully incorporated national citizen is not necessarily the desired positionality of all people, and the alternative communal affiliations that cross-cut and challenge these national forms become repositories for alternative desires and self-(and jointly-) constructed realities.

Bringing these more complex affiliations into discourses of identity is a recognition of the multiple and complex nature of contingent identity that forms the core of a postmodernist critique of the nation. However, as has been stated throughout this chapter, to recognise the alternatives to national identity is not to discard it wholesale. The reflection on postmodern identity needs to be incorporated simultaneously with a recognition of the identity forms that structure our understanding of the world and our place as individuals. This is not a post-national project that seeks to replace the nation with some other structural hegemony. To decentre the nation by bringing other alternatives into the discussion is to bring the nation and national identity ‘in from the cold’ and into engagement with its Others in order to reflect a more complex reality of multiplicity and dynamism. These discussions will be made more explicit in Chapters 7 and 8 where the important place of religious identity along with class, gender, education and peers, music and sport, and the intersections of different scales from the family and the home through to the international and the global, all interact to problematise ‘Iranian’ identity as a reflection of the discourses of dominant ‘us’ versus minority ‘them’.

2.13 Disciplinary Responses

Within the social sciences human geography is well placed as a discipline to reflect on the debate concerning the ‘transition’ from the modern perspective, as typified through scientific approaches to sociology, to the post-modern perspective as advocated through postmodern, more particularistic, analyses in anthropology (see Werbner, 2003: 52). Stratton and Ang (1996) see sociology as a modern discipline in

that it treats itself as a universal body of knowledge based on the general hegemonic totality of 'society'. The limits of 'society', when discussed, are most commonly seen as "coterminous with the geographical territory of the nation-state".³⁰ In this way, differences between geographic societies, that is their internal differences, are problematic "only in terms of (the problems of) inclusion and integration rather than in terms of the radicalisation of difference" (Stratton and Ang, 1996: 364). In this modern sociology there is no room for a polycentric model of sociology whereby difference can be understood in terms of fundamental conditionalities exclusive to each 'society', however they are bounded.

In contrast, cultural studies has attempted to build within itself as a discipline an anti-disciplinary nature, where specific universally inscribed theoretical underpinnings of modern disciplines, are substituted by a looseness of theory, an inter-disciplinary nature that works more like a confederation of ideas that gravitate together. This looseness is described as essential to the continued life of cultural studies by McRobbie and Bennett who claim we cannot talk of a universally applicable 'international cultural studies' due to the necessity of context (e.g. local, regional, national, or class, gender, subculture) in the construction of meaning from culture; there are fundamental differences that preclude any sense of the international, let alone a global, cultural studies (in Stratton and Ang, 1996: 361-2, 364). Beyond these claims to a methodological particularism in cultural studies, one weakness highlighted by Hage is the lack of empirical validation (Hage, 1997: 104). As a disciplinary approach it remains interested in the intellectualisation of representation, rather than reflecting on the empirical consequences of these processes of representation. It is in this applied area, that a cultural geographical approach within the human geography discipline can be brought to bear. In this research the values of a cultural studies analysis shall be 'taken into the field'. The nationally-inscribed hierarchies will be interrogated against the possibilities beyond these dominant forms through an applied approach that is largely missing from cultural studies.³¹

³⁰ A notable exception is John Urry (2000) who calls for a 'Sociology Beyond Societies'.

³¹ Exceptions to this include the work by Ang and Butcher (2003) on youth cultures and McRobbie (2000) on the consumption of women's magazines.

Following the cultural turn in geography the place of 'culture' in its various guises has infused a new 'cultural' geography (Mitchell, 2000; Crang, 1998). The culture at the centre of the new cultural geography is a slippery term that, "however defined, can only be approached as embedded in real-life situations, in temporally specific ways" (Crang, 1998: 1). In the search for this cultural relationship with space and place cultural geography has attempted to enter into an inter-disciplinarity which calls for a less universal, more contingent, appraisal of human-space relations grounded in empirical analysis. Where anthropology traditionally focuses on a specific field site within which the ultimate contingency of 'culture' is set, geographical studies often range into comparative analyses in order to best highlight the 'difference' in and between places.³²

2.14 Conclusion: Multicultural Futures

At the core of Hage's (1998) analysis of the exclusion of minority voices is the role of the media. His analysis looks at the silence 'from the margins' in the national press, particularly in the opinion pieces and letters, where migrant voices have no place in the debate over inclusion in the spaces of the nation. Instead, the 'Anglo-Celtic' Australian, from Left and Right, contests the public resolution of the conundrum of tolerance/intolerance. Despite a battle being fought from the margins to produce counter-narratives of representation, the toleration of national migrant Others still emanates from the white centre.

Whilst I am in agreement with Hage's basic notion that the state of the nation and its multiculturalism is in dire need of redress, we also need to better understand how we can expand on static notions of 'the migrant' and 'the nation' as portrayed through the state, and reproduced for consumption through the media, so as to better understand how we can produce a more responsive, more inclusive multiculturalism than that existent in Western liberal democracies such as Canada, Australia, and Britain. It is not merely a case of producing multiculturalism for migrants, as Hage (1997)

³² Anthropology, as a discipline, has shown recent interest in the geographical preoccupation with space expressing the need for multi-sited ethnography. For example, the 2004 Australian Anthropological Society conference, 'Moving Anthropologies', was convened around the disciplinary challenges of the incorporation of notions of geographical relations to space. Also, the 'soft sociology' of Burawoy *et al.* (2000) calls for a 'global ethnography' that better engages with migration and transnationalism and the geographical challenges of the transcendence of space.

advocates, but of finding the multicultural in all communities in society regardless of their national identity or legitimacy.

This critique of multiculturalism leaves open the door for claims of a cosmopolitan ‘whitewash’, of creating a multicultural future ‘with no migrants’. This is the claim of Hage (1997) when he talks of a cosmo-multiculturalism that claims the multicultural centre as a place of consumption of ethnicity without the necessary presence of the ‘ethnics’. However, this research does not aim at a cosmopolitan veneer, instead calling for a greater consideration of the complexity of ethnicity and ‘cultural identity’ so as to highlight the intercultural relationships that bridge the ‘mainstream’ and the ‘minorities’. Hage’s call to keep multiculturalism clean of cosmopolitan influence is also a call to ensure that ‘the migrant’ stays at the centre of multiculturalism, claiming that without this we have “a vacuous conception of multiculturalism, a ‘multiculturalism without migrants’” (Hage, 1997: 99) that would fail to affect meaningful change. However, keeping the migrant at the margins and limiting multicultural programs to ‘migrancy’ only serves to reify difference and remove multiculturalism from its potential relationship to difference.

Whilst a continuing focus on migrancy in multiculturalism will help break down incipient power relations within the politics of difference by ensuring that ‘weaker’ migrants can claim their share of the power of the natural citizens, this fails to draw the centre into dynamic relations with itself and its Others, instead leaving the reified nation as the static focus of expectations of migrant integration. At the same time, cosmopolitanism is not wholly negative. ‘Food and dance’ multiculturalism, or boutique multiculturalism, or pretend pluralism, do produce a heightened awareness of difference in society. Whilst this too can be seen to obfuscate some of the ‘real issues’ of policy-based multiculturalism, such as the entrenching of tokenism and the continued elision of migrant voices from the processes of decision-making, there have been advances in recognition. In some cases, real power has shifted (Lopez, 2000). However, as will be shown through this thesis, multiculturalism as it exists now cannot produce real enduring equality. Instead we must look to a multiculturalism that, rather than denying cosmopolitanism in multicultural relations, attempts to distil the advances in recognition without ‘erasing the ethnic’ from a multicultural future.

This is part of the challenge of opening up multiculturalism beyond merely 'ethnic politics' to a greater level of inclusion.

It is through looking at how 'the nation' interrupts the potential of multiculturalism that this analysis hopes to pursue a future for multiculturalism. Working within the discourse of multicultural recognition, through the lens of 'the multicultural question', this thesis aims to better understand how to attempt to reconcile multicultural theory and praxis. By presenting new ways of thinking about diversity and policy through a critique of the postcolonial white subject that fixes the nation at the centre of discourses of belonging, this thesis seeks to investigate if an empirical analysis can come into engagement with the theoretical in order to imbue new thinking about a more inclusive multicultural future that is less post-national as extra-nationally engaged.

3 METHODOLOGY

The rich stories told by migrants themselves can reveal these diverse subject positions (at the intersections of gender, class, ethnicity) and how they read modernity in particular ways from these positions
(Lawson, 2000: 174).

In our view, one life-history text is equally as 'valid' as a historical text as 100
(Miles and Crush, 1993: 87).

This research focuses on the lives of the children of Iranian migrants living in the cities of SVL who come from two different religious backgrounds. Below I outline the reasons behind these choices and the methodological structure of my interactions with my respondents, followed finally by a brief discussion of some of the issues faced applying this methodology in the field.

3.1 *The Fieldwork Decision*

The two main decisions I had to face in grappling with a way to empirically express the theoretical problems that I had identified with contemporary multiculturalism were, broadly, who to study and where to base the study.

3.1.1 The Second Generation

In seeking to work with a group that would be a challenge to questions of national identity I turned to the children of migrants. These individuals, whom I have called the second generation in accordance with convention,³³ are in an interstitial relationship with respect to the nations of immigration and emigration. It was thus posited at the beginning of this process that these individuals would be in an everyday situation of having to explain their commitment to the two nations to their family, other people from their migrant cohort, and people from the wider community, and hence were more aware than most of the flexible nature of identity and that national

³³ In some disciplines there is a mixture of definitions of this group as the first generation, as in the first generation born in the nation of immigration, and the second generation, meaning the children of the first generation to live in the nation of immigration. Another definition that has been used is that of the 1.5 generation to account for those who have immigrated as dependent children (Danico, 2004).

identity was but one of an array of identities to be utilised in the negotiation of a stable place in society. This ambiguity over national identity places them in a position that challenges the simplicity of a singular national identity.

For this research the second generation was defined as individuals who were the children of at least one migrant parent, and born in the country of immigration; or were the children of at least one migrant parent, and were born in the country of emigration and who had immigrated with their family before they were ten years old. Those second generation individuals who were born in Iran had to have spent at least ten years in the nation of immigration to qualify for the study. Thus, a child who came to Australia as a six year old from Iran would not be eligible to take part in the research until they were sixteen years old. This time period was chosen to ensure that respondents had been exposed to societal conditions in the country of emigration for a significant part of their life. As a result, both the second generation born in the nation of immigration, and the nation of emigration, have spent a significant part of their life, if not all of it, in the country of immigration of their parent(s). Finally, all respondents had to be aged sixteen years and over. This choice of the Australian 'age of consent' enabled the individuals to be more fully, and legally, aware of the conditions and ethical ramifications of the research. From a purely pragmatic perspective, it also allowed the researcher to deal directly with the respondents without needing to negotiate through members of the first generation.

By allowing the second generation to be defined as the children of at least one parent from Iran this research structure opens up both a theoretical and a methodological question. Theoretically, a definition that excludes individuals who have only one parent from Iran sets an artificial boundary around the legitimacy of belonging to a migrant community, denying the necessary existence of 'mixed-race'³⁴ relationships that straddle different 'national communities'. As has become more apparent in research into mixed-race groups and individuals, such as that conducted by Mahtani (2002), the boundaries of community are not immutable and studies that deny the existence of 'mixed-race' relationships deny a significant empirical reality that

³⁴ The use of the term 'race' in mixed-race is due to current convention in the study of mixed relationships and does not account for the ongoing debates over its suitability as a term (Mahtani, 2002: Wright *et al.*, 2003).

challenges traditional definitions of community. Empirically, and in a related sense, the cohort of Iranian migrants, the parents of the second generation, have been shown through research to have a higher level of divorce and separation than the wider community (Ahmadi Lewin, 2001; Darvishpour, 1999; Hojat and Shapurian, 2000). These results, found for communities in Sweden and Los Angeles, were confirmed in my own fieldwork where a high level of single parenthood and remarriage was found. To exclude individuals because their parents had split and remarried, or because they were the progeny of a 'mixed-race' relationship, would deny voices who are involved in the day-to-day challenge of traditional notions of identity and belonging. Moreover it would also have seriously restricted the number of respondents.

3.1.2 The Iranian Communities

The decision to work with individuals with an Iranian background was made in light of several important considerations. The Iranian diaspora is comprised primarily of people who have emigrated following the 1978/79 Revolution that overthrew the monarchy of Shah Reza Pahlavi (see Chapter 5). This meant that in the diaspora the children of those who had left would include a discernible group who were born in the diaspora and who would be at or just beyond tertiary education age. Additionally, the emphasis on education amongst the Iranian community meant that I could expect to find a cohort of second generation individuals at university. This was a key point in dealing with the pragmatics of subject enlistment as I was warned at the outset of the difficulty of gaining access to the families of Iranian migrants as a white middle class English-speaking male outsider. The presence of a cohort at universities allowed easier access, particularly through university clubs and societies, as discussed below in Chapters 6 to 8.

An important feature of the decision to choose Iranian background individuals was the strength of stereotypes surrounding Iran and Iranians. This played a part on several fronts. Firstly, in the lead-up to the research, media representations of the new 'wave of boatpeople' 'threatening the integrity of the Australian national territory' were intensifying. Whilst the majority of stories in the mainstream media involved Iraqi and Afghan asylum seekers, Iranians, who had been prominent in refugee flows to

Australia throughout the previous twenty years, became implicated in this revived³⁵ method of approach to Australia. I wished to examine the importance of these media representations in the minds of the second generation in the way they constructed their identity/ies, though in the end this analysis became less central. As a related fact, the ongoing exile of Iranians in the diaspora on religious and political grounds meant that most of the second generation lived at both a temporal and physical distance from the 'homeland' of their parent(s) under conditions of exile. Thus they were expected to be more prone to a long-distance imagining (Anderson, 1998; Skrbis, 1999; Kalan, 1991) of the homeland than other second generation groups who had greater access through the act of return. Additionally, the stereotypes of Iranians tended to conflate the national with the religious to construct a homogenous reality of reified 'fundamentalist Muslim' Iranians to the exclusion of any alternative. I was aware of the limitations of these representations on two counts: many of the Iranians who fled Iran and were from the Muslim majority were generally more secular than 'orthodox' or conservative; and, a disproportionate number of those in the Iranian diaspora were not Muslim at all, but religious minorities who had come under (greater) persecution under the rule of the Ayatollahs (see Chapter 5). Hence it was assumed that the diaspora was dominated by secular Muslims and religious minorities, of which the Baha'is would be a significant component. Finally, the 'Iranian community' was not visible to the wider 'Australian' community. Combined with this was the relative lack of institutional visibility for the Iranian communities in Sydney. There were no Iranian (licensed) clubs,³⁶ as there are for many other migrant communities; there were no communal groups who were vocal in advocacy; there were very few, if any, discernible religious institutions dedicated to Iranian worshippers.

As a starting point for this research this lack of institutional visibility was considered an influential factor, as the second generation, exiled from the homeland, subject to essentialised media representations, did not have any highly visible institutions to base the idea of an Iranian community around.³⁷ Other work had shown the

³⁵ The term 'boat people' was first associated with Vietnamese asylum seekers in the mid to late 1970s (see Jupp, 2002).

³⁶ Many national ethnic communities have registered clubs that often incorporate licensed premises. Whilst the Iranians did not have these social clubs in the wider public arena, they did have some social institutions in the form of university clubs and societies which are discussed in Chapter 6 and 7.

³⁷ See Bousetta (2000) for a discussion of the importance of informal relationships in addition to institutional structures in understanding a 'community'.

importance of such institutions in the construction of communal solidarity (see Skrbis, 1999). The lack of institutional visibility was thought to allow a greater degree of ambivalence over the boundaries of constructed national communities, thus presenting the cohort from an Iranian background as suitable for the present study.

The stratified nature of Iranian born migrants along religious lines was highly influential in the decision to select the Iranian cohort, as religious identity was identified as a significant starting point for identifying alternate identities that interrupted the surety of national belonging. For this reason two separate cohorts from Iran were selected for analysis: those of Muslim background and those of the Baha'i Faith. And, as a final factor, the selection of Iranians represented a shift from the bulk of studies of migrants which concentrated on migrants of low socio-economic status with reduced opportunities and limited social mobility.³⁸ The Iranian migrant community included significant numbers of wealthy middle- and upper-class individuals who maintained or aspired to a high level of social mobility. This was reflected in the sample, which included a majority whose parents emigrated from Tehran as middle to upper class educated elites (see Chapter 8). At the same time the Iranian born included lower socio-economic groups, such as some of those who arrived as refugees, which could possibly facilitate a class analysis within the 'communities'. For all of the above reasons, the Iranian cohort was deemed appropriate for this research.

3.1.3 Site Selection

The second important set of decisions about fieldwork was the location of field sites. Initially, the research was to be conducted as a comparative analysis between two cities with Iranian populations. The first city chosen was Sydney for several reasons, foremost of which was the ease of conducting research in my local environment with regards to cost, local knowledge, and language. Sydney as an immigrant reception city was also my first choice because it was the focus of Australian immigration, particularly for the Iranian born, and most of the ideas behind the research were formulated with the Sydney/Australian context in mind. The second city selected was

³⁸ A notable exception to this case is the extensive work completed on Chinese migrants in Vancouver (see K. Anderson, 1991; Ley 1995; Ong and Nonni, 1997; Waters 2002, 2003).

Vancouver, Canada. The selection of a Canadian city was important for it allowed a comparative analysis of different multicultural models in two nations at the forefront of political multiculturalism. The choice of Vancouver, rather than Toronto, the largest and most diverse city in Canada, was predicated on similarities and important differences. Vancouver is a Pacific Rim city that has been subject to comparison with Sydney in other research looking at the different urban geographies and the situations of migrant communities (e.g. Ley and Murphy, 2001). One distinct feature that supported the choice of Vancouver was the fact that whilst it was an important city in the Iranian diaspora, with a population of Iranian born larger than that of Sydney (see Chapter 5), it was not the focus of refugee flows; Toronto had greater flows. Further, the recent flows of refugee claimants to Vancouver that had received media attention were Chinese asylum seekers from Fujian (Mountz, 2003). The Iranians were ‘not on the radar’ with respect to the ‘threat’ of refugees. Both of these facts contrasted with the Sydney case. The city itself is half the size of Sydney in population, which had the initially unintended consequence of making the Iranians a more visible community in Vancouver. This consequence was significant in the comparative analysis (see Chapters 6 to 8) and resulted from the decision to select a ‘smaller’ city.

This initial comparative structure was expanded during the course of the fieldwork from two to three cities, with the inclusion of London, Britain. The decision to include a third city representing a third national context was initially made on a purely pragmatic basis. Due to personal reasons I relocated during the research project to London for a one year period, which presented an opportunity to increase the scope of the research. Fortuitously, London is also an important city in the Iranian diaspora, and, unlike Sydney and Vancouver, it was also an important city prior to the revolution as a centre of European contact for the Shah’s outward-looking gaze (see Chapter 5). London, like Vancouver and Sydney, is also a focal point for migration. Additionally, Britain formed an interesting counterpoint to Australia and Canada as it was involved in a more laissez faire multiculturalism with a lesser degree of political commitment to its implementation (see Chapter 4). Britain also has faced large questions over English-British identity in the face of European expansion and Scottish and Welsh devolution, and tensions over the place of Muslim migrants in the nation (Nairn, 1981; Hall, 1997, 2000). Both of these issues concerning national identity made London an interesting choice for comparison.

3.2 Constructing the Method

At the outset this research was cast as a subjective analysis of the real and symbolic structures of community. Hence, the methodology was intended to interrogate the assumptions of bounded communities not by attempting to better understand or construct the communities, but to investigate their social construction against a more poststructural analysis. I did not intend to ‘find the true communities’ but to look at the variability that occurs across the various communal negotiations and how alternate forms of communal identity challenge assumptions about national communal identity.

3.2.1 Phase 1 – Semi-structured Interview

In order to collect data about ‘national’ belonging, as well as data about other forms of possible and emergent communal identity, I designed the primary phase of the fieldwork around a semi-structured interview with respondents. This interview process, Phase 1, involved discussions with respondents across a range of general topics that included: demographic information, the structure of the community, migration and refugee issues, links with the homeland, peers and marriage partners, the family and expectations, media consumption and refugee issues.³⁹ Interviews were conducted in a flexible manner as a discussion rather than as an objective construction of scientific fact. As a result, despite the appearance of the structured nature of the questions, the discussions ranged backwards and forwards depending on the state of the conversation. As a consequence of this discursive method the interviewer was able to take part in the discussion, adding to the dialogue in order to both inform the respondent and to elucidate information beyond the scope of individual questions, thus extending the initial questions. The question list itself was flexible in that as time progressed in the course of Phase 1 some questions were found to be either irrelevant, misunderstood, or rendered redundant. Some questions were also altered as saturation of basic information was achieved. The actual list of questions went through five drafts through the course of Phase 1 in the three city sites in order to account for the changing expectations of the interview process. This was not considered a problem as the data collected were not intended to be a representative sample of a community.

³⁹ The full list of questions can be found in Appendix 1.

The questions asked in Phase 1 ranged widely in order to try and allow the respondents to give as much data as possible about alternative communal forms to the Iranian or ABC forms that normally dominate discussions of identity without explicitly stating that this was desired. It was made clear to the respondents through the processes of introduction to the research that it was about 'Iranian' second generation. The fact that the research was with 'Iranians' was made clear in the Subject Information Sheet (SIS),⁴⁰ which was provided to prospective respondents as a brief introduction to the research. The challenge of the subsequent interview was to interrogate this starting point of national belonging whilst opening up possibilities for alternate identities. The fact that the sample contained two different religious groups, as outlined in the introduction to the interview, meant that respondents were aware of some recognition in the structure of the research of internal differentiation within the wider 'Iranian community'. Further limitations inherent in the recruitment process are discussed below.

Interviews ranged in length from less than an hour up to almost two hours, with most being around one hour and fifteen minutes. They were recorded on mini disc for later transcription.

3.2.1.1 Sample Size.

Following the cultural turn in the social sciences the traditional methodological need for statistically representative samples for social scientific studies has come under scrutiny. Whilst this debate is ongoing in some areas, such as in sociology where the rationalist and subjective perspectives continue to diverge, there is a growing legitimacy for small-scale ethnographic analyses (e.g. Ghosh and Wang, 2003; Lindenmeyer, 2001). These small-scale studies are presaged on the fact that they are not statistically representative of wider social scientific relations, but are instead a collection of reflections on the dynamism of relationships that go on inside particular contexts. The subjectivists feel that the 'truth', or objective reality, cannot be captured, so there is no need to invest in statistically representative sampling. The sample can be as small as one, a personal history, and still have social scientific merit

⁴⁰ The Subject Information Sheet, Consent Form, Information Notice, and other associated information sheets for respondents are shown in Appendix 2.

(Lawson, 2000; Miles and Crush, 1993). The sample for the study was selected with this in mind.

It was not the intention to construct a representation of what Iranian communities in various cities 'are like', but to look at some of the relationships that debunk simplified notions of communal existence. As a result the narratives of respondents become stories that cross lines of possibilities, producing a different 'community' perspective from person to person, from time to time, and from context to context. In each city site a sample of approximately 20 individuals was initially set, with the sample split down gender and religious lines so that the sample would include 5 male and 5 female Muslims, 5 Baha'i males and 5 Baha'i females from each of SVL. The difficulties of recruitment faced in the course of this work meant that the actual number recruited was approximately 15 to 16 in each city site.⁴¹ This number was deemed acceptable due to the depth of ethnographic information collected from the sample.

3.2.1.2 Recruitment.

As has been mentioned above, the Iranian communities in the diaspora are notable for their lack of institutional infrastructure. This means that there are few, if any, formal community leaders through which to gain access to the 'community'. One key institutional structure that does exist for the second generation from Iran from both a Muslim and a Baha'i background are the university clubs and societies. I was aware of the presence on several Sydney campuses of both Baha'i clubs and Persian or Iranian clubs, run by students as a part of the cultural programs supported on university campuses. I had surveyed the clubs and societies by internet for universities in Sydney and Vancouver prior to the commencement of the research, and in London when this field site was included, and found several clubs and societies that could form initial points of contact with the second generation cohorts (see Chapters 6 and 7).

Sampling from clubs and societies was limited to those of the second generation who were at university, and who had decided to join these social and cultural groups. To augment this, other fora were sought as a source of respondents. Iranians from a Muslim background in each of the three cities are predominantly non-practising

⁴¹ A table detailing relevant demographic data for the respondents has been included in Appendix 3.

Muslims (see Chapter 6). As a result, there were few wholly Iranian religious institutions. Exceptions to this included the Imam Husain Islamic Centre in Earlwood in Sydney and the Holland Park Mosque in Holland Park, London. In Vancouver, at the time of the research, no informants could point to a permanent religious institution for the Shi'i Muslim population in Vancouver. There was a part-time floating congregation which I was told had a shared space in North Vancouver; however, I could find no further information from my respondents, nor the other informants in Vancouver.

For the Baha'i samples in each city it was a little easier to access religious institutions. The nature of the Baha'i Faith structure is quite well defined and, although there are no clergy, there are established hierarchical administrative structures in place in each of the three cities. Contact with 'Baha'i Youth' associations in each city were facilitated through the respective national Baha'i administrative structures. In the case of Sydney, the presence of the Baha'i Temple, one of only seven in the world, in Ingleside, allowed both formal and informal contact with prospective respondents. The National Spiritual Assembly of Australia is also located at the Sydney temple, and through this formal avenue the research was 'validated', or sanctioned as acceptable by the Baha'i administrative hierarchy. In Vancouver, it was necessary to contact the national assembly operating out of Ottawa in order to both make contact with the administration in Vancouver and also to have the research 'validated' as acceptable. The Baha'i Centre in Vancouver subsequently became an important meeting point, particularly during the regular cultural and social events that were conducted there. In London, the process was similar to Vancouver, except that the national centre was located in London, allowing me to meet and speak directly with the necessary gatekeepers in the hierarchy. Here again, as in both Sydney and Vancouver, Baha'i Youth representatives were important contacts, several of whom subsequently became key informants.

3.2.1.3 Transcription.

Interviews were transcribed into the qualitative analysis software 'NVIVO'. This software allows the coding of transcribed material in-situ as the transcription takes place. It can also build hierarchies of linked themes, create memos, apply pre-defined

coding templates, and transfer coding between different projects. One of the most useful features is its report building capacity allowing the building of customised reports based on the different code themes or constructed sets of information. This software was very useful in constructing the analysis and in drawing thematic relationships whilst completing the transcriptions.

3.2.2 Phase 2 – Photodocumentary Exercise

A second phase, Phase 2, was designed to extend on and augment the themes already discussed in Phase 1. The second phase of the methodology involved an ethnographic photography exercise, in which respondents were asked to take part. The respondents used disposable cameras to photograph ‘the people, places and things’ that were important to them. These images reflect their relationships to the various identity spaces that intersect in the narrated nation. The photographs were used as visual prompts in follow-up interviews in order to elucidate issues surrounding the process(es) of identity negotiation.

Reflexive textual analysis using photographic media has not been used extensively in human geography (see Pink, 2001: 4-7; Markwell, 2000; Kearnes, 2000; also Rose, 2001). This present research placed the camera in the hands of the respondent allowing the research to flow from the source with relatively little intervention from the researcher. This method was used to augment the themes from Phase 1 and to find new themes not considered by the researcher or uncovered by the previous interview. Photographs, and other visual texts, are increasingly recognised as influential in processes of identity negotiation (Pink, 2001: 12). Sarah Pink notes that “while images should not necessarily replace words as the dominant mode of research or representation, they should be regarded as an equally meaningful element of ethnographic work” (Pink, 2001: 4-5).

After completing Phase 1 respondents were invited to take part in the visual ethnography project. Respondents were given black and white disposable cameras, some basic technical instructions, a second Subject Information Sheet and associated Consent Form. Once they agreed to take part the respondents were requested to photograph ‘the things that are important to you on an everyday basis’. They were

reminded that I wished them to range as widely as they needed to in order to capture their everyday selves, and that they should avoid taking pictures that they thought I, as researcher, wanted them to take.⁴² Thus armed with a self-awareness of themselves as subject and object, as signifier and the signified, they proceeded to produce a short visual biography.

The photographs generated from the exercise were used primarily as a visual prompt for a second round of one-to-one interviews about identity, representations and community. This interview was recorded on mini disc for later transcription and took between 15 and 40 minutes. The value of this methodology was felt through the several requirements the photographs fulfilled: firstly, as a way of gathering ethnographic data, both visually in the form of the images themselves and in the form of the associated interviews; secondly, as a way of assembling a visual narrative that could be used as a counter discourse to visual and textual representations of Iran and Iranians in the media; thirdly, as a way of generating a visual space that places the second generation within the landscapes of the nation; and, fourthly, as a way of transmitting the complexities of the everyday that influence how people negotiate their place in society, to the respondents and also beyond to wider communities. In satisfying these multiple requirements visual ethnography has proved itself a useful tool in this project.

After agreeing to take part in Phase II, respondents were given the information pack consisting of SIS, Consent Form, and Photography Exercise information sheets.⁴³ The respondent was then asked to either read the material now and ask questions, or to take the material away and read it. Once the respondent had read the material and decided they wanted to take part they were supplied with the 27 exposure Ilford disposable black and white camera. Once they had completed taking their photographs the camera was picked up from the respondent and the film was developed. At the time of camera pick-up a second interview date was set. The decision to hand out the Phase 2 pack, and even the camera to respondents immediately following the end of the Phase 1 interview ran the risk of placing undue

⁴² No visual prompts were given to the respondents. When requests were made for examples of what to photograph it was reiterated that they should photograph the 'people, places and things' that are important to them on an everyday basis, and that showing them examples could influence their choices.

⁴³ See Appendix 2.

pressure on respondents to take part in the second phase. Being aware of this allowed the researcher to ensure that the individuals were sure of all of the particular uses to which I intended to use the photographs before they signed the Consent Form.

Respondents had cameras for between a few days and several months, although most conformed to the two to three week deadline I set when handing the camera to them. The level of uptake of the second phase was high with approximately 10 respondents finishing the second phase in each city site.⁴⁴ Almost all of the respondents expressed a high level of satisfaction with the methodology, invariably saying they enjoyed the photography experience. In many cases this positive feedback was unprompted. However, some people expressed a reticence to become involved because they had no camera skills. Despite being told that the quality of the images was of little consequence and that I was interested more in why they chose to photograph the things they did, and that most of the respondents were also similarly inexperienced (which indeed most were) they still decided against taking part. This may be a limitation of the method as the concern for competence may preclude some respondents' involvement. The inclusion of a 'photography tips' sheet specifically designed for the study was aimed at alleviating these possible anxieties.

Regardless of the decisions of some not to participate in Phase 2 because of the demands of the photography exercise, the results of Phase 2 were satisfying. Both in terms of the quality of the data produced (several new themes of which the researcher was previously unaware became apparent through the exercise) and the level of involvement (approximately 66% of respondents), the use of visual methodologies was worthwhile and the photographs form an integral part of the ethnographic analysis in Chapters 6 to 8.

3.2.3 General ethnographic data collection

A range of data was also collected from interviews with key informants from community, religious, government and non-governmental institutions. These were conducted on an ad-hoc basis as unstructured interviews.

⁴⁴ Four respondents who were given cameras subsequently decided not to take part. In each case the cameras were not recovered.

Additional ethnographic material was collected from attendance at community events ranging from Persian dance clubs to religious events and services; films and cultural events such as classical music concerts; attendance at private homes for family gatherings through to New Year celebrations; playing and watching soccer matches with respondents; going to restaurants or sharing pizza at social club meetings. All of this contextual ethnographic material helped to inform my overall analysis of the process of identity negotiation amongst the second generation and is integral to the discussions in Chapters 6 to 8.

3.2.4 Media Analysis

An analysis of the mainstream newspaper media representations of Iran and Iranians in ten newspapers across the three cities was conducted for the period from January 2001 to December 2002. The full details of this study can be found in Appendix 4.

3.3 *Limits to Implementation*

Limitations accompanied the fieldwork process. Many of these did not greatly impact on the structure of methodology, whilst others caused a rethink of the initial intentions. Regardless of the limitations experienced through the fieldwork, the data produced has ensured that the final results are informative and relevant. The final section of this chapter documents some of the challenges faced in attempting to implement the methodology as intended.

3.3.1 Armenians from an Iranian background

With the expansion of the study to a third field site in London it was decided to scale back another of the variables. Initially the study included a third 'religious community', the Armenians of Iranian background, a predominantly Christian group. The selection of a third group emphasised the religious diversity of the Iranian born in the diaspora. Following the decision to include London, and the initial field visit to Vancouver during which there was a relative difficulty in locating Armenian respondents compared to Muslim or Baha'i background respondents, it was decided to scale back to two cohorts in the three national city sites. The initial Sydney fieldwork

indicated that whilst the Armenian sample would contain very interesting points of comparison, there were no theoretical ramifications of their exclusion from the sample.

3.3.2 Insider vs Outsider argument

The question of the benefits of being an insider or an outsider have been ongoing in the social sciences. An 'insider' is usually considered someone who is from the same ethnic/cultural group. In this case this could mean someone from an Iranian background, from a Muslim background, or from a Baha'i background, or some combination of the three. An insider is expected to have greater access and a higher degree of trust, as well as the advantage of speaking the language and understanding cultural nuances. However, the relative positionalities of outsider and insider suffer the same processes of reification of ethnic boundaries as was discussed in Chapter 2 concerning 'the nation'. The traditional designation of insider status (re)constructs a homogenous bounded ethnic group and denies alternative affiliations as legitimate grounds for the commonality of experience.

When Ghassan Hage (1998) claims that 'white' people cannot understand the experiences of the non-white and therefore that white researchers can only misrepresent the non-white experience he denies the possibility of the transcendence of the boundaries of (national) ethnic groups, reproducing the conditions of inequality he abhors. I refute Hage's denial of the agency of a white (dominant/majority/male) researcher to reach an understanding of minority experience. Rather, in response to his (legitimate) concerns over misrepresentation I see a need to better understand the relative positionality of the white researcher as in some ways 'more outside' and less subject to processes of marginalisation. There is no absolute 'outside' from which a researcher operates, nor is there a definitive 'inside', although our positionality may come to resemble these positions from time to time.

Related to questions over being an 'outsider' in social science research is the constant consideration of how to ensure ethical access to respondents and their environments. For 'insiders', the family home is perhaps easier to access, people may trust you more as a researcher and language may not be a barrier. These are issues that the relative

outsider, no matter what the justification for doing the research is, needs to reconcile in the research process. For this research, being a white 'Anglo-Celtic' Australian male who spoke English and didn't speak Farsi, didn't have any prior contact with the Iranian-born, didn't even know any Iranian-born, access was a key issue that needed to be considered and, in many ways, overcome.

Having said this, status as a relative outsider had ramifications for the investigation of the geographies of everyday encounter. As important to this analysis as the more readily recognisable cross-comparative international macro geographies are the spatialities produced at the micro scale of the everyday. Ash Amin (2002) discusses the necessity of investigating the 'micropolitics of everyday social contact and encounter' in order to understand these geographies of the banal and everyday (2002: 960). It needs to be recognised that my positionality limited the level of access to these everyday geographies. The ethnographic study is far-reaching, and yet not comprehensive, reflecting my status as a relative outsider and the limitations of conducting a study amongst two different groups in three different cities across three continents. Whilst the data collected was thorough and detailed, it was also by context and necessity, partial.

3.3.3 Gender Bias

Access to female respondents, particularly female practicing Muslims, was initially perceived as problematic for the research, by the researcher and by some initial respondents. For practicing Muslims, who appeared to be a small subsection of the whole second generation cohort, there may be religious reasons that preclude a female taking part in a one-to-one interview with a male non-family member. This was considered a possible source of difficulty. However, the reality is that both Muslim and Baha'i females, both practicing and non-practicing were recruited for the research. Consideration was given to possible concerns prior to the interview processes and any issues were attempted to be resolved. One way that this was achieved with a particular respondent was through ensuring that we met in public places. Another female respondent wished to have her boyfriend present. On one occasion in Sydney, the mother of a respondent sat in on the interview itself.

3.3.4 The difficulty of talking to ‘Iranians’ about not being Iranian.

In the interview process I established the use of the terms Iran and Iranian in a specific manner in order to both interrogate the national scope of identity, and to allow for the discussion of non-national identities as the interview progressed. One difficulty in this process has been the need to find and interview people with an Iranian background about their non-Iranian identities. Whilst setting the frame of the research as limited to those of Iranian background helped in locating those who wished to talk about Iranian identity, in doing so, I also excluded those with more liminal associations to Iranian-ness, those who would have been perhaps more interesting to talk with about their alternate modes of identity. In one particular example, a respondent, following the interview, noted that I would have an interesting discussion of alternate forms of identity for the second generation from Iran with her sixteen year old brother as he had chosen to more or less deny his Iranian identity as a way of dealing with his interstitial position as the child of migrants growing up in a ‘host’ society. However, when I suggested she talk to him about his possible inclusion in the research she was quick to reply that he would not take part because ‘it was about Iranians’. This tension between the expectations of respondents, that the research was about Iranian identity, and the actual intention of the research, to investigate more complex identities, was a limitation.

3.3.5 The Recruitment Process

Prospective respondents were recruited through a variety of methods. Firstly, in accordance with University of Sydney Human Ethics procedures, an Information Notice⁴⁵ was posted for individuals to respond of their own volition or provided to third parties, either electronically or as a hard copy, who could relay the request for respondents to those they think may be interested. Whilst it was understood that this process ensured the impartiality of the involvement of the respondents as they were not placed under any undue pressure to take part, this process of recruitment was a dismal failure. Over the course of more than two years of fieldwork I received one query about the research through the placement of notices, and this person did not take part in the Phase 1 interview.

⁴⁵ See Appendix 2.

A secondary process of recruitment was carried out in conjunction with third party representatives. The presidents of clubs and societies on university campuses, the staff of non-government organisations coordinating settlement, religious leaders and staff at the centres of religious learning, were contacted in order to try and recruit respondents through these key 'community leaders'. This passive snowball technique requires prospective respondents to contact the researcher about being involved. As the Human Ethics policy website for the University of Sydney states,

participants may be asked to discuss the research with friends/contacts whom they think may be interested in volunteering to be participants. Those new participants should then contact the research team to volunteer. Active snowballing when participants volunteer their friends/contacts directly to the research team is not acceptable (University of Sydney, 2004).

Again, this process, whilst being more successful in directing prospective respondents to the researcher, was on the whole inadequate. Far less than half of the eventual respondents were recruited through passive snowball techniques.

As a direct result of the inadequacy of these two 'ethical' approaches to recruitment a third process became the primary method of recruitment. This method involved direct contact between the researcher and the prospective respondent prior to their recruitment in order to introduce the research project to the individual. This procedure was conducted in a passive manner to ensure prospective respondents were not unduly pressured. Once prospective respondents were identified they were introduced to the research through a combination of personal discussion of the work and through distribution of SIS and Consent Forms. Once the individuals had read the SIS and Consent Form, if they indicated that they were interested in taking part at this juncture their contact details were taken and a preliminary time and location for the interview were set. This process of recruitment was by far and away the most successful method accounting for the majority of respondents recruited for the research.

This method of allowing people to see and meet the researcher before they decided to take part was appropriate for the context of this research project.⁴⁶ The cohort of

⁴⁶ Issues of ethical recruitment and the difficulties of maintaining an ethical position in ethnographic research in geography is discussed in McDowell (2001).

second generation individuals from Iran was partially selected because of the visibility of Iran and Iranians in the media. Media stereotypes diverge from the reality of Iranian communality in the diaspora.⁴⁷ These representations have resulted in an ongoing fomenting of distrust amongst those of Iranian background that was reinforced through the attempts to recruit individuals in this project. Impersonal and third party processes of recruitment failed primarily because of this lack of trust of wider understanding of Iranian-ness combined with my relative outsider status which tended to initially associate me with as being more in common with the producers of misrepresentation than as a researcher critiquing these stereotypes. For this reason, it was essential for a personal introduction to allow the assurance of understanding and sensitivity, and to express the confidentiality and anonymity, that this research involved. This information was laid out in the Information Notice, the SIS and Consent Forms. However, these were not enough to ensure that individuals were comfortable that the research was sensitive enough to understand ‘the issues’ involved in being a second generation person from Iran.

At the outset of the Phase 1 fieldwork in Sydney in June/July 2001, several prospective respondents showed a high level of distrust related to the visibility of the Iranian community. The questions asked were akin to, ‘why are you looking at Iranians?’, and, ‘who told you there were Iranians in Sydney?’. However, when the first international fieldwork commenced in Vancouver I was surprised to find that my status and the project’s legitimacy had been raised purely by virtue of my undertaking ‘international’ research. This commitment to the research expressed, to some, that I was a legitimate actor, serious in my intentions and intending to behave in an ethical manner having the effect of destabilising my relative outsider status and instilling a degree of trust. When fieldwork was commenced in London in 2002, following both Vancouver and Sydney, the questions over legitimacy and visibility were again absent confirming to a degree that the status of the researcher was increased through the appellation ‘international’ to the project. When the final round of Sydney fieldwork was completed during the course of 2003, the already completed international fieldwork did, for some, create an air of legitimacy, as respondents were keen to hear of any interesting differences and/or similarities between life in Sydney and life in

⁴⁷ See Chapter 4.

Vancouver and London. However, another significant impact made itself felt over the life of the research, affecting the perceptions of respondents to the research project itself: the impact of '9/11' and the 'War on Terror'.

3.3.6 Impact of Sept 11, 2001

One feature of the interview process in Phase 1 that needs to be mentioned is the initial focus on refugee issues. As mentioned earlier, at the outset of this research the issue of representations of asylum seekers from Iran in the Australian media was a key point of differentiation to be investigated through the comparative analysis. However, as the process went on, the 'refugee issues' became less important to the research than issues of wider representations of Islam and Muslims in the West. This watershed occurred as a direct result of the terrorist attacks on New York and Washington DC on September 11, 2001. Whilst the impact of '9/11' on perceptions of Islam and Iran in the international arena increasingly became important in each of the three city sites, the structure of Phase 1 was not changed significantly to reflect this. Instead, the focus on refugee issues was maintained, in order to maintain a level of internal consistency in the comparative analysis. Yet, the changing international relationship between the West and its Islamic others had discrete impacts for the cohorts in this research. I have endeavoured to discuss this point at length in Chapters 6 to 8.

3.4 *Conclusion*

Maintaining a consistent research agenda over the course of two years of fieldwork has been a challenge when set against the changing nature of world politics, particularly as it plays out in the ABC and Iranian contexts. Certain aspects of the research have been moulded by the processes of time in a self-reflexive manner, whilst others have been maintained as a more rigid focus. The challenge of this has been to try and produce an ethnographic study that maintains a legitimate comparative focus, whilst not becoming 'irrelevant' in the face of changing experiences. I feel that this partially iterative process has remained valid throughout, helping to produce a solid set of data from which to produce an informative analysis and draw some interesting conclusions. These will be developed primarily in Chapters 6 to 8. Before

moving on to the discussion of the results of this fieldwork it is necessary to continue on with some contextualisation of the research. In the following chapters the processes that structure national communities, including the national contexts of multicultural policies and the representations in the mainstream media, are investigated (Chapter 4) followed by an investigation of the form and structure of the Iranian diasporic 'communities' from an historical and contemporary perspective (Chapter 5).

4 STRUCTURING THE NATION

Modern states are nation-states – political apparatuses, distinct from both ruler and ruled, with supreme jurisdiction over a demarcated territorial area, backed by a claim to a monopoly of coercive power and enjoying legitimacy as a result of a minimum level of support or loyalty from their citizen.

(Held et al., 1999: 45)

This chapter engages with two separate but related themes that structure discourses of identity and belonging and hence impact on the way individuals from an Iranian background perceive community. Firstly, the discussion turns to the policy form of the national multiculturalisms discussed in Chapter 2, looking at the policy contexts in ABC that act to inform recognition of diversity whilst structuring debates within national communal forms. In the second half of the chapter, the power of representations in the mainstream media to (re)produce national discourses of identity are examined. The media construct a ‘preferred meaning’ of Iranian-ness that structures public discourse, impacting in turn on the lives of the second generation. Both of these arenas of investigation highlight the ‘top-down’ structuring of identity discussed in Chapter 2 that operates to limit the discourses of identities and belonging to national forms.

As will be shown throughout this dissertation, in each of the national sites that form the focus of this research national identity is privileged above other possible identities, creating a dominant discussion centred on the ABC ‘us’ versus the nationally inscribed Iranian ‘them’. It is for this reason that we will discuss in the later chapters the relationship between the dominant construction of Iranian identity and how other types of identification, such as religious identities, class or linguistic identities, interact with and disrupt the dominant discourse of national ethnic Otherness. By looking at the politics of multiculturalism and mainstream media representations in more detail we will presage the later discussion of possible futures for multiculturalism that are more inclusive of diversity.

4.1 *National Multiculturalisms*

One way to improve our understanding of the place of the multicultural within the liberal democratic polity is to examine the different national contexts and the way they have responded to the opportunity of multiculturalism and the challenge of understanding and including the diversity that exists within their borders. In this section the three different national multiculturalisms are discussed, noting significant similarities and particular differences in their political and social forms, to better understand the emphasis on the reproduction of national forms inherent in national multiculturalisms.

The question of the place of immigrants within the borders of Western nations has been, and remains, a constant political and social dilemma. Multiculturalism as a policy designed to alleviate these tensions has been the focus of constant debate over the last thirty years since the term was given political relevance by the Canadian Prime Minister, Pierre Trudeau, in 1971. The three nations at the core of this work have many similarities and important differences with regards to the term multiculturalism that form the background against which current issues of migrant identity are set. Further, the term multiculturalism has to some extent formed a window through which the identities of the nations themselves are being recognised as experiencing dynamic transition (Modood, 1997). As such, multiculturalism as an idea is highly contested and manifests itself differently in each of the national contexts under investigation.

The understanding that identities are fluid and dynamic not only has implications for the national, ethnic or religious minorities struggling to find a place in the nation, but also for 'the nations' themselves. The nation, as constituted by certain dominant groups as a politically/culturally/racially homogeneous space, becomes a problematic concept once there is an acceptance of the necessity to recognise and include minority 'diversity' within the legitimate spaces of the nation (Gilroy, 1987 as cited by Modood, 1997: 291). By engaging in the multicultural question, the homogeneously constituted nation engages with the process of its own dynamic reproduction. The recognition of a case to be answered with regards to the place of the Other – migrants, refugees, the indigenous population, women – within the national space, is an

acceptance of the necessary mutability of the nation that produces the possibility of dynamic engagement with the nation's evolving internal diversity, in contest with the fear of loss of national identity this mutability implies.

The opening of discursive relations with minority groups by the supposed dominant group representing the nation does not represent in and of itself a solution to the multicultural question. Rather, it presents an opportunity to progress towards an understanding of what it would take to effectively include all members of a multicultural polity within a bounded geopolitical construct, be that set at the scale of the nation, or at the local, regional, or global level. By engaging in policies of multiculturalism, nations such as Canada and Australia, and to a lesser extent Britain, have made a commitment to engage with the historically constituted minority groups that exist within their borders. However, as alluded to in Chapter 2, the use of the ideology of multiculturalism to approach the intransigence of 'problem groups' in these nations has itself been problematic. Too often the emphasis has been on the (re)production of a central homogeneously constituted majority to which the 'multicultural' groups must defer – an ethnic politics of limited inclusion producing a shared experience of racism/exclusion rather than a 'recognition of difference'.

The following analysis examines separate thematic differences in the operation of political multiculturalisms in the three countries. In Australia, the emphasis on multiculturalism as a policy of immigrant settlement will be addressed. In Canada, the positionality of ethnic minorities as a 'third force' between English and French Canada and attempts to incorporate a model of group rights into multicultural policies will be discussed. In Britain, the impact of post-colonial discourses of racial difference on the inconsistent commitment to multiculturalism will be discussed. In each case, these themes have implications for the way the children of migrants in general, and the second generation from an Iranian background in particular, interact with the socio-political context set down by national multicultural policies.

4.2 Australian Multiculturalism: A Program for Settlement

Australian multiculturalism has grown out of the pragmatic requirements of successfully 'integrating' large numbers of immigrants into Australian society with

minimal disruption. The form of Australian multiculturalism has hence been driven by a focus on immigration and the migrant to the exclusion of other ‘non-migrant’ identities, such as the successive generations and, significantly, the mainstream or dominant majority. The mythology of Australian immigration centres on the white British/Irish migrant, the constructed ‘Anglo-Celtic’ mainstream identity, without actively involving this constructed majority group in the processes of social development incumbent in immigration processes. This lack of engagement with wider social actors has limited the policies of Australian multiculturalism to questions of the successful settlement of immigrants, a process tied to the history of migration that has configured the present nation. The intricacies of the history of Australia as an immigrant nation that have a bearing on the form of multiculturalism have been covered in detail elsewhere (Jupp, 2001, 2002; Stratton, 1998). A brief summary here of some important historical points will suffice to draw the distinctive nature of Australian immigration in multicultural policies.

Australian history has traditionally been built on assumptions of a homogenous white male history prior to 1945, as imagined through such white themes as the convict, the bushranger, and the stockman. However, the reality of the diversity of migrants, in particular the large number of Chinese⁴⁸ present in the Australian population in the 19th Century, led to tensions with the majority white population that became the basis for what became known from 1880 as the ‘White Australia policy’ (Jupp, 2002: 8-10). With federation of the Australian nation in 1901, control of immigration passed to the new commonwealth government which immediately passed the Immigration Restriction Act (1901),⁴⁹ which determined immigration policy until the Migration Act of 1958. It was these Acts that formed the legal basis of the ‘White Australia policy’ which influenced the make-up of immigration through until 1973 when it was officially abolished by the Whitlam Labour Government.

⁴⁸ Jupp points to the arrival of many thousands of Chinese through the newly opened colony of Hong Kong to the Victorian Goldfields in the 1850s as the beginning of a fear of Asian immigration, which, 150 years later, still remains (2002: 7).

⁴⁹ It is important to note that the spirit of the Immigration Restriction Act was the racist exclusion of non-white, non-British applicants for immigration. However, at no time was the White Australia policy included in the wording of the Act. In contrast to the actual day-to-day running of selective and exclusionary immigration, the denial of racism has been the case throughout the history of Australian immigration legislation. As Jupp notes, this “illuminates one of the stranger features of Australian immigration policy: the consistent denial by officials of something which everyone knows to be true” (2002: 8), that is, that immigration policy was racially discriminatory.

Immigration demand was greatly increased following 1945 to satisfy the government's view that Australia needed to 'populate or perish'. However, programs such as assisted passage failed to meet the demands for 'white' migrants leading to the search for non-traditional sources. The turn away from the traditional 'white' immigration sources created a fundamental tension between what had been an increasingly mythologised 'white Australia' and the new diversity represented by southern and eastern Europeans. This tension was dealt with by the formal ascension of 'assimilation' policies to regulate the threat of difference and to ensure the sanctity of what became increasingly known as 'the Australian way of life' (Theophanous, 1995; Stratton, 1998).

4.2.1 The Anglo-Celtic Core

During this period of diversified migrant intake the unilinear 'history' of Australia as a white British-Irish homogeneous national culture was normalised. The imagining of Australia as uniformly 'Anglo-Celtic' in the face of threat of the migrant Other has influenced not only post-war policies of assimilation, but remains an important issue in the current climate of multiculturalism.

The term 'Anglo-Celtic' is itself an ethnic construct (Stratton, 1995: 38). Inglis notes that Anglo-Celtic is "a word unknown outside Australia" (Inglis, 1991: 21) and represents a syncretic association of Irish Catholic with 'Anglo-Saxon' which came about more than one hundred years ago. The idea of an Anglo-Celtic mainstream has gained contemporary credence in the face of the recognition of the legitimacy of the ethnic Other, and forms a new basis for a strategy of exclusion, which Stratton claims sits at the core of Australian multiculturalism.

By constructing a core national ethnicity – the Anglo-Celtic Australian – as the naturalised Australian, we have set the stage for the introduction of multiculturalism, not as an idea of individual and communal equality, but as a management principle, a set of power relations managing the tension between the national ethnic Other and the mainstream Anglo-Australian national identity. This 'liberal toleration' (Hage, 1998) that lies at the core of Australian multiculturalism sets the ideals for the achievement of multicultural aims to the advantage of the existing national elites. The ability to

achieve any real sense of equality of recognition is hidden behind 'pretend pluralism' (Fleras and Elliot, 2002) which serves as the ideological framework for managing/tolerating difference in Australia.

Three aspects that were significant in the lead up to multiculturalism in Australia include the growth of an 'ethnic lobby', the growing visibility of the non-British population, and wider international moves towards greater human equity through the doctrine of human rights. Lopez (2000) identifies a counter movement to the ideology of assimilation that was present through the 1950s and early 1960s that he calls anti-assimilation. This movement of critique coupled with pressures from the growing ethnic lobby and the pressures from international condemnation of what was being increasingly recognised domestically and internationally as racist immigration policies eventually led to a change in ideological stance from assimilation to a process of 'integration'.

The Labor government of Gough Whitlam came to power in 1973 seeking to reverse racist policies in Australian immigration. Whilst the White Australia policy was formally stopped near the end of the previous Liberal Government, Whitlam saw to it that there was a complete policy turn around to remove racist barriers to immigration and settlement overseeing the change in policy to multiculturalism.⁵⁰

Whilst the ideas of multiculturalism in some ways present a watershed in policy and wider public thinking towards those who were previously characterised as the Other in Australian society, the history of relations between the perceived Anglo-Celtic mainstream and immigrant Others strongly determines the form of contemporary multicultural policy in Australia. As a result, multicultural policy has focused exclusively on the settlement of new migrants. As Jupp notes,

Australian multiculturalism is best understood as an aspect of immigrant settlement policy. It grew out of a concern with settlement rather than with cultural maintenance, which has largely been left to the ethnic communities (Jupp, 2002: 93).

⁵⁰ During this period 1973 to 1975 the assisted passages were opened up to non-Europeans for the first time and all racist barriers to non-British 'aliens' in the entry visa program for short term visitors and tourists were removed.

Essentially, multiculturalism at the national level has had very little to do with culture and a great deal to do with immigrant settlement (Jupp, 2002: 121).

Whilst the policy basis of Australian multiculturalism was rooted in the Whitlam government from 1973 to 1975, the first official definition of multiculturalism was produced by the Australian Ethnic Affairs Council (EAC) in 1977 in the report 'Australia as a Multicultural Society' (AEAC, 1977). The report concludes with a commitment to 'cultural pluralism' stating:

What we believe Australia should be working towards is not a oneness, but a unity, not a similarity, but a composite, not a melting pot but a voluntary bond of dissimilar people sharing a common political and institutional structure (in Jupp, 2002: 86).⁵¹

The council itself was a product of the conservative Fraser government as a part of its continuation of a policy-based multicultural ideal. The EAC was one of the important agencies behind the development of multiculturalism. It is important to note at this point that, in contrast to the Canadian case below, group rights were wholly subordinated to individual rights in Australian multiculturalism from the outset. Members of the council were not considered to be representatives of interest groups, but considered as individuals (Jupp, 2000: 90), thus focusing on individual equality rather than communal recognition as the cornerstone of Australian multiculturalism. The definition of multiculturalism produced by the EAC, principally drafted by Jerzy Zubrzycki and Jean Martin (1978, 1981) from the Australian National University, based as it was on the principle of 'cultural pluralism',⁵² emphasised the importance

⁵¹ According to Jon Stratton, the term 'multiculturalism' first appeared in the Australian context in a speech by the Jewish commentator Walter Lippmann (Stratton, 1995: 40), but its most important early articulation was in the form of a speech by the Immigration Minister for the Whitlam Government, Al Grassby, entitled *A Multi-Cultural Society for the Future* (Grassby, 1973). Lopez notes "Although one can not be precise, the term 'multiculturalism' entered Australian political discourse to describe certain sets of ideas at the end of the 1960s. During the first term of the Whitlam Labor Government ... some of these ideas, and accompanying policy options, were officially referred to under the heading 'multi-cultural society'. Other terms like 'ethnic pluralism', 'cultural pluralism', and 'family of the nation' were also used until multiculturalism achieved predominant currency by 1975" (Lopez, 2000: 2-3). Additionally, the allegorical form of the national family was set within the historical form of the British 'national family' (Davidson, 1997 in Castles *et al.*, 1998).

⁵² Stratton has commented that Australian multiculturalism in some ways mirrors the cultural pluralism of the USA. The cultural pluralism that was the focus of immigration policies in the United States from the 1920s calls for an acceptance of an individual's right to cultural maintenance in private, whilst maintaining a public allegiance to the forms and institutions of 'the American way' (1998: 68). In trading the acceptability of public cultural diversity for political and legal conformity, the normalised American cultural pluralism has entrenched the white elite as the controllers of power in the political

of the liberal equality of individuals. The ‘voluntary bond of dissimilar people’ ensured that group affiliations were subsidiary to individual rights, a point that is still stressed in the present.

In Australia, multicultural policy has remained predominantly in the hands of the administrators of immigration policy. This is in contrast to the administration of Canadian multiculturalism which has been subject to ‘mainstreaming’ beyond an exclusivist immigrant focus. As James Jupp notes,

From the beginning, Canadian multiculturalism accepted that cultures had relevance beyond the immigration generation. This was not so obviously the case in Australia, where responsibility for multiculturalism has rested for all but nine of the last thirty years with the Immigration Department (2002: 83).

Built as it is on the history of separation between a constructed Anglo-Celtic majority and the ethnic migrant minorities, Australian multiculturalism has been restricted in its application across the breadth of society. In recent years, this restriction has become even more pronounced under the conservative federal government. Following the 1996 federal election, one of John Howard’s first acts of state was to abolish the Office of Multicultural Affairs, moving federal responsibility for multiculturalism from its central place in the Office of the Prime Minister to place it, once again, under the guardianship of the immigration ministry.⁵³ The resultant Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs clearly represents in structural form the perceived relevance of the policy of multiculturalism to the conservative government. The subsequent move, following the 2001 election to include indigenous affairs in the expanded DIMIA (Department of Immigration, Multiculturalism and Indigenous Affairs), further emphasised the peripheralisation of these ‘problem’ issues (of difference from the centre) away from any involvement in the central functioning of Anglo-Celtic Australian society.

The continued focus of Australian multicultural policy on the management of the short term integration of migrants, and in particular, non-English speaking

and legal, and thus also economic, spheres through the support of an unquestioned Anglo-centric moral order to which all must conform.

⁵³ Howard also abolished the productive Bureau of Immigration, Multicultural and Population Research shortly after, leaving no government body involved in systematic research on issues of diversity.

background (NESB) migrants, has produced a 'multiculturalism for them' mentality that separates the processes of inclusion of particular minority groups, the recently arrived migrants, from the questions of inclusion and exclusion that circulate throughout other possible 'communities'. The continued focus of multiculturalism on issues of housing, language training and employment programs aimed at migrants in their initial settlement period in Australia, restricts the multicultural to an ethnic periphery. It is not only the assumed majority Anglo-Celtic identity that is reified as a static 'end point', untouched by multiculturalism. The second generation, existing beyond the settlement process, are also outside of the reach of Australian multiculturalism.

4.3 Canadian Multiculturalism: Mainstreaming Visibility

On the 8th of October 1971, Canadian Prime Minister Pierre Elliot Trudeau announced a new federal policy of multiculturalism for Canada. Since that time, multiculturalism as policy has formed a background to a raft of initiatives that have centred on the place of ethnic identity in a modern Canada. Whilst the status of these two nations, Canada and Australia, as New World immigration reception nations indicates a similar trajectory in their relationships to diversity within the nation, there are important divergences which outline contextual differences between the two nations that have influenced both the form of multicultural policies and, subsequently, the contemporary relationships between majority and minority groupings within the nation.

The founding conditions for multiculturalism in Canada are implicitly tied to the relationship between the English and French national groups, the 'charter' groups, in the Canadian nation (Li, 1999: 150). The single most important influence on the development of Canadian multiculturalism has been the bi-cultural status of Canada.

4.3.1 Bi-cultural and Bi-lingual

The 'white' history of Canada is one of two distinct trajectories linked to the two colonial Empires of France and Britain. The first permanent European settlement was established by the French at what is now Montreal in 1608, some 150 years before the

British established a permanent settlement in Canada. The French have maintained this continuity through to the present day in the areas of eastern Canada covered primarily by the province of Quebec. Following on from the growth of French settlement, sustained British migration during the 100 years leading up to Canadian confederation in 1867 ensured that two distinct European groups were in existence in Canada at the time of The British North America Act (1867).⁵⁴ The Act legalised the claims of the two European migrant groups to continuing rights to the perpetuation of cultural privileges such as separate languages, and established in law the bi-national character of the modern Canadian nation (Driedger, 1996: 68).⁵⁵

The historical focus of Canadian immigration on white European sources parallels the 'White Australia' aims of Australian immigration. The dominance of the two founding nations of Britain and France, whilst problematising the notion of a unitary Canada, ensured that white Eurocentric immigration was a core intention.⁵⁶ In the period immediately prior to, and following the, Second World War, the understanding of Canadian demographic reality was increasingly seen in terms of a 'cultural mosaic'. Interestingly, the use of the term cultural mosaic was as much to do with noting the increasing presence of migrants from 'non-traditional', that is, 'white' European, sources, as it was to do with distinguishing Canada from the United States, where the 'melting pot' was used to describe the philosophy of minority incorporation (Wargon, 2000: 24).

The demands of a legally inscribed duality of national cultures came to a head following the growth of 'other' cultural/ethnic groups following World War Two. The socio-economic needs created by the Second World War were satisfied by large scale immigration post-war. Demand for suitable white European immigrants soon outstripped supply, just as was the case for Australia and, by the early 1960s, the

⁵⁴ At this stage Canada included only the four original eastern provinces – Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. Manitoba was the fifth in 1870 whilst Newfoundland was the last province to be incorporated into the confederation in 1949 (<http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/>, accessed: 15th September, 2004).

⁵⁵ The census of 1871 indicated that the British and French charter groups made up almost 92% of the 3.5 million population (60.6% British; 31.3% French) of what then made up the Canadian Confederation. By 1991, this had fallen to 51% (28% British; 23% French) (Driedger, 1996).

⁵⁶ Just as in Australia, the assumption of a white history is further challenged by migration of groups such as the Chinese and Japanese as labourers in the late 19th and early 20th century. See also the work of Kay Anderson on the Chinese and the formation of Chinatown in Vancouver (Anderson, 1991).

changing demographic structure of immigration, now including significant non-traditional sources, led to inevitable change in policy. In 1962, the 'white-only' immigration policy was scrapped in lieu of policy based less on race due in part to the perceived international pressures from bodies such as the United Nations, significantly changing the composition of immigration to Canada (Hawkins, 1988: 12). It was also due to significant internal pressures. As the demographic nature of Canadian society was changing due to immigration, a new realisation was occurring in French speaking Canada. The steady increase in the proportions of English speaking immigrants to Canada compared to the French had been slowly eroding the confidence of the French Canadian population. This anxiety led to an intensification of French nationalism culminating in the appearance of the Parti Quebecois in the early 1960s, which in turn led up to the period known as the 'Quiet Revolution' in Quebec. Through the Parti Quebecois the French speaking majority in Quebec, as representative of one of the two nationally inscribed charter groups, sought greater recognition in the face of the increase in the status of English as the more dominant Canadian identity, particularly concerning English as the 'national' language, and particularly amongst the majority of newer migrants.

In an attempt to settle French-British tensions, the Pearson government appointed a royal commission in 1963 to investigate the ongoing status of the two charter groups – the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, (the B&B Commission) (Hawkins, 1988: 16). The terms of the B&B Commission were to determine what modifications to public institutions would be necessary to ensure a better reflection of the bilingual and bicultural nature of the nation, whilst at the same time recognising the contributions of other groups to national identity. Breton considers the B&B Commission, and the subsequent move to multiculturalism, as an act of political expediency driven not by a need to recognise minority groups as increasingly important members of the population, but rather to place other migrant groups as a convenient wedge between the established charter nations (1988: 35).

The recognition of a 'third force' of ethnic minorities competing for inclusion within the nation with the charter groups can thus be argued to be less about the rights of recognition and legitimacy and more about diffusing the aspirations of the Parti Quebecois. Through the processes of the B&B Commission, and later through the

move to multiculturalism, the calls for greater recognition of French Canada were heard whilst at the same time their secessionist claims were undermined by the acceptance of the legitimacy of claims for minority recognition.⁵⁷

The B&B Commission, whilst focused on how to further strengthen the bilingual/bicultural institutional basis of the nation, also made sixteen recommendations regarding how the rights of ethnic minorities could be better recognised through key institutions (Li, 1999: 151). These recommendations formed the basis of the federal policy of multiculturalism announced in 1971. This direct relationship to the B&B Commission is instructive because it helps to clarify an important distinction between Australian and Canadian multiculturalisms. In Canada, the growth of multicultural policy was more influenced by the contestation over national identity, whereas, in Australia, multiculturalism was more directly related to the need to better overcome barriers to successful migrant settlement. The relationship between Canadian multiculturalism and national identity is nowhere better highlighted than through the fact that Trudeau presented Canada in 1971 with a new program of 'Multiculturalism within a Bilingual framework'.⁵⁸ This relationship to the unity of the nation through a commitment to bilingualism endorses the focus of the B&B Commission on resolving binational tensions as a priority, and only then considering the place of the third force of ethnic minorities. By placing multiculturalism within a bilingual framework, Trudeau set up minority recognition as being firmly subordinated to questions of national unity. However, the binational contestation over 'Canadian' identity ensured the situation of an unquestioned dominance of a central majority, such as is the case in Anglo-Celtic Australia, has been at least partially avoided.

As previously stated, definitions of multiculturalism are contested. This is no less the case for Canada. Multicultural policy has been interpreted in different ways by different interest groups within the state apparatus since its inception in 1971 (Li, 1999: 152). Fleras and Elliot (2002) have called Trudeau's commitment to

⁵⁷ As a further result of these internal and external pressures the government resolved to review immigration policy through an immigration White Paper in 1966. The result of this review was the introduction of the 'point system' (Driedger, 1996: 55). The point system, which came into effect in 1967, completed the elimination of selection of immigrants according to the basis of race or ethnicity, (Taylor, 1988: 58; Kalbach & Kalbach, 1999).

⁵⁸ See Appendix 4 for a summary of the key points of Trudeau's policy.

multiculturalism a ‘pretend pluralism’ that “established a Canada that endorsed diversity in principle without actually changing in any fundamental way how power and resources were distributed” (2002: 56).

The structural response to the multicultural commitment was indicative of attempts to internalise multiculturalism as a core part of Canadian identity. In 1972 the Multiculturalism Directorate was created. It was initially a department within the Secretary of State, unlike the Australian case where multiculturalism was related structurally to immigration from the outset. The Charter of Rights, which came into effect in 1985, included explicit reference to the importance of multiculturalism as a core facet of Canadian national identity. Section 27 stated that the, “Charter shall be interpreted in a manner consistent with the preservation and enhancement of the multicultural heritage of Canadians” (Fleras and Elliot, 2002: 66). With the tabling of Bill C-93, The Multiculturalism Act in 1988,⁵⁹ multiculturalism was now recognised as a central feature of the national identity, ready to fill the void created by a growing realisation of the ‘no official culture’ policy.⁶⁰

What the Act sets out to achieve is the recognition of the centrality of multiculturalism to questions of identity across the whole of Canadian society. Consider this in comparison to the continued emphasis in Australia on the marginal relationship of multiculturalism with immigrant identity.

Whilst policy intentions to include all people in Canada’s multicultural character may have symbolic value, on the ground they are no guarantee of successful implementation and popular support. The decision to move from policy to legislation marks a further symbolic investment in a legitimate multicultural character for Canada and, as will be shown later, at least for some of Vancouver’s second

⁵⁹ See Appendix 3 for summary of the ten elements of the Act.

⁶⁰ Tensions over the denial of a quintessential Canadian identity related to either English or French heritage has resulted in some anxiety over what it means to be a Canadian. In response, the Reform Party and its successor, the Canadian Alliance, have advocated a relegation of ethnicity and culture to the ‘private sphere’, thus emphasising the overriding importance of individual rights (Abu-Laban, 2002: 463). This intention of separating private and public spheres matches the cultural pluralism of the United States, where the public adherence to the core values of American citizenship outweigh the expression of private differences.

generation from an Iranian background, the project of inclusion across society has met with some success.

The irony that has grown out of this further centralisation, or mainstreaming, of multiculturalism within the discussions of national identity and in the institutions of the state is that as multiculturalism has gained more credibility, debates over the form of multiculturalism have become more muted. The institutional acceptance of multiculturalism has tended in some ways to silence the debate on critical multiculturalism – in a way it has become one of the nation’s sacred cows, beyond critique.⁶¹ Even as it gains more political credence, the ‘value’ of multiculturalism is undermined through reductions in budgets and the ‘restructuring’ of resources. At the provincial level, multiculturalism in Quebec has been consistently resisted as antithetical to the ideals of French Canada. And on the other side, the recent change to conservative government in British Columbia has seen the Ministry of Multiculturalism and Immigration disbanded with responsibility for multiculturalism now falling under Department of Aboriginal, Multiculturalism and Immigration, along with seven other departments, within the Ministry of Community, Aboriginal and Women’s Services. The budget for the new department has been halved from \$1 million in 2002 to \$500 000 in 2003, a relatively small sum when compared to the provincial budget for immigration and settlement at \$20 million, and hardly reflective of the supposed ‘centrality’ of multiculturalism to Canadian identity.

Multiculturalism in Canada has grown to be a central feature of an evolving Canadian identity. Unlike in Australia, a unitary core national identity is not a given. The ongoing anxieties over tensions between English and French Canada ensure that debates about the place of the ‘third force’ are not simplistically subordinated to the national mainstream. Yet the reality of questions about exactly what is Canadian identity, still tends to produce an ethnic politics, where ‘visible minorities’ are reproduced as homogeneous entities, passively awaiting the resolution of tensions between the two ‘legitimate’ European actors.

⁶¹ It is against this status as ‘beyond critique’ that the popular success of Neil Bissoondath’s (1994) conservative critique of multiculturalism can be best understood.

4.3.2 Group Rights versus Individual Rights

Canada's institution of group rights in the form of visible minority recognition in conjunction with multiculturalism is worth investigating briefly at this point. Charles Taylor (1992) outlines the debate concerning the best way to achieve equality as the rights of individuals versus the rights of groups. The rights of individuals are built into most Western liberal democracies through the sense of 'difference blindness' where the imposition of constitutions recognise that the state should give no special advantage to any one individual or group over another as this would be a breach of equal treatment. In contrast, the argument for the recognition of difference takes as its starting point the fact that there is no true equality under a system that commands only the recognition of individual rights as this ignores the historical and enduring oppression of particular groups in society – women, the disabled, 'blacks', indigenous groups – by the more powerful majority (Young, 1989, 1990; Taylor, 1992; Kymlicka, 1998, 2001: Part I). Instead Taylor claims there should be a recognition of the disadvantaged status of these oppressed groups, in conjunction with the recognition of individual rights, in order to better achieve individual equality across all sectors of society. In Canadian multiculturalism, the movement towards group rights has been a significant development, manifest particularly through the construction of 'visible minorities'.

The growing unease during the 1970s that multiculturalism was too concerned with cultural retention and not focusing on core structural problems of inclusion/exclusion led to the Special Committee on Participation of Visible Minorities in the early 1980s. The commission's report, *Equality Now*, called for the immediate introduction of a Multiculturalism Act and the creation of a separate Ministry of Multiculturalism in order to overcome some of the institutional limitations facing minorities (Li, 1999: 154; Fleras and Elliot, 2002: 65). The 'visible minority' status related to the groups considered outside the 'biculturalism' framework who were seen to be facing the forefront of racial discrimination – those of non-European origins who were designated racially as 'non-white'. The 1986 Employment Equity Act saw the first legal recognition of 'visible minorities' as one of the designated groups, along with women, indigenous peoples and persons with disabilities, who systematically faced disadvantage in employment. The Act sets out visible minorities as "persons, other

than aboriginal persons, who are non-Caucasian in race and non-white in colour” (Employment and Immigration Canada, 1988, in Karim, 1993: 212).⁶²

This categorisation of national ethnocultural groups into either one of the charter groups or as visible (or non-visible)⁶³ minorities reifies difference set along national lines entrenching lines of separation based on ‘colour’ or ‘race’ that in turn map onto the national boundaries between groups. For example, all Iranians become ‘people of colour’ according to their designation as ‘visible’ minorities, regardless of their self-definition which may relate to ‘Aryan’ whiteness, as will be touched on in Chapters 6 to 8. Additionally, the ‘visible place’ of Iranian migrants and their families is significantly influenced by their designation as visible in the media (see below).

The construction of visible minorities, whilst producing tangible advantages through the imposition of legislative controls in employment and rights, has tended to reify difference between the ‘multicultural’ groups and the rest of Canadian society (Karim, 1993: 214). Regardless of the imposition of group rights the impact of reified national categorisations within multicultural discourses tends towards the separation of the national ‘us’ from the national ‘them’.

4.4 British Multiculturalism: The Postcolonial Racial Divide

The relative success of multiculturalism in Australia and Canada has become a blueprint for minority relations for other countries to emulate as international migration intensifies under the conditions of increasing globalisation. In the British case, multiculturalism has been present in one form or another since the 1970s as a proposed model for the successful understanding of minority/majority relations. Yet, unlike the two ‘multicultural nations’ above, Britain has suffered from a lack of commitment to an enduring policy-based multiculturalism that has served to

⁶² This designation has developed into a definitive ‘list’ of visible minorities to include the following ethnic categories: “Chinese; South Asian (e.g. East Indian, Pakistani, Punjabi, Sri Lankan); Black (e.g. African, Haitian, Jamaican, Somali); Arab/West Asian (e.g. Armenian, Egyptian, Iranian, Lebanese, Moroccan); Filipino; South East Asian (e.g. Cambodian, Indonesian, Laotian, Vietnamese); Latin American; Japanese; Korean; Other” (Statistics Canada, 2004).

⁶³ The categorisation of visible minorities has had the effect of producing ‘non-visible minorities’ from the non-British, non-French, European origin groups, such as the large groups that relate to Ukrainian or German heritage.

undermine attempts to instil a culture of change. The recent report of the ‘Commission on the Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain’ produced by the influential Runnymede Trust and compiled by a distinguished panel of British academics chaired by Lord Bhikku Parekh notes that:

The movement towards a multi-ethnic, multicultural Britain has been decisive. However, it has not been the result of a concerted decision. Nor is it yet an accomplished fact. It has evolved as an unplanned, incremental process – a matter of multicultural drift, not of a conscious policy. Much of the country, including many significant power centres, remains untouched by it (Parekh *et al.*, 2000: 14).

This multicultural drift represents the lack of commitment to systematic cultural change away from the recognition of English identity as an unassailable central core of British identity. In the past the place of the English within the British identity has taken a primary role, producing a Britain which has appeared as “essentially an English nation-state, which happens for odd historical reasons to have Celtic fringes and (more recently) small pockets of non-English settlement” (Parekh *et al.*, 2000: 21).⁶⁴

Whilst the tenor of multicultural projects within Britain are centred on the inclusion of ethnic/racial Others within the bounds of British society, the tensions between ‘English’ and ‘British’ society appear to confound efforts to achieve racial acceptance and ethnic equality. One submission reproduced within the Parekh Report clearly highlights this problematic:

In the current climate ... any failure to identify a positive multicultural English identity ... will be an historical opportunity missed. More cheap shots about the conflation of England and Britain simply will not do as a means of avoiding the question of a separate civic identity for people living in England. ... The key is not fundamentally one of British identity. It is one of English identity and how previous conceptions of English identity have excluded so many people who live in and richly contribute to English society (Parekh, *et al.*, 2000: 8).

⁶⁴ The recent devolution of Wales and Scotland has been a great source of insecurity within Britain, and in particular, in England. The legislative recognition of the importance of the Welsh language and the re-investment in the Gaeltacht in the Republic of Ireland as an important aspect of national culture separating the historical British Others from the English, has led to increasing probing of English (and Welsh, Scottish, Irish) identity.

British identity as an institutional identity, the identity of citizenship, is one that is rendered more open and available for groups marginalised through ethnicity. This inclusion of the Other within the bounds of institutional identity, as British subjects, is often portrayed as a manifestation of liberal equality. However, it is a limited inclusion into a restricted space, one that is controlled by the white English core in much the same way that Hage (1998) talks about the Australian mainstream. Again, as we have seen above for Australia and Canada, migrant identities are tolerated through a ‘pretend pluralism’ which denies full and equal citizenship.⁶⁵ British identity must then be seen as institutional inclusion without the cultural inclusion of English identity.⁶⁶ Indeed, the according of British identity is itself caught up in issues of the post-colonial status of British society. Early migrants to Britain who arrived under the aegis of the British Empire did so carrying British passports to signify themselves as members of the conquered Empire given leave to be in the space of the conqueror. To be British is to be part of the Imperial realm whilst to be English is to be sitting on the throne. This postcolonial theme renders more complex the inclusion/exclusion of ‘minorities’ and increases the theoretical distance between the ‘white’ English and the ‘black’ colonial. As Paul Gilroy reminds us, “There ain’t no black in the Union Jack” (Gilroy, 1987). Whiteness is nowhere explicitly stated as a necessity for inclusion in British society, however, there is a tacit understanding that English identity is racially coded as a ‘white’ space (Parekh *et al.*, 2000: 38-9).

In Britain, multiculturalism has been historically framed within a discourse of post-war race-relations (Hesse, 2000), where the growth of multicultural thought and praxis is inextricably linked, at least in common thought, to the immigration of ‘non-white’ immigrants into the white, British, national space following the end of the Second World War.⁶⁷ This appearance of the non-white, non-English, British citizen, within the national space deterritorialised the nation (Deleuze and Guattari, 1988). The reterritorialisation of the nation is expressed through the resultant contestation

⁶⁵ The citizenship granted through the forms of liberal equality does not guarantee equality of treatment. Will Kymlicka notes, “it is increasingly accepted in many countries that some forms of cultural difference can only be accommodated through special legal or constitutional measures, above and beyond the common rights of citizenship” (1995: 26).

⁶⁶ See Chapter 6 for a discussion of the distinctive ‘Iranian’ cases.

⁶⁷ The journey of the Empire Windrush, bringing Caribbean migrants to Britain arriving on the 22nd June 1948, marks the symbolic beginning of the modern post-colonial phase in Britain centred on the presence of non-white migrants.

over space and the legitimacy of belonging, which in the case of post World War Two Britain forced the post-colonial condition upon the centre of the Empire.

The multiculturalism that grew up in the 1970s and 1980s in Britain was limited through its subordination to the importance of race which indeed led to a multiculturalism centred not on ethnic pluralism, as is the case in Australia and Canada, but on the assumed existence of naturally discrete, biological and culturally incommensurate communities known as ‘races’ (Hesse, 2000: 11).⁶⁸ Hence, the road to the multicultural becomes more complex as we must deal with the progression beyond a reliance on the limitations of race discourse through an engagement with the historically constituted structures of institutionalised racist governmentality and media driven populism.⁶⁹

The difficulty faced in the British context in order to overcome the institutionalised nature of racism within the conception of the multicultural is problematised by the inertia present in these very structures (Parekh *et al.*, 2000: 11). And these racist assumptions have ultimately shown their intransigence through the inability to attend to the successive generations attempting to find a way into an English identity, which ultimately remains closed.⁷⁰ The lack of reflexivity of British institutions remains apparent in their ongoing difficulty in dealing with, amongst various other relations, the “successive generations of diaspora-thinking, western speaking descendents of colonial migrants and those from former colonies ... (as they remain) entangled in defining the meaning of their place in the nation” (Hesse, 2000: 16). This unsettled nature of English identity is a good place to start considering a future for a multicultural Britain.⁷¹

⁶⁸ Hesse (2000) has identified several major limitations in the race-relations narrative that have left a need to return to a multiculturalism less readily cajoled into a restricted sense of the multicultural through ‘race’ discourse (2000: 12). He calls for a conceptual shift which offers the opportunity to recast the multicultural as a result of a post-colonial, rather than a post-war, historicity, thereby reaffirming the role of the history of Empire, and its subsequent dissolution, within the processes of the present.

⁶⁹ The Macpherson Report (1999) highlighted the ‘institutional racism’ prevalent in an important national institution, the police force, and in particular, the Metropolitan Police Service of London.

⁷⁰ See Chapter 6.

⁷¹ The Parekh Report highlighted seven themes that are ‘unsettling’ Britain. These included the impacts of the EU and devolution as mentioned above, along with the impacts of globalisation, the decline of Britain as a global power, the ‘end of Empire’, post-war migration, and the rapid advances of social pluralism (Parekh *et al.*, 2000: 23-6).

Whilst, Abu-Laban notes that, “John Rex (1997) asserts that ‘multiculturalism’ has become a new goal for British race relations” (2002: 463), he remains wary of the possibility of the systematic mistreatment of minorities under multiculturalism. This wariness towards a more complete institution of multicultural programs is indicative of a continuation of a British pretend pluralism undermined by the imagination of the threat to social cohesion represented by the non-white, non-English. The Parekh Report warns of this continuing fact, calling for a more sustained effort to overcome racism and phobias about cultural difference, which are tied to wider social, economic, educational and cultural disadvantage (2000: 36). It reminds us that,

Unless these deep-rooted antagonisms to racial and cultural difference can be defeated in practice, as well as symbolically written out of the national story, the idea of a multicultural post-nation remains an empty promise (Parekh, *et al.*, 2000: 38-9).

At the same time, in some ways the relationship of English identity to British identity is uniquely poised for a more complete articulation of multiculturalism, as the unassailable ‘white’ English core encounters the diversity of the contemporary British citizenry. This will not be a simple task, but several recent events have made the possibility more plausible. Foremost amongst these present changes are the recent moves towards a devolved government in Scotland and Wales. The question of the overriding centrality of English identity as representative of British identity is challenged through the increased recognition of the legitimacy of both Scotland’s and Wales’ ability to determine their own political destiny within the framework of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. This process of devolution has its contemporary roots in the appearance of another, even greater, geopolitical challenge to Britain/England – the ratification of the European Union (EU). The EU has consistently been perceived by large sectors of the British public as antithetical to an autonomous ‘island’ culture. The Schengen Agreement⁷² (1985) opening the borders of Europe to free labour movement, and the recent acceptance of the Euro as

⁷² The Schengen Agreement commenced on 26th March, 1995, opening the borders of Belgium, France, Germany, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Spain and Portugal. Other nations that have subsequently been included in the Schengen Agreement are Greece, Italy, Austria, Iceland, Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden, making a total of 15 nations as of 25th March, 2001. The United Kingdom sought to enter into some aspects of Schengen in March 1999, namely police and legal cooperation in criminal matters, the fight against drugs and the Schengen Information System (SIS). Approval was reached on the 29th May 2000. (<http://europa.eu.int/scadplus/leg/en/lvb/l33020.htm>, accessed 13th May, 2003).

the currency of Europe on January 1st, 2001 by the majority of the EU nations marked moments of significant pressure for the British/English identity. This resistance to change is manifested through the support for the English icons that are reproduced as the cornerstones of British identity. The currency and the Imperial system of weights and measures, have become the loci of popular resistance to change. These icons construct solidarity over English identity that forms the imaginary space of the nation. “They not only express solidarity but also construct a solidarity that was not there before” (Parekh, *et al.*, 2000: 20).

The threat of outsiders taking advantage of Schengen to make their way eventually to Britain, usually couched as an ‘employment issue’, is a manifestation of the anxiety over the inevitable miscegenation of the ‘English’ identity. All this appears to deny the fact of an existent diversity in Britain. The ‘threat to Englishness’ silences the Other inside Britain as the already unwanted and unnatural visitor (regardless of their status as British citizens). As a result of this increased tension concerning the movement of people into the imagined homogeneous cultural space, increased pressure has been placed on immigration, and, in particular, the movement of asylum seekers through ‘Europe’ and into Britain.⁷³

The degree of tension that exists in the British environment between the English core and the threat of diverse (racialised) minorities has opened a wider front of issues concerning the place of ethnic and religious identities within the nation. The lack of consistent political commitment to a policy-based engagement with diversity, as in Canada and Australia, has meant that wherever the issue of diversity arises, the threat of difference to the ongoing social cohesion of society is invoked, creating, in many cases, a downward spiral of tensions, that have many times over the last thirty years led to outbreaks of violence between two normalised ‘sides’ in British society: the ‘ethnic minority’ identities and the intrinsically legitimate ‘white’ English identity. The levels of these national anxieties play themselves out across a range of issues.

⁷³ The recent pushes to implement a program of centralisation of asylum seekers within Britain to rurally located holding centres as a part of the program of refugee ‘dispersal’, is a move that mirrors prior moves by another ‘island nation’, Australia.

In all three nations, multiculturalism is played out against the distinctive national context in a differential manner that, collectively, converges to a similar position – that the processes of the recognition of diversity through multiculturalism are limited to national discourses of belonging, normalising a threatening nationally inscribed migrant ‘them’ in contrast to the homogenously constituted (white) national ‘us’. These relations serve to structure the nature of national Iranian ‘community’, against which the agency to express more complex individual and group identities is arrayed (see Chapter 6).

4.5 *Representing Iran: The Power of the Media*

In this section we will focus on one particular field of influence that sets, and is set by, the contexts against which the negotiation of individual and group identity are made; that of media representations. The media is one of the disjunctural fields of influence (following Appadurai, 1990) that acts upon, and is the context through which, the second generation negotiate ‘communal’ identities. It is in the media that the discursive interaction between national identities and their others are played out (Billig, 1995). Hence we can think of the media as one of the contexts that influences, fixes, and possibly questions, the hegemony of national identities.

Media representations of individuals as nationals or migrants, as criminals or victims, or nations and communities as deviant or utopian, are intimately implicated in the processes of production and reproduction of images of community, and it is through the media that some of the expression of dominant ‘national’ power relations makes itself apparent. The Others against which the nation is defined are constituted through the media producing a ‘fictive ethnicity’ (Balibar, in Jakubowicz *et al*, 1994: 32). As a mouthpiece for dominant views, the mainstream⁷⁴ media in particular, creates communities in its image through the specific processes of representation, both textual and visual. In the three city sites, the selective use of text and, more specifically for this analysis, image constructs a communal image of ‘Iranians’ and other ‘national migrant’ communities. How these processes take place will be discussed briefly

⁷⁴ Mainstream media is used subjectively in this case to mean the large circulation English language press and the public and private free-to-air television channels. ‘Multicultural’ or ‘migrant’ channels such as SBS in Australia compete with the mainstream media but are better thought of as specialist services with an ambivalent relationship to the mainstream.

below, and referenced against a limited sample of signifying images used in the press.⁷⁵

The media has the power to influence the way people see themselves and others through the particular representations they convey (Hall, 1981; van Dijk, 1987: 40). As noted by Mahtani (2001), “it is important to ask how media representations of minorities affect the construction of identities”. She quotes Henry’s work on the criminalisation of race in the print media in Toronto, “that it is imperative to research media-minority relations because the media play a crucial role in the creation of social identities” (Henry, 1999, in Mahtani, 2001: 2). The second generation, like all individuals in society, respond to representations of themselves and others within a complex contextual field of cultural processes. As will be shown in the chapters that follow, for the children of Iranians living in the diaspora, the media creates a concern over the expression of identity through the specific types of images and texts it uses to represent Iran and Iranians. This concern over identity causes individuals to compromise and negotiate identity in a particular way, responding directly or indirectly to the power of representations in the media to convey a particular message about ‘what an Iranian is?’ The media constructs an expectation amongst the non-Iranian, mainstream, and also, to an extent amongst other ‘migrants’ of what an Iranian is, and what Iran is like, such that the decision to express one’s identity as Iranian is taken within the context of what the Other thinks (or is assumed to think) constitutes an ‘Iranian’ (see Chapter 7). Whilst media representations inform the construction of meaning by wider non-Iranian audiences, they also, as a result, set up a reflexive schema within which ‘Iranians’ construct meaning from representations, which subsequently informs how they construct a self-image for (re)presentation to others (be they ‘Iranian’ or not). How this process takes place, and how the individuals in this study responded to these community constructions will be investigated in more detail in Chapters 6 to 8.⁷⁶

As discussed, the ‘choice’ of what identity a second generation individual takes is not made in a value-free social environment. Decisions over self-identity are contingent

⁷⁵ A more detailed analysis is found in McAuliffe (forthcoming).

⁷⁶ See in particular Chapter 7 with regards to the conflation of Iran and Islam and the implications for identity negotiations.

on the available social space for their expression. That is, decisions over the negotiation of identity are made by and for the individual as agency over self-representation are set within wider networks of understanding the Other. The media is one such structuring force, which, through representation, conveys particular ‘preferred meanings’ to society at large (Hall, 1996). It is against these ‘structures’ that the individual seeks to claim agency. The negotiation of, and contestation over, individual identity that is the focus of much of the discussion in Chapters 6 to 8 needs to be therefore predicated on a discussion of media representations of Iran and Iranians so we may understand the context against which these negotiations are set. Through investigating the media we can analyse the social framework that is both constituted by, and constitutive of, the practices of media agenda-setting⁷⁷ set within national multiculturalisms (Louw, 2001: 19).

4.5.1 From Visible Minorities to the invisible majority?

The media as a conveyor of fictive ethnicities is implicated in questions of recognition or the visibility of ‘community’. Beginning from the position of the political manifestation of visibility present in the Canadian notion of visible minorities discussed above, it is possible to problematise the act of ‘being seen’, and hence categorised, through everyday actions and interactions with individuals and society at large, and particularly through the mediation of imagery, for example, in the mainstream press. Visible minorities, as a legislated list of groups in the Canadian case, are given preferential treatment as ‘seen’ groups. Their very visibility in the Canadian social context is both a measure of their social inequality – the product of racist exclusions based on ‘the way they look’ – as well as a signifier by which preferential group rights may be accorded. Thus the visibility in this context is both constituted by, and constitutive of, the social and political context.

Yet this particular ‘visibility’ is constructed in an almost biological determinist framework. The groups who are listed as visible, are seen through their difference to an assumed normative whiteness. Their skin colour, the shape of their eyes, the clothes that they wear, the food that they eat, the Gods that they worship are all

⁷⁷ This agenda-setting is both formal and informal as decisions on content are made both consciously (e.g. editing) and unconsciously (e.g. self-censorship).

visibly different to the norm. Hence, under an adjusted model of liberal equality driven by multiculturalism their difference becomes a marker of politically sanctioned acceptance (Hage's 'toleration'). This acceptance and advantage is designed to counteract the inequality in power relations and the racist exclusions driven by these self same markers of visible inclusion. The difficulty here is that in adjusting the power relations surrounding acceptance and toleration, difference is reified. In this sense they must be 'seen' as a visible minority before they can become 'invisible' as an 'equal' member of the polity.

In a similar vein to earlier arguments, beyond the political economy of disadvantage that the project of visible minority recognition aims at alleviating, the path from visibility to invisibility can also be seen as a proto-assimilationist project that reifies a central ocular position from which these minorities are 'seen'. The action of rendering these 'minorities' visible is a subjectification by an objective observer whose position is not subject to change. It sets up once again a cohort of natural white citizens who are stationary and the epicentre of change by the tolerated non-white minorities constructing a choice in the Canadian context between being 'visible' and being 'Canadian'.

From this problematising of the policy-based discourses of visibility in Canada, we can extend our vision of difference to the normalising constructions of visibility in the media. These are not unconnected, as visibility in the media has been linked to the normalising of practices of exclusion (Parekh *et al.*, 2000; Richardson, 2004). In the following discussion we will look briefly at the constructions of visible Iranian communities, and what impacts these have on the process of negotiating not only a sense of self and group affiliation, but also the extent to which they facilitate inclusion in wider society.

4.5.2 Photojournalism and the Image

Extending on the visual metaphor, Gillian Rose asserts that one aspect of media representations that has been inadequately dealt with is the impact of photographs in the construction of meaning (Rose: 2001: 190-1). Despite the contemporary recognition of the photographic image as a mediated representation of reality

(Barthes, 1972; Hall, 1996; Rose, 2001) the photographic image in journalism is imbued with the power of objective evidence. The inclusion of images in articles produces a testament to the ‘witnessing’ of events. In this sense, photographs are used as supporting evidence for the claims of a ‘professional norm of objectivity’ in journalism (Richardson, 2004: 45). Yet, the claims to objectivity in reporting have been shown to be fallacious with a ‘value-free’ or ‘unbiased’ journalism tending to reproduce dominant power relations where ‘balance’ equates to ‘white (male) values’ (Santos, in Richardson, 2004: 44). This implication of objectivity in the extant power relations of the media environment tends towards the continuation of “an imbalance between the representation of the already privileged on the one hand, and the already underprivileged on the other” (Fowler, in Richardson, 2004: 45).

Beyond the inconsistencies underlying claims to objectivity in the profession of journalism in general, the claims to objective witnessing imbued in the image itself have been shown to be inadequate. The constructed nature of photographs as truth claims has been widely discussed in theories of representation. These claims to the reproduction of reality in the image have been questioned across the threefold reality of the visual image; the image production, the actual claims of the image itself, and the images consumption (Hall, 1996; Barthes, 1972; Rose, 2001: 17-28). Gillian Rose, in her extensive survey of visual methodologies states, “All visual representations are made in one way or another, and the circumstances of their production may contribute towards the effect they have” (2001: 17). In production of an image, objectivity is interrupted by questions over who took the image; why did they chose a particular composition, and, in the case of journalism, who selected the image for publication and why; and, in a related sense, why was the photograph taken at all (as opposed to any other). The questions over these selective criteria of the production of photographs imply a decision-making process which can be said to be embedded in networks of power relations (Murdoch, in Richardson, 2004: 38). The image itself is made up of components or elements influenced by the different technologies in use (e.g. whether the image is in black and white or colour) or influenced by particular social practices (e.g. is the photo to be sold for commercial use, or is it a tourist photograph?). Of great importance to an image’s own effects is its ‘compositionality’, the arrangement of the elements within the frame of the image, and what this tells us about the images’ ‘way of seeing’ (Rose, 2001: 24).

Finally, the truth claims of an image are interrupted by the contingency inherent in the consumption of the image. An image may be read in multiple ways by its various 'audiences'. Rose notes that there are two aspects of the social modality of 'audiencing': the social practices of spectating and the social identities of the spectator (2001: 25-6). In the former she implies that images in a newspaper are viewed differently to images in a book or on an art gallery wall. The claims to objectivity that underlie journalistic practice thus can be said to imbue the newspaper image with 'factual' depth through the expectation of professional objectivity in journalism. The second aspect of audiencing, the social identities of the spectators, will be discussed in more detail in later chapters where the different ways the second generation read the images in the media will become part of the wider discussion of the negotiation of individual and group identities. As Parekh, *et al.* note,

Any one news story is interpreted by the reader or viewer within the context of a larger narrative, acting as a kind of filter or template. If the larger narrative is racist ... then the story is more likely to be interpreted in a racist or majority-biased way, regardless of the conscious intentions of reporters, journalists and headline-writers (2000: 169).

Meaning is produced through the media through the distinctive readings of individual viewers, whose own context rules their understanding, interpretation and negotiation of the representation. Their reading makes it their own, deriving meaning through their subjective position (Hall, 1996). Hall (1980, 1996) notes that the preferred reading⁷⁸ of the image is interrupted by the audience through the contingent act of consumption of the representation. The image means nothing until it is read, a wholly context-driven and contingent process.

4.5.3 Iranian 'Muslims' in the media

The media plays a significant role in imagining the nation (Anderson, 1983). Debates about the form of national identity and the legitimacy of citizenship status are constantly played out through the media. It is here that questions about inclusion and exclusion within the nation find their voice. To date there has been little direct research on the form of media representations of Iranians. Hamid Naficy's, "The

⁷⁸ Preferred meaning in this sense is the intention that results from the decision processes of image production (i.e. selection, composition, editing, publication, distribution, etc.).

Making of Exile Cultures” (1993), is a comprehensive study of the production of diasporic Iranian media coming out of Los Angeles during the 1980s and early 1990s. Whilst Naficy’s work establishes Los Angeles as the centre of global diasporic Iranian media production, it is limited to the production of ‘ethnic media’ representations and does not deal with mainstream constructions of Iran or Iranians. At the other end of the spectrum, Flora Keshishian (2000) has undertaken an autobiographical study of the construction of meaning from mainstream media representations of Iran and Iranians. Where Naficy is concerned with the production of (ethnic) media imagery, Keshishian looks at the construction of meaning (through the process of acculturation). Neither deal directly with the form of mainstream media representations.

The representations of Iranians in the media centre on particular media frames that essentialise Iran and Iranians. International images of Iran often construct an inscrutable Muslim ‘threat’ (Richardson, 2004; Poole, 2001; Hippler, 1995; Hippler and Lueg, 1995). Figure 4.1 and 4.2 show two images from an article on the rise of the internet in Iran in the IT section of *The Guardian’s* London edition. In them we can see examples of some standard themes in representation of Iran. The article opens with an illustration of a woman in purdah sitting at a computer. She is rendered anonymous through her wearing of the *hijab*, stripped of agency; a point neatly juxtaposed in this image against her use of the computer and by extension the internet, all neatly packaged in an illustration. On the next page we have the significant image of an anonymous woman walking under the ‘glare’ of the ever present Ayatollah Khomeini. And in the corner, the subject of the article represented by a token shot of software for sale in an Iranian shop. This use of images of women, often out of context, is typical of the way a media frame has been built up around Iran.

Differences in reporting exist between the tabloid press and the broadsheets. Whilst the overtly racist reporting of earlier periods may no longer be socially and politically acceptable in the media (Parekh, *et al.*, 2000: 170) more subtle constructions of negativity are common. As noted by Richardson, the conservative tabloid press is not alone in constructing a negative portrayal of issues surrounding ‘migrants’, and in

particular ‘Muslim migrants’. The broadsheets sampled in this analysis⁷⁹ exhibited an ‘inferential racism’ (Hall, 1981) that normalises difference whilst explicitly denying more overt racism. The more ‘reasonable’ approach to the ‘natural’ differences between groups in the broadsheets protects this ‘upmarket’ reporting from racist critiques (Richardson, 2004: 52-3).

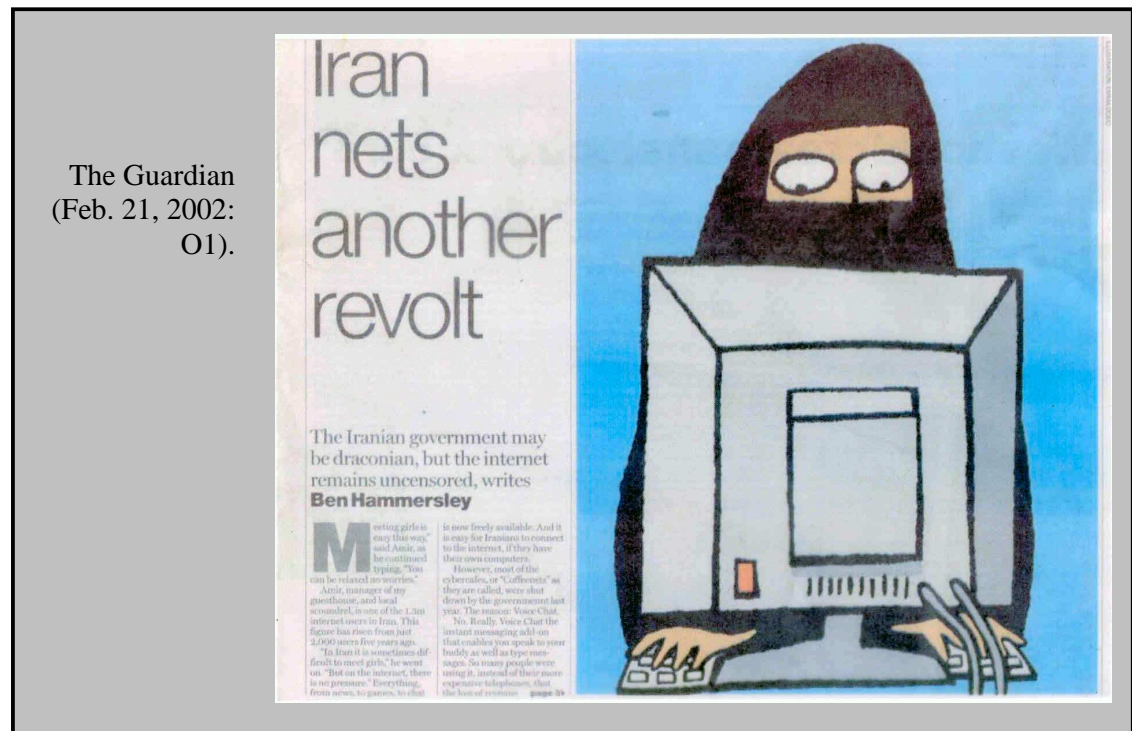


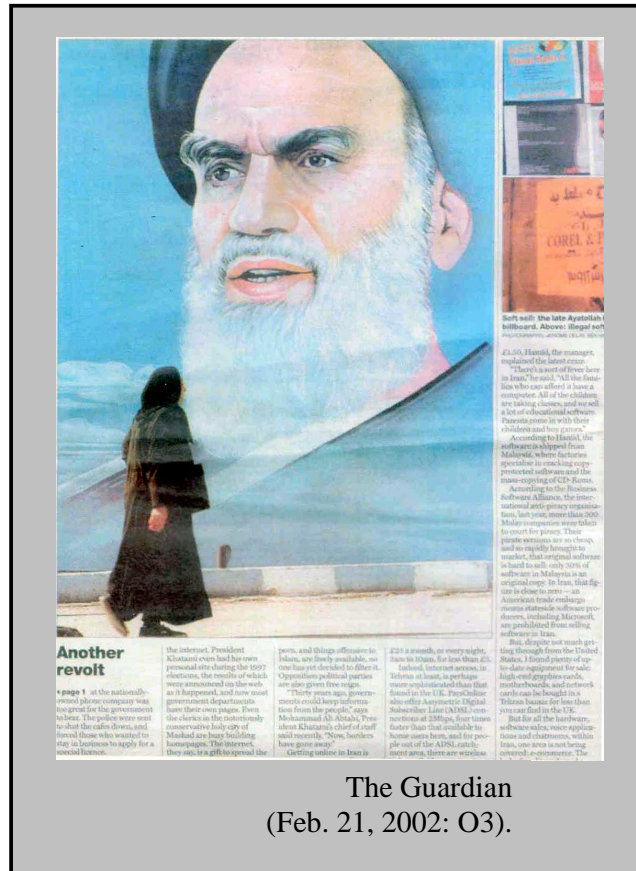
Figure 4.1: Illustration of woman in the *chador*.

In Figure 4.3 the endless sea of blurry faces unified by the signifying *hijab*, constructs a metaphorical extension that these are the faces of all Iranian women, and in turn that all Iranian women are Muslim. The focus of the image is clearly marked out as the poster of the presidential candidate, President Khatami. Finally, the accompanying caption reinforces the preferred meaning by referring to “Women and youth” producing the mass of women as anonymous and homogenised, universally subject to the repression of the *mullahs*. Finally, Figure 4.4 from the Sydney Morning Herald shows the use of the signifying anonymous Muslim female completely out of context accompanying an article on the imminent arrival of IAEA inspectors in Tehran. All of these images represent the natural conflation of Iranian and Muslim that was common

⁷⁹ See Chapter 3, Appendix 5 and McAuliffe (forthcoming).

in the sample, particularly through the use of visual texts. These images serve to construct a monolithic Islamic Iran that structures popular understandings of Iranians – a construct that belies reality (see Chapter 5 and the ethnographic analysis to follow). This construction of distinctive Iranian media frames dominates visual representations in the press, often contradicting the more liberal tone of the accompanying article.

Figure 4.2: Woman walking in front of mural of Ayatollah Khomeini.



The Guardian
(Feb. 21, 2002: O3).

Much work has been undertaken on Muslim representations in the mainstream Western media following the seminal work of Edward Said (1978, 1997), and this intersects, both directly and through implication, with the focus on Iranian representations. The contemporary demonisation of Muslims in the Western media has been well noted through research (see Parekh *et al.*, 2000: 167-72; Richardson, 2001, 2001a, 2004; Hafez, 2000, 2000a; Poole, 2000; Bell, 1992: 78-9; Brasted, 2001; Wilkins and Downing, 2002; Macmaster and Lewis, 1998; Lueg, 1995; Glass, 1998; El-Farra, 1996; Runnymede Trust, 1997). Much of this research, which is part of a

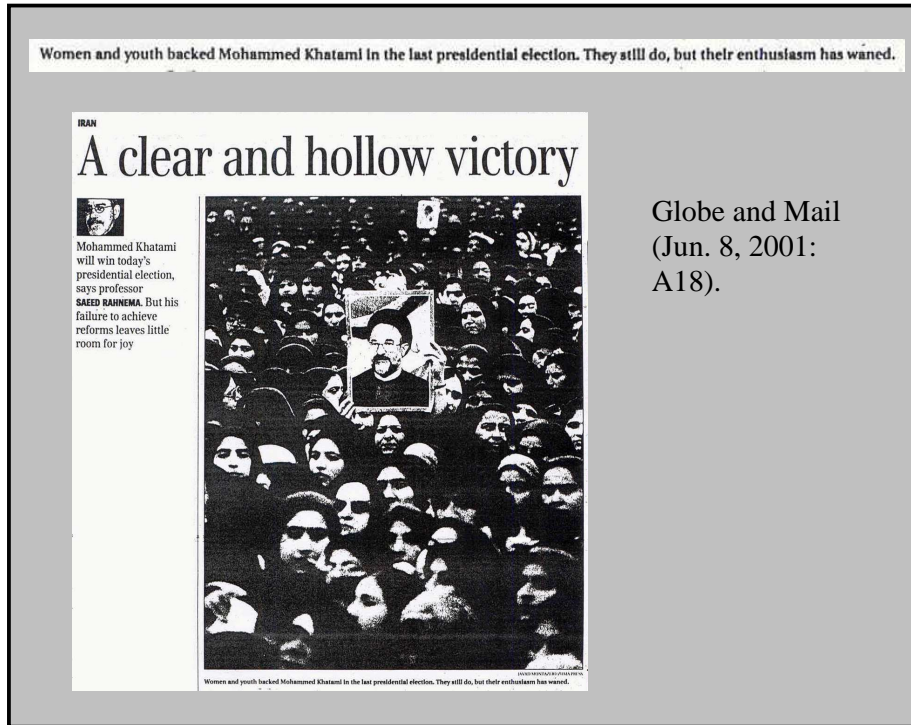


Figure 4.3: Image from Iranian election 2000 (used in later article).



Figure 4.4: Use of photographs in the media (SMH, Nov. 12, 2003: 12).

wider discourse of racism in the press, centres on the construction of a monolithic Islam set in contest with the West, broadly within Said's discourse of Orientalism, and concurrent with critiques of Huntington's (1993) flawed thesis of a Clash of Civilisations. In many cases, the nation forms a lens for both the research and the nature of the dialectic construction itself, setting, for example, the British national context against the Muslim threat as described through the constructed terms 'Islamaphobia' and 'British-Muslims' (Runnymede Trust, 1997; Poole, 2002; Richardson, 2004).

These contextualised research projects understand 'the West' through the local national scale producing instead 'the Western nation' versus Islam mirroring Huntington's 'religious civilisation' focus. This research is distinctive in that rather than starting with Islam as the dialectically opposed correlate to the Western nation, the nation of Iran is chosen. The choice of investigating Iranian representations within the three national contexts allows a clearer investigation of the elision of significant 'national Others' from the map of Iran in the Western media, whilst at the same time investigating the conflation of Muslim identities with the (Arab/Middle Eastern/Oriental) Iranian identity to produce an essentialised and monolithic Muslim Iranian Other. The concentration on a national geopolitical context makes sense when looking to the media as Iran has become increasingly emblematic of wider international Islam in recent times. Even throughout the dominant media coverage of the Iraq and Afghanistan conflicts, Iran has remained the focus of US ire, through its constructed position in the 'Axis of Evil' and as a 'state sponsor of terror', and hence, has remained consistently 'visible' in media representations. The construction of the Islamic Other is a historically contingent process. The reporting of Iran has produced a neo-Orientalist (Sardar, in Poole, 2001: 32) construction of a homogenously Islamic Iran that appears to transcend historical variation, despite the realities of the reporting of 'cosmopolitan' Iran prior to the revolution. Throughout the 1980s images of Iran progressively merged with images of Islam in general (Brasted, 2001: 215) constructing an unquestioned Islamic reality that was not present prior to 1979. The undoing of the 'Westoxification' of Iran, announced by the Ayatollah Khomeini on his return from exile in Paris (see Chapter 5), marked the beginning of the change in reporting from the predominantly secular Pahlavi state to the current quintessentially Islamic nation. Over time 'Iran' has become a coherent 'piece' of neo-Orientalist

discourse, in that its constructed Islamic homogeneity comes to be emblematic of the schism between 'the West' and 'the (Islamic) Orient'. In conformity with Halliday's (2003) 'myth of confrontation' Iran has been constructed as the standard-bearer of the contemporary Clash of Civilisations.

4.6 Conclusion – From the Top Down

Multiculturalism as a policy has primarily been mobilised in nations such as ABC, to deal with the question of 'migrant' diversity. Multiculturalism as a means of recognising difference has proven itself a far more successful model for understanding the place of migrants in their new society than its antecedents, such as the assimilation policies practiced in Australia prior to the 1970s. However, as has been discussed previously, it is important to recognise that multiculturalism as a policy tends to claim one thing in principle, whilst in reality it is something quite different. Multicultural policy professes to express the recognition of difference across the whole of society as its underlying principle. Yet in reality it operates as a tool only for recognising 'migrant' difference from the 'mainstream' of the nation. This leaves no room for an investigation of difference within the 'mainstream', only for the recognition of difference to the 'mainstream'. Rather than being a social experiment in the recognition of the complex and multiple differences amongst the individuals who make up a given society, the expression of unity in diversity through multicultural policies has been restricted to a discourse of national identities, and has been set up as a dialectic between the legitimate (white) mainstream of 'the nation' and the 'difference' that new migrants represent. As Hage (1998) notes, it is the difference between the 'natural citizens' of the nation and the unnatural migrants that becomes the focus of multiculturalism, not the commonality of difference between individuals.

The success of this form of national multiculturalisms as policies of recognition cannot be underestimated; the formation of SBS in Australia for those who speak languages other than English, the recognition of visible minorities in Canada, the creation of specific race-based legislation in Britain, all represent great advances for those who are in many cases the most disadvantaged in their new society. However, these processes of recognition of difference do, at the same time, limit recognition to

difference from the mainstream, and this difference is presented as a difference to the nation. I continue to stress this point because, as has been noted by many commentators (Collins, 1991; Stratton, 1996, 1998; Hage, 1998; Harles, 1998; Gunew, 1999; Das Gupta & Iacovetta, 2000), this form of recognition appears very much like a less radical form of assimilation, a soft multiculturalism that protects the inequalities inherent in national multiculturalisms.

At the core of Australian multiculturalism is the dominance of the constructed Anglo-Celtic mainstream identity as a socio-political signifier of belonging that reifies difference between ‘migrants’ (particularly ‘Asians’ and ‘Muslims’) and ‘Australians’. The concrete manifestation of this incomplete articulation of multiculturalism is the (temporal/political/economic) limitation of multicultural affairs to migrant settlement issues. In Canada, the tensions between English and French Canada have simplified the place of the other ethnic groups not as a force in dialectical opposition to a unitary national core, but a tertiary actor rendered subordinate to the ongoing struggle between Canada’s fragmented English and French selves. Whilst the multicultural identity of Canada is a more central and self-recognised ‘fact’ than in the immigrant-focused Australian multiculturalism, the structures of control have still, in many ways, sidelined multiculturalism in both policy and budgetary terms. Whilst in Australia the relationship between race and multiculturalism has to some extent been elided from the critical discourse surrounding minority relations (Stratton, 1998; Hage, 1996), in the British case, race has been the central feature of popular and academic discussions of minority groups (Gilroy, 1987; Hall, *et al.*, 1978; Parekh, *et al.*, 2000). The construction of racial difference as irreducible has tended to undermine the commitment to a British or English multiculturalism. In contrast to both of these national examples, in Canada these problematic relations between race and culture as determined through multiculturalism have been conveyed through visible minorities, centring questions of race and ‘colour’ within the discursive space of multiculturalism.

Taylor’s views on a politics of difference have been far more influential in his native Canada than elsewhere, yet, the statement made by Parekh, *et al.* with respect to Britain that, “the need for both equality and difference, and to respect both individuals and communities, appears to be beyond the compass of existing political

vocabularies” (2000: 37) is also applicable, at least in part, to the Canadian and Australian case. The ability of multiculturalism to overcome the domination of the existing political economy of identity ruled by the centrality of ‘national’ cultural codes, in order to allow a more inclusive understanding of diversity, is severely curtailed in each of these national multiculturalisms. The fact that the national scale as a dominant discourse limits recognition of non-national actors (individuals or groups), such as, but not limited to, religious groups (see Chapters 7 and 8), is absent from considerations of multicultural futures. Instead the anxiety over social cohesion of the nation ensures that national intention is central to multicultural policy, leading, as it does, to the (re)production of a mainstream national culture in dialectical opposition to nationally configured homogenously constructed ‘ethnic cultures’ in order to ensure that the nation remains ‘safe from diversity’.

The media are recognised as vitally important in the process of identity construction and in the processes that structure inclusion and exclusion of the individual in the legitimate citizenry (Dunn and Mahtani, 2001: 163). It is here that much of politics finds its voice and it is the forum through which policy is (re)produced for mass-consumption. Visual representations of Iran and Iranians are central to the normative construction of Iranian (Muslim) deviance in the press. They construct a pictorial narrative that sometimes conforms to, and can sometimes override/undermine, the written text in the press. The power of the visual to configure readings of the press is something that has been neglected in research to date, particularly that research that tracks the contemporary demonisation of Islam in the Western media.

What this visual analysis allows is an insight into visibility as a configuring agent in identity negotiations. As Balibar asserts, “the racial/cultural identity of ‘true nationals’ remains invisible but is inferred from ... the quasi-hallucinatory visibility of the ‘false-nationals’ - Jews, ‘wops’, immigrants, indios, natives, blacks ... That the ‘false’ are too visible will never guarantee that the ‘true’ are visible enough” (Balibar, as quoted in Bhabha, 1998: 31), where “the too visible presence of the other underwrites (the ongoing existence of) the authentic national subject” (Bhabha, 1998: 32). Hence, there is a need to continue to produce and reproduce the essentialised Other as the dialectical opposite of the nation, producing a Hegelian totality. This framing of representations tends towards the rendering of the dynamic as static, with difference

moderated along specific lines which are reiterated and reinvested as the difference between 'us' and 'them' within the multicultural society.

There are questions that remain open concerning the power of policies based on visible difference, such as the Canadian visible minorities legislation, to affect enduring societal change, or whether a policy dependent on the visibility of national/racial signifiers can produce 'migrant' invisibility. The visibility of migrants becomes the totem by which the majority's dominant invisibility is known, and so long as the mainstream/majority remain invisible they shall remain static and beyond change. As has already been stated, we need to 'see the nation', to cross these reified boundaries between the visible (migrant) and the invisible (legitimate national citizen) to produce mutability and subvert the dominance of the nation in multiculturalism.

For the second generation from an Iranian background in the three cities, the limitations of political multiculturalism and the impact of media representations in each site have distinctive implications for the processes of identity negotiation which will be discussed in Chapters 6 to 8. National multiculturalisms and national representations structure an essential 'Iranian-ness' in contrast to the constructed ABC identity forming the context for everyday identity negotiation. The limitations to settlement, the visibility of minorities, and the intransigence of racial difference all work to problematise the place of the second generation within multicultural discourses, emphasising their interstitiality whilst failing to adequately engage with the relevant questions of positionality in contemporary society.

5 IRANIANS IN THE DIASPORA

Distinctions within the Iranian communities are not readily apparent to outsiders, and some subgroups would be completely overlooked if we were to base our image of Iranians on a stroll along Westwood Boulevard (Los Angeles)

(Bozorgmehr, Sabagh and Der-Martirosian, 1993: 59).

This chapter introduces the groups that are the focus of this research, the Iranian communities in SVL. The selection of the Iranian community, a national community, as a focus for this research has been deliberate. Through investigation of the contradictions and complexities that exist within this ‘national community’ we can interrupt the centrality of national discourses in complex identity relations. The form of the multiple and complex communities within which the second generation from an Iranian background find themselves will be discussed in Chapters 6 to 8. In this chapter we shall provide a social, historical and demographic picture of the communities of Iranian-born in the three cities of SVL. This quantitative background will set the scene for the more in depth qualitative considerations to follow.

In this work, the Iranian diaspora,⁸⁰ relates to the sense of exclusion from the homeland of Iran, an experience that began, for many but not all, with the Iranian revolution.⁸¹ However, it needs to be made clear that I am not intending to support a normative construction of the Iranian diaspora to the exclusion of other pre- and post-modern diasporas that exist within and beyond the bounds of the ‘Iranian’ community. The contemporary Iranian state, as an Islamic theocracy, excludes individuals and groups on religious, political and ethnic grounds to produce a complex web of diasporic relations. Within the ‘Iranian diaspora’, excluded through

⁸⁰ The notion of a diaspora is contested (see A. B. Anderson, 1998; Butler, 2001; Chaliand and Rageau, 1997; Cohen, 1997; Esman, 1986; Gilroy, 1987; Tololyan, 2001; Toynbee, 1915, 1916). Significantly for this discussion, Ledgerwood (1998: 93) states that the nation-state as a ‘national community’ is the normative form of diasporas. Werbner (2000) notes that ultimately, as a theoretical concept, diaspora has settled towards a ‘far broader consensual stress’ in order to allow the social heterogeneity of diasporas to be understood through the literature. She points to segmented diasporas that “cut across the national origins or religious beliefs of performers and participants” (Werbner, 2000: 12-3) and can relate to a convergence across space and time of such ephemera as sports, poetry, food and film (see Chapter 8).

⁸¹ Vertovec recognises the use of the term diaspora with relation to the contemporary flows of the Iranian people as an ‘Iranian diaspora’ (Vertovec, 2000: 4).

the formation of the Islamic republic of Iran, we can find evidence of ethnic diasporas (Armenians and Assyrians), trade and labour diasporas (international networks of production and consumption), and religious diasporas (Baha'is and Jews) that can each be included within a wider sense of the exclusion from Iran of an Iranian *national* diaspora.⁸² The Jewish minority in Iran has been one such group involved in this new exclusion, as has the Armenian Christian population of Iran. These new persecutions coexist within a sense of wider Iranian diaspora whilst feeding at the same time into the specific historical notions of diaspora for these two 'peoples' (see Cohen, 1997 and Tololyan, 2001). This association to multiple diasporic communities is indicative of the complex and multiple Iranian 'communities' that interpenetrate in the host societies.

Iranian-born migrants, and more significantly their children, are not automatically subjects of the 'Iranian diaspora'. The Iranian diaspora is an identity form that is not necessarily congruent with Iranian ancestry and the decisions over inclusion in the diaspora are taken by the individual, and by the wider diasporic community which acts as gatekeeper to the legitimate types of behaviour befitting an 'Iranian' (i.e. structuring from within – see Chapter 2). Thus, in the process of negotiating their identity, the individual can simultaneously feel included in, and/or excluded from the Iranian diaspora (however this is defined). As we shall see in the next three chapters, the decisions about how you present yourself through social action and intention reflects on the positionality of the individual relative to the diaspora. The maintenance of Iranian community ties and physical and emotional ties to Iran and relatives still living there are an investment in the Iranian diaspora that potentially keeps a path for return open into the future. For the second generation, as we will see below, there are conscious decisions to be made with regards to the nurturing of diasporic ties that are

⁸² In his work on the cultural production of the Iranian communities of Los Angeles, Naficy (1993) draws on a distinctive notion of 'exile' that differs from the notion of diaspora, to describe the experience of those excluded from their homeland. Naficy claims diaspora is an inadequate term with regards to understanding how Iranian migrants manifest their relationship with the homeland. Anderson, too, notes that exile is a result of a forced diaspora (1998: 25). This sense of forced movement or migration links refugee movements to discourses of diaspora through exile. Tololyan (2001) discusses a change from exilic nationalism to diasporic transnationalism that links the two notions via the networks of global relations in exile. In this discussion I will persist with the term 'Iranian diaspora' as a signifier of post-revolutionary Iranian emigration and exclusion the reasons for which will be made more explicit in Chapter 7.

made all the more apparent because of the second generations temporal, physical, and emotional distance from the homeland.

5.1 Diasporic Drivers: Revolution, War and Education

The Iranian diaspora has a discrete beginning. The Iranian revolution, which took place on the cusp of 1978 and 1979, is recognised both empirically and demographically as the starting point of the contemporary Iranian diaspora. Since this rupture in the Iranian social fabric, migrants from Iran have formed communities in exile in many countries around the world, from Australia to Japan, and from Turkey to Britain.

Placing a discrete beginning for the Iranian diaspora as the 1978/79 revolution is not to say that prior to the late 1970s there was no Iranian presence outside of Iran. Indeed, the modernisation programs of the Shah of Iran, Mohammed Reza Pahlavi, during the 1960s and early 1970s saw high levels of engagement with Western nations, predominantly with the Western European nations and the United States, particularly in high level business and tertiary education.⁸³ Several of the respondents in this study had parents who met each other as students in cities such as London or Manchester in the UK prior to the revolution (see Chapter 6). These educational experiences, facilitated by extensive state scholarship programs (Bozorgmehr, 1992), meant that many of those who were to leave under the conditions following the revolution had previously experienced the societies to which they immigrated.

5.1.1 The 1978/79 Revolution

The Iranian revolution, according to many commentators, was fuelled primarily by the general dissatisfaction with the pace and extent of the modernisation programs instituted by the Shah. This, in combination with a persistent marginalisation of religion in an increasingly cosmopolitan society, encouraged widespread discontent, particularly outside of the capital, Tehran, from where the Shah ruled from his

⁸³ This engagement with the West was facilitated by the promotion of overseas education through the award of scholarships aimed at benefiting ‘modern’ Iran. In 1968-69 there were 20 317 Iranian overseas students, of which 7 236 were in the US, 5 027 were in West Germany and 2 500 were in the United Kingdom (Sahab, 1971).

mountaintop Niavaran Palace. There were many forces at work in the moves to overthrow the monarchy. Primary amongst these was the renewed National Front, a group that was representative of forces that sought to bring an end to spiralling inequality as the wealthy and cosmopolitan upper and upper-middle classes of Tehran took advantage of the freedom and growth fostered by the Shah. But whilst intellectuals and the urban elites focused on the need for political reform, it was the extensive Shi'i clergy, subject to increasing marginalisation, who eventually prevailed.

Explanations of the causes of the Iranian revolution differ in their analysis of the complexities that unfolded in the lead-up to, and following, the fall of the monarchy. Parsa (1989) observes that many of the critiques seeking to explain the roots of the revolution fall into two broad categories: theories of social breakdown and theories of social movements. The social breakdown model invariably emphasizes the changing social structures, norms and values that lead to a destabilizing of society. In the case of Iran, rising expectations are said to have caused a disjuncture in the burgeoning middle-classes as the new economic mobility failed to be matched by concomitant political reforms. As the middle classes gained freedoms through the marketplace, the same repressions of political thought and social action by the powers of the state in the form of the armed forces and, particularly, the secret police, SAVAK continued (see Green, 1980; Keddie, 1981: 231-9). The failure of reforms in the political process was cited by the writers of an open letter declaring the revitalisation of the National Front, which dated back to the rule of the nationalist Mosaddeq in the early 1950s. The political-economic disjuncture coincided with tacit international pressure in the form of United States President Carter's commitment to a new era of human rights in foreign affairs policy following his inauguration in 1977. Keddie notes that the intellectuals and political reformists behind such moves as the revival of the National Front, the formation of the Writers' Guild, and the Jurists' Association all in quick succession were all linked to perceived pressure to reform the human rights, and by extension the civil rights, abuses of the state (Keddie, 1981: 232-3).

In terms of the second theme described by Parsa, that of social movements, the importance of the rise of the religious conservatives in response to the Shah's secularisation of the state is central to the analysis. Forbis describes a sequence of

events rolling out of control from the publication in January 1978, under direct order from the Ministry of Information, of an article critical of the role of the Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini in riots 15 years earlier. The article led to mass protests that were bloodily suppressed in a 'cycle of mourning'⁸⁴ that ultimately led to riots in 55 towns and cities across Iran. This groundswell of religious discontent fed beyond the mosques in the form of a general strike in November 1978 that would remain in place until the monarchy's dissolution in early 1979 (Forbis, 1980: 3-9; see also Keddie, 1981: 242-3). Other commentators moved beyond this simplistic determinist account from Forbis to produce a more complex combination of factors involving both social movements and social breakdown (see Parsa, 1989: 8-10).

The ultimate success of the religious leader Ayatollah Khomeini, whose return from exile in France was instrumental in the final form of post-revolutionary Iran, was not initially predicted by those who were involved, nor by those who were observing the machinations at hand. Whilst much of the opposition was couched in Islamic terms the reality was that the National Front was expected to take up the reins of power following the supersession of the monarchy. Indeed, as the apogee of the revolution approached the Shah went so far as to strike a deal with the dissident Shahpur Bakhtiar of the National Front. Bakhtiar became Prime Minister as the Shah agreed to take a 'vacation' abroad signalling a model for transition (Forbis, 1980: 8). However, the tentative alliance between the opposition groups, which included the National Front, the Shi'i *ulama* under the leadership of Khomeini, *Mujaheddin* and *Feda'iyen* guerrillas, the merchants (*bazaaris*) who had suffered under the Shah, the intellectuals and educated middle-class, all combined under the banner of reform, was ultimately rendered asunder following the revolution.

The Bakhtiar government was replaced by the Provisional Government of Mehdi Bazargan, who himself was 'nominated' by Ayatollah Khomeini from Paris on the 5th of February 1979, even before the formal collapse of the Bakhtiar government (Zabih, 1982). The machinations of Khomeini in demanding an 'Islamic Republic' eventually led to a new Khomeini-friendly constitution as a precursor to the election of the Islamic Consultative Assembly (*Majlis*) led by a Prime Minister selected by the

⁸⁴ Following the prescribed 40 days of mourning, further riots took place across a wider geographic area leading to more bloody suppression, and so on.

President. Again, it was Khomeini, whose power as the now unassailable religious leader was entrenched in the new constitution, who ‘approved’ the first President of the Republic, Abolhasan Banisadr (Zabih, 1982: 33-40). The presidency of Banisadr came into inevitable conflict with the *Majlis* who were dominated by the clerics (*mullahs*) of the Islamic Republican Party who answered to the Ayatollah. What began as an attempt to bring reform soon turned to dust as the newly anointed Ayatollah turned on the President, impeaching him on the 20th June 1981 and taking central control in what was to become the one-party theocratic state. This transition from modernist cosmopolitan outlook under the Shah to religious conservative rule under the rule of the *mullahs* was more complex than this brief summary indicates.

Regardless of the path the revolution took, its ultimate result in the Islamic Republic of Iran, which was declared by referendum on the 1st of April 1979, was indicative of the backlash to the inequalities of the Shah’s rule. However, the pre-revolutionary systematic repressions of ‘political opponents’ by the SAVAK were soon replaced by the actions of the Revolutionary Guard against ‘religious opponents’ (i.e. political opponents).⁸⁵ The success of the combination of the reformist secular parties with the religious conservatives reflected twin themes which, whilst underpinning foment, also influenced the structure and form of emigration in the aftermath of the revolution.

The result of the combination of emphases on religion and class separation produced an emigration of wealthy and educated middle and upper class urban elites in conjunction with religious minorities who came under the particular attention of the new Islamic state. The exodus of Iranians following the revolution was dominated by both wealthy and less wealthy émigrés, a fact that will be discussed further with regards to the contemporary form of the communities of Iranians in the diaspora here and in the following chapters.

5.1.2 Iran-Iraq War

Two other main factors have driven the engines of Iranian diaspora beyond the formation of the Islamic theocracy and its associated attacks on opposition and

⁸⁵ At the first anniversary of the Islamic Republic in mid-June 1980, the Revolutionary Guard stood at 30 000 (Hiro, 1991: 49).

minorities: the Iran-Iraq conflict of the 1980s, and the limitations and expansions of education. The opportunistic outbreak of hostilities initiated by Saddam Hussein on the 22nd of September 1980, led to the full scale outbreak of conventional war that lasted until August 1988, with the loss of some 200 000 Iranian military and civilian lives at an estimated total cost to the regime of approximately US\$500 billion (Hiro, 1991: 250). This onset of war, occurring on the back of revolution was a fillip to the Islamic theocracy as the ‘people’ rallied around the fledgling state. However, for those of the educated middle-classes and minority groups against whom the Khomeini regime had set its sights, the war was a tangible reason to flee Iran.

For the regular military and the volunteer forces, the early phases of the war saw them used preferentially in full combat whilst the Revolutionary Guard was held in check as a defensive force. Thus the non-aligned groups suffered the greatest casualties. But it was the position of those not committed to holy war that was the most precarious. Wholesale conscriptions were advanced, and for many of the respondents in this study, the threat of being sent to the front in the war was enough to motivate many Iranians to emigrate (see Chapter 7).⁸⁶

5.1.3 Education

The war had direct impacts on education and by 1987, 115 of the 200 universities and colleges in Iran were engaged in military research and development (Hiro, 1991: 195). For those seeking an education, the closure of universities by the religious conservatives and the wholesale use of universities to support the war, meant the loss of opportunity that for many was a prime motivator to leave Iran. Under the terms of the Islamic Republic educational places were reserved for those sympathetic to the regime. Minority groups suffered at the hands of these policies as places were withdrawn, or never made available. For Baha’is, further education at tertiary institutions was plainly not permitted.

As restrictions on access to education fuelled the emigration of minority religious groups and those desiring an unfettered educational experience free of the spectre of

⁸⁶ By April 1986 the call had gone out to bolster the armed forces through the institution of military training for the country’s 1.6 million civil servants, 20% of whom would be ‘allowed’ to go to the front at any one time (Hiro, 1991: 171).

conscription, the strain on the population to produce a viable technocracy to support its growing needs led to the institution of scholarships for education in foreign institutions in late 1980s/early 1990s (Bozorgmehr: 1992). Thus, during the 1980s and into the 1990s, both the refugees and the sponsored students of the Iranian state were present in the educational institutions of Western cities such as London and Los Angeles.

5.2 *Persian Tapestry: Diversity in Iran*

It is useful at this point to discuss the complexity that underlies Islamic Iran. Whilst the Iranian nation-state, both under the Shah and the post-revolutionary theocracy, is presented as a one-religion, one-language homogenous entity, the reality is far more diverse and multifaceted.⁸⁷ Iran, whilst dominated by the Shi'i Muslim faith, has a complex landscape of ethnicities and religions that complicate the homogeneity of the Islamic nation-state as constructed through political rhetoric and media representations in the West and the 20th Century nationalist political project in Iran. Ethnically, religiously, and linguistically, Iran shows a diversity that sits well with a more nuanced understanding of the history of Iran.

Iranian nationalism from around the turn of the 20th century has centred on the construction of a unitary Iranian people (Kashani-Sabet, 1998, 1999). This unity, more imagined than real, is predicated on the suppression of the histories and contemporary realities of ethnic diversity. The rise of Dr. Mosaddeq as premier in 1951 is often seen as marking a sudden appearance of nationalism in Iran. Yet, nationalist movements in Iran can be traced back to the crises that led up to the 1906 constitutional revolution. Whilst this liberal nationalist experiment lasted only for six years from 1906 to 1912 before the monarchy regained control, the nationalist ideas of unity remained in the form of calls for a unitary sense of cultural, political and religious identity (Cottam, 1964; see also Anderson, 1983). The official language and religion of the Iranian nation-state, as set down in both the 1906 constitution and in the post-revolutionary constitution of November 20, 1979, is Persian and Shi'i Islam

⁸⁷ This simplified image is also present in academic work. Hobsbawm, in his discussion of the roots of national identity, continually refers to a Shi'i Iran in opposition to a wider Sunni Muslim reality, "Iran, it would appear, has gone its own divine way both as a Zoroastrian country, and, since its conversion to Islam, or at any rate since the Safavids, as a Shi'ite one" (Hobsbawm, 1992: 69; Roemer, 1986).

respectively. Following the overthrow of the fledgling constitutional state in 1912 the Qajar dynasty (1796 CE – 1925 CE) regained control only to be ousted by Reza Khan in 1925 who enthroned himself as Reza Shah Pahlavi. Under the rule of Reza Shah, coinciding with the consolidation of the Iranian nation-state, the Iranian people were declared to be “of ‘pure’ or ‘genuine Aryan race’ ... boasting a 2500-year old civilisation” (Mojab and Hassanpour, 1996: 231). The Iranian nation has, since 1906, rallied around these constructed connections to a historically continuous Iran as a key to their contemporary existence. In the mould of Ataturk in Turkey, Reza Shah sought to Westernise Iran in order to stabilise and unify the nation. The nationalism of Reza Shah, whilst in contrast to the liberal nationalism of 1906-12, was still based on unity of purpose at the national level, allowing no room for alternate national projects, such as those that were fostered most vigorously by the Azeris and the Kurds in Iran. Following on from his father, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi continued to support the monarchical version of the nationalist project, built on the unity of the Persian people linked through history to the glorious pre-Islamic civilisation of Persia.

Whilst the Shah, like his father before him, attempted to forge an Iranian nation based on the Western ideals of separation of church and state, in reality the clergy have always been strong. Despite attempts to secularise the state, the nation has continued to be imbued with an Islamic core. In searching for the unity of national identity, the place of Islam has ultimately by default been placed alongside the pre-eminence of the Persian people. Hence, resistance to Iranian nationalism has often been related directly to ethnic or religious difference, with the two often conflated, as in the cases of the Christian Armenians or the Sunni Kurds.

Far from being a homogenous Persian Islamic nation-state, Iran is home to a wide variety of ethnicities, religions and linguistic backgrounds. In reality, the Persian population of Iran make up approximately half of the more than 60 million population (Shaffer, 2002: 221).⁸⁸ The rest are ethnically divided into several major and minor groups. Azeris, or Azerbaijani Turks make up approximately 24% of the population,

⁸⁸ There has been no systematic collection of statistical data concerning ethnic and linguistic diversity by the Iranian state. Mojab and Hassanpour (1996) quote two sources from the 1950s based on ‘population according to language’ figures from the 1956 Census and the data from the Geographical Dictionary of Iran compiled and published by the Iranian military in the early 1950s. Underreporting and over-reporting of figures has routinely been used to prop up political agendas (Shaffer, 2002; Keddie, 1995).

Kurds another 9 %, followed by Baluchis (3%), Arabs (2.5%), and Turkmen (1.5%) (Mojab and Hassanpour, 1996: 229-30).⁸⁹ These groups predominantly live on their ancestral lands in the western, south eastern and north eastern regions (see Figure 5.1). Further ethnic separations include the Assyrian, Armenian and Jewish peoples of Iran who exist within Iranian territory as well established groups tied to the diasporic migrations of their earlier history. Tehran, according to Shaffer, is itself dominated by non-Persians (particularly Azeris and Kurds) creating a multi-ethnic centre to a supposed homogenous demographic landscape (Shaffer, 2002: 222).



Figure 5.1: Map of Iran detailing the major ethnicities (Source: Keddie, 2003).

The demographic map of Iran becomes more variegated when religious differences are taken into account. There are groups adhering to a variety of established religious faiths including significant populations of Christian, Jewish and Zoroastrian faiths.

⁸⁹ Amongst nomads, ethnic appellations may not be related to the language spoken. Rather they are political and signify allegiance (i.e. some 'Arab' Basseri tribes are made up of a variety of groups and speak Persian as a common language) (see Barth, 1961: 131).

Additionally, there are populations of Baha'is and Sunni Muslims. Most Persians and Azeris are Shi'i Muslims, whilst Armenians and Assyrians are Christian. The majority of the people of the Zoroastrian faith are Persians, whilst the Arab population are both Shi'a and Sunni. Finally, the Baluchis, Turkmen and the majority of the Kurdish population are predominantly Sunni Muslim, whilst the Jewish ethnicity is intimately tied to religion (Mojab and Hassanpour, 1996: 230).

As this work takes as one of its starting points the relevance of religious identity in discourses of belonging, it may be useful to view a brief overview of some of the religious groups of Iran. It is also important to recognise that in some ways religious difference has been a significant point of repression by virtue of the central role of Shi'i Islam in the post-revolutionary theocracy.

5.3 *Religious Diversity from Zoroaster to the Baha'is*

Several important religious movements have been influential over the course of Iran's/Persia's '2500 years of history'. One of the earliest religions to have its roots in Iran was that of the Mazdean or Zoroastrian religion, based on the doctrines of its founder Zarathustra (Zoroaster according to the Greeks). As a religion, the religious scholar Alessandro Bausani sees Zoroastrianism as,

having supplied material for the construction of the eschatological legends of all the great religions of the civilised world: Islam, late Judaism, and – through mysterious channels ... medieval Christianity of which the legends include those of the Christianised Nordic Sagas, which undoubtedly owe their angelic and eschatological visions to Iranian religiosity (2000: 9-10).

Zoroastrianism has its origins in the lands of pre-modern Persia and is seen by many as the root of Persian culture having direct influence on many of the significant Persian cultural forms. The traditions surrounding *Norooz*, the New Year celebrations, including the *haft seen* and *chahar shanbeh souri*, which will be discussed in later chapters, have their roots in the Zoroastrian religion.

Today, the Zoroastrians still conduct their religion in Iran, and this continuity between the pre-Islamic and the present holds an important place in the creation myths of the

modern Iranian nation. Politically, the importance of Zoroastrianism to the modern state of Iran stands more in this relationship as a conduit to the golden ages of the past than in the religions' position as a theological threat to Islamic supremacy. For the Shah, the cultural aspect of Zoroastrianism, as the religion associated with the pre-Islamic Persian Empire, was a key feature of the push to produce a 'secular' nation. With a relatively small population of practising Zoroastrians this religion could be safely constructed as central to the nation whilst presenting little affective religious zeal across the whole population. Thereby, through the use of Zoroastrian mythology as a key configuring element in the nation, the monarchy attempted to render the religious nature of the nation-state virtually benign. By usurping the power structures held by the Islamic clergy throughout Iran through recourse to the 'more historically correct' centrality of Zoroastrianism, the Shah sought to undermine the resistance to his modernisation programs. The reality for the monarchy was different than intended as the Muslim clergy, rather than passively subsiding from their roles as educators, social commentators, and even political actors, instead proved to be more than capable adversaries. The period following revolution has been marked by considerable religious tension as a result of the centrality of Zoroastrianism in the usurpation of Islamic power under the monarchy.

In contrast to the politico-religious position of Zoroastrianism under the theocracy, other religious minorities have been placed in a more difficult position. There are significant populations of Armenian⁹⁰ and Assyrian Christians living in Iran, as well as a community of Jews that traces its existence back to destruction of the first Temple and the first great diasporic movement of the people of Israel to Babylon. These groups have been a part of the Persian tapestry for several hundreds of years as distinct communities and, more recently, as part of the modern Iranian nation-state.

5.4 *Baha'i Faith*

A more recent tradition, which also marks its origins in Iran, is the Baha'i Faith, which began in the late 19th century under the guidance of its founder, Baha'ullah. It is related to its slightly earlier antecedent Babism, which still has an active, if small,

⁹⁰ Tololyan (2001) gives an estimate of the Iranian Armenian population as approximately 100 000.

population of followers in Iran. The Baha'i Faith can be considered an Iranian monotheism, despite the fact that through successive persecutions the spiritual centre, the Baha'i World Centre where the Universal House of Justice resides, is located in Haifa, Israel on the mountainside of Mt Carmel (Bausani, 2000: 396). Its relationship to Islam is credited with being similar to the relationship of Christianity to Judaism, based as it is on the rising of "He whom shall make himself manifest", Baha'ullah, as a prophet in the tradition of Mohammad. It is this 'heresy' in the eyes of Islamic jurists that has seen continued persecution of Baha'is in Iran since its inception as a religion with Baha'ullah's 'manifestation' on April 21, 1863.⁹¹

One of the most interesting aspects of the Baha'i Faith is the overall aim of the religion to bring about an earthly unity of humanity, whilst at the same time recognising the diversity of voices that will eventually make up this 'world community'. This mission, which ultimately resembles a socio-political direction as much as a religious theology, has been summarised as 'diversity in unity' (or unity in diversity) (Warburg, 1999), a parallel of contemporary multicultural ideology.⁹² What this means for ideas of community, and particularly with regards to national belonging, will be dealt with in further detail in Chapters 6 to 8. However, at this point it is instructive to briefly note the forms that the administrative structure take in order to better understand the nature of the human flows Baha'is have been involved in over the last 25 years since the Iranian revolution.

The administration of the Baha'i Faith is imbued with a spiritual content such that the expansion of, and participation in, the Baha'i administrative structure is considered as religious service. The basic unit of Baha'i administration is the Local Spiritual Assembly (LSA) and it is set up in every political administrative area where there is a quorum of nine Baha'is. The LSAs are territorial markers of the extent of the Baha'i community mapping themselves onto the existing political boundaries at the local scale wherever they exist. For example, in Sydney, the LSAs map onto the local government area divisions, of which there are 44. In Vancouver, the LSAs map onto

⁹¹ Baha'ullah, which translates from the Arabic as splendour of God, or glory of God, was the title taken by Mirza Hussain Ali Nuri to affirm his position as the person 'the Bab' (the founder of Babism) foretold would "make himself manifest" (see Bausani, 2000).

⁹² Warburg's research amongst Baha'is in Denmark and in Haifa, Israel have led her to conclude "that the Baha'is see themselves as a vanguard of globalisation" (1999: 50).

the municipalities within the Greater Vancouver Regional District (22), whilst in Greater London, the LSAs map onto the borough divisions (33). This means that LSAs exist under different conditions of representation depending on the different populations and physical territories mapped out by the pre-existing political boundaries of the area. This has ramifications for the formation of communities, and the practice of forming LSAs themselves influences movements between and within urban areas. This impact on inter- and intraurban movement and the implications tied to community formation as an intimate part of the religious observance will be spoken of more in later chapters on communal forms.

Where there is a sufficient number of LSAs they are coordinated by their respective National Spiritual Assembly (NSA), which, like the LSAs, is elected by universal suffrage. According to Bausani (2000: 402) in 1958 there were only 25 NSAs, but this had increased by 1992 to 165 NSAs across the globe. Smith (1998: 50) notes that as of March 1988 there were 148 NSAs which were comprised of some 19 592 LSAs. The most recent figures indicate that the spread of the Baha'i Faith has now taken it into 188 countries and 45 'dependent territories or overseas departments', with some 132 000 LSAs (Baha'i World, 2001). The formation, in 1963, of the Universal House of Justice as the elected body that controls and interprets the religious texts and expounds new tenets based on the principle of 'progressive revelation' was a significant moment in 20th Century Baha'i development. The nine (male) members of the Universal House of Justice are elected every five years.

Whilst the Baha'i Faith expresses itself as a global religion, it has its roots in Iran, and as such, the Iranian population are well represented in the Baha'i Faith worldwide. In the 1950s, of the estimated 200 000 Baha'is worldwide, all but 10% of them lived in Iran. The Baha'is were a significant minority in Iran numbering around 1% of the population with significant dedicated infrastructure in the form of schools, hospitals and investment funds (Bausani, 2000: 405). Despite the current estimates of the Baha'i community in Iran at around 300 000 (House of Commons, 2001), as the Baha'i Faith has spread, its traditional foothold in Iran has diminished in importance. Over the last 25 years Baha'is have felt the destructive ire of the Iranian theocracy. In 1980 the members of the sitting National Spiritual Assembly in Iran were abducted by Revolutionary Guards and made to 'disappear'. Since 1983, the right to assemble and

maintain its institutions has been denied to the Baha'is of Iran. Baha'i properties have been routinely confiscated since 1979, and some 200 'martyrs' have been executed, with many more imprisoned, particularly during the reign of Khomeini (Bausani, 2000: 406). The number of executions for 'crimes against the state' involving Baha'is was greatly reduced following the death of Khomeini, yet executions still occur. In July 1998, the first execution of a Baha'i for apostasy since 1992 took place (House of Commons, 2001).⁹³ In September 1998, a correspondence university set up by Baha'is to teach dentistry and computer science was closed with more than 532 homes raided and 36 academics arrested across the country (McIlveen, 1998). These ongoing acts of repression, along with restrictions on Baha'is entering tertiary education and being employed in government employment, have received international recognition and condemnation. The plight of this religious minority was officially recognised as early as 1985 when the United Nations passed the first of sixteen resolutions (as of 2001) noting the Baha'is of Iran as a persecuted minority,⁹⁴ making their path to freedom as refugees administratively much easier.

Religious minorities are currently held in a state of uneasy recognition under the terms of reformist president Mohammed Khatami's moves to pluralism and a 'civil society' following his 1997 election. Interfaith dialogue is on the rise. However, this is not universal with periodic repression of minority groups still occurring. Religious minorities are tolerated so long as they refrain from evangelism with it remaining an affront to Iranian Islamic law to convert from Islam to another religion. Significantly, particularly for this study, one glaring omission from this amnesty is the Baha'i community of Iran, who remain an official 'threat to Islam', no longer subject to the persecutions and mass executions of the 1980s, but still existing under a cloud of intolerance resulting in periodic repression.

5.5 *Language Diversity*

There is significant language diversity related to the existence of many indigenous communities within the Iranian state with as many as 63 indigenous 'languages'

⁹³ On July 22nd 1998 a Baha'i adherent was 'summarily executed' by Iranian authorities in Mashhad, Iran for converting a Muslim to the Baha'i Faith (Keddie, 2003: 224, 312; Cole, 1998).

⁹⁴ Australia first began a special humanitarian assistance program for Baha'is seeking to escape religious persecution in Iran in 1981 (DIMIA, 2004).

(Price, forthcoming). Linguistic differentiation has commonly been utilised as a justification for ‘cultural’ difference (Johnson, 2002: 132-4) with Castles and Davidson (2000:12) calling language a ‘basic building block’ of community. A key feature of ethnicity is the language of community that may set it apart from other language communities. Extending on this, when we talk of the ‘national’ ethnic community, language is significant as a unifying feature. Fishman (1972, in Johnson, 2002) points to four main reasons for the centrality of language to nationalist causes. Firstly, common language imbues common identity. Secondly, it links the present with the (real or imagined) past. Thirdly, language is linked to authenticity, whereby to be an authentic part of the national community the individual must ‘speak the language’. And fourthly, the rise of vernacular literatures “can allow elites to become central to a nationalist movement” (2002: 132; see also Anderson, 1983).

The diversity present in Iran has been variously related to the push for recognition of alternate nationalisms to the Persian/Shi’i Iranian nation-state of the Qajars and the Pahlavis. The Kurds, the Azeris, Turkmen and Baluchis have all been the subject of state-led repressions over the last 50 years at the hands of both the secular monarchists and, particularly following the revolution, the religious jurists. The centralisation of the Iranian state and the implementation of public education programs undertaken by the Pahlavis endeavoured to universalise Farsi. However, this has always been a partial and incomplete process with minority languages remaining the lingua franca in some areas (Kashani-Sabet, 1999). Language difference has been a defining characteristic of nation-building projects by Azeris and Kurds in particular over the last century (Keddie, 1981, 2003; Kashani-Sabet, 1999).

Some of the religious communities are also distinctive language communities, such as those associated with the Christian Armenians and Assyrians, or the Iranian Jews, and language differences have underscored suspicions over the allegiance of these religious groups to the Iranian nation. This has been particularly the case since the revolution. The impact of language diversity in the diaspora is further discussed in Chapter 8.

5.6 Iranian ‘Communities’: The demographics of the Iranian-born

The flows of migrants out of Iran have included a large proportion of refugees many of whom have subsequently sought asylum in Western nations such as Australia, Canada and Britain. Iran and the countries that border Iran have been the focus of some of the largest global flows of displaced persons over the last 25 years (Home Office, 2004). Flows have originated in Iran with refugee camps being set up across the borders to the north west in Turkey and to the south east in Pakistan. Additionally, the crises in Iraq and Afghanistan over the last decade have seen large numbers of refugees flow over the Iranian border in the opposite direction as minority groups flee persecution. The refugee flows out of Iran for the period 1992 to 2001 by the most common country of destination are shown in Figure 5.2. From this we can see that countries share the burden of asylum differentially, whilst at the same time the diaspora of Iranians fleeing persecution has indeed spread globally.

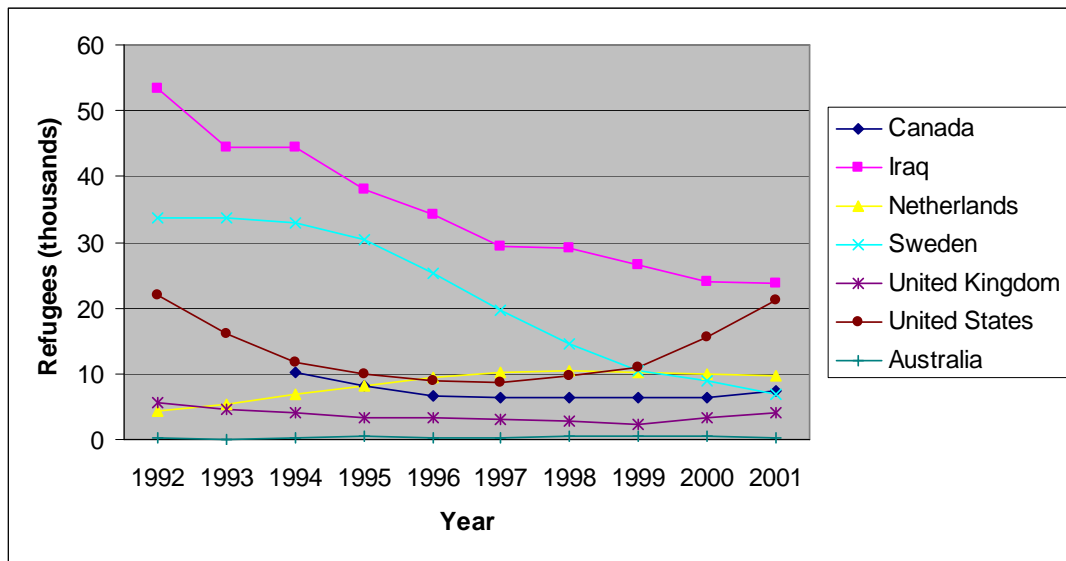


Figure 5.2: Refugee flows by country of asylum for Iranian refugees 1992-2001. (Source: UNHCR, 2002; Australian Immigration Consolidated Statistics; DIMIA, Settlement Database).

Following the revolution of 1978/79 the presence of immigrants of Iranian birth in countries such as the United States, Sweden, Netherlands, Britain, Canada and Australia increased. Figure 5.3 indicates how the immigration levels of Iranians changed over the last thirty years for the countries under investigation in this research.

The large increase in immigration of Iranians following 1980 is reflective of both the initial persecution of the elites and minority groups and the continued impact of the persecution of religious minorities coupled with the uncertainties of the Iran-Iraq war.

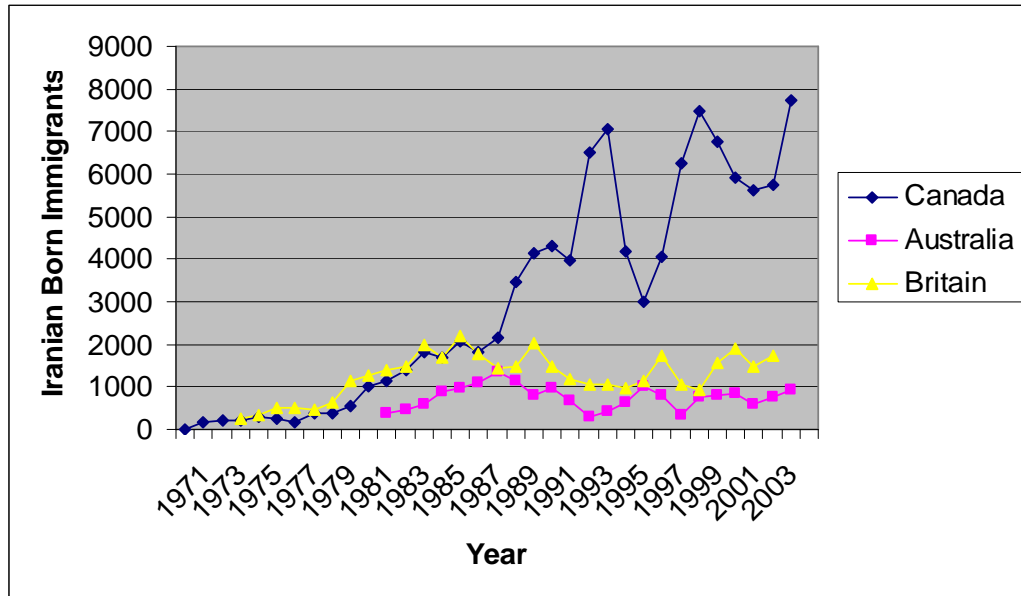


Figure 5.3: Iranian born immigrants to Canada, Australia and Britain from 1970 to 2003. (Source: CIC, Canada; ABS, Australia; DIMIA, Australia; Home Office, Command Papers, UK).⁹⁵

The Iranian diaspora has found a primary geographical, social and political focus in Los Angeles in the United States. Unlike the case in Australia and Canada, immigration to the United States of Iranian immigrants was significant prior to the revolution.⁹⁶ According to Bozorgmehr, Sabagh and Der-Martirosian (1993) there were two distinct waves of migration to the United States: the first from 1950 to 1977 involved about 35 000 immigrants, and the second from 1978 to 1986 involved some 104 000 immigrants. The bulk of these migrants are found in southern California, and in Los Angeles in particular, which has been a focus for immigration since before the revolution. The population of Iranian-born in Los Angeles varies greatly from

⁹⁵ Prior to 1981 Australian figures for Iranian arrivals were aggregated with other countries, indicating they were small in number.

⁹⁶ This is also the case for London (see Chapter 6) although not to the extent that has occurred in Los Angeles. Los Angeles was not chosen as a field site due to the existence of a strong sense of Iranian community (see Bozorgmehr, Sabagh and Der Martirosian, 1993 and Naficy, 1993). In the cities of Vancouver, Sydney and London there is more ambivalence over the existence of Iranian ‘community’ offering a more interesting analysis (see Chapter 3).

amounts of between 53 000 and 74 000 for 1986, to a purported 200 000 to 300 000 Iranian-born individuals in the media (Time Magazine, quoted in Kelly and Friedlander, 1993: xii; Bozorgmehr, Sabagh and Der-Martirosian, 1993: 72-3).⁹⁷ Following the 1980 ‘hostage crisis’ in Tehran, the numbers of Iranians dwindled due to the difficulty and the cost of obtaining visas (Bozorgmehr, Sabagh and Der-Martirosian, 1993: 68-9; Kelly, 1993). According to the 1990 Census figures for the US the total numbers of foreign born Iranians and those who claim Iranian ancestry are 216 963 and 235 521, respectively, whilst the figures for California are respectively 117 053 and 108 871 (Naficy, 1993: 25).⁹⁸

Los Angeles has become a centre of diasporic cultural production since the revolution resulting partially from the size of the Iranian-born population and due to the concentration of “Iranian entertainers, comics, actors, singers of classical songs, pop singers and musicians” that migrated to LA (Naficy, 1993: 13). Naficy’s study of Iranian cultural production emanating from Los Angeles between 1980 and 1991 noted a high level of cultural production for both the domestic market and the diaspora, in particular in the form of music and satellite television programs (see Chapter 8). This focus on Los Angeles in the diaspora in terms of numbers and cultural production is significant for later discussions concerning the transnational relations amongst the second generation (see Chapter 7), as well as more general discussion of the awareness of Iranian communal forms, in which the LA ‘community’ looms large.⁹⁹

5.6.1 Australia

Australia, as an immigrant reception country, has been an important destination for Iranian migrants since the revolution. Of the 18 972 350 Australian’s in the 2001

⁹⁷ Figures as high as 1.8 million Iranian-born for the US and 800 000 for Los Angeles have been used by Iranian organisations in Los Angeles (Bozorgmehr, Sabagh and Der-Martirosian, 1993: 73). These inflated figures are sometimes used by academics to justify their research (see Hojat *et al.*, (2000: 421) who incorrectly attribute these inflated figures to Bozorgmehr, Sabagh and Der-Martirosian).

⁹⁸ Birth figures do not include the second generation born outside of Iran, and ancestry figures do not include the significant ethnic subgroups that do not see Iranian as a primary affiliation (see below).

⁹⁹ Stockholm is also important in the Iranian diaspora and has been the subject of much research into Iranian community, particularly by psychologists and sociologists (see Ahmadi, 2003; Ahmadi Lewin, 2001; Almqvist, 1997; Darvishpour, 1999; Emami *et al.*, 2000; Shahidian, 1999, 2000). Sweden has an approximate Iranian-born population of 52 038 in 2000 of which only approximately one third live in Stockholm according to Ahmadi (2003: 687) (see also Ahmadi Lewin, 2001: 122).

Census, some 4.1 million were born overseas. The Iranian population in Australia, at 18 840 in 2001,¹⁰⁰ whilst not featuring in the top source countries for Australian immigrants, has impacted significantly in certain immigration categories. In 2000-2001, Iranians made up approximately 5.9% of all applications for refugee status, placing them fourth on the list of top source countries for Australia. At the same time, Iranians also figure prominently in skilled and business immigration programs. The majority of Iranian migrants have settled in Sydney, with 10 030 Iranian born living in the Sydney Statistical Division in 2001 (ABS, 2003).

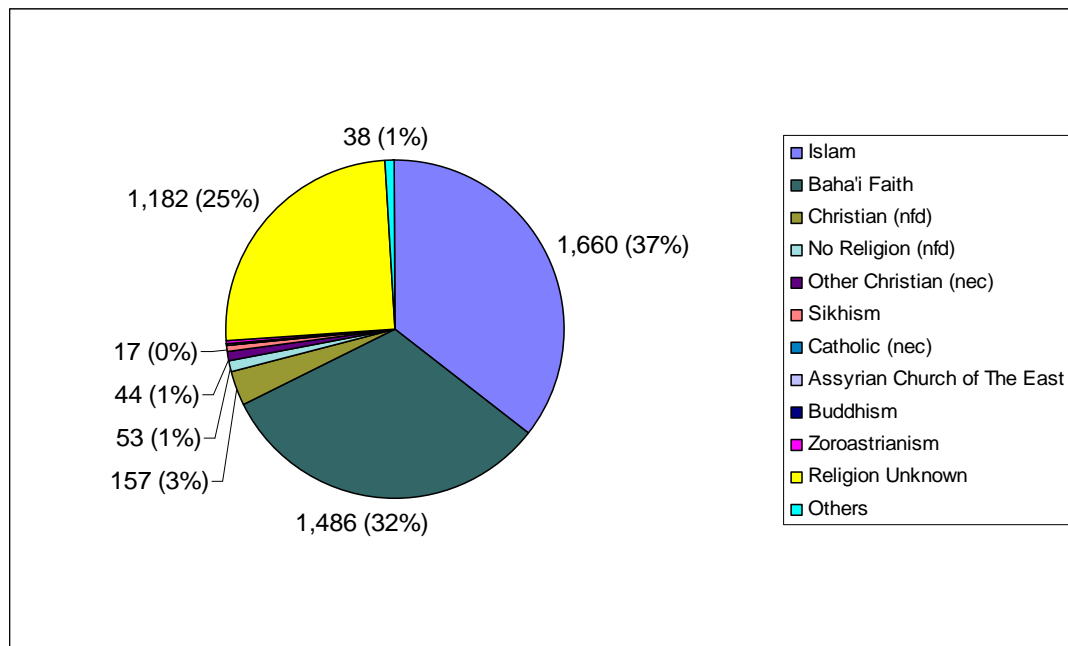


Figure 5.4: Breakdown of religions of the Iranian born entering Australia with the intention to remain from January 1998 to December 2003 (Source: DIMIA, Settlement Database, 2004). See Appendix 6 for full details.

The Iranian migrant population in Australia is made up predominantly of people who migrated during the last 25 years since the 1978/79 revolution (see Figure 5.3). The ‘diaspora’ is more diverse than the population in Iran by virtue of the determined repression of minorities both along religious lines and national/ethnic lines. As an indication of this, Figure 5.4 shows the breakdown of Iranian born arrivals by religion intending to stay for longer than one year in Australia over a six year period leading up to the end of 2003. Figure 5.4 clearly shows the religious variety of Iranians

¹⁰⁰ A 15.5% increase from the 1996 figures.

entering Australia. When we consider that Iran, with a present population in excess of 60 million, has an estimated population of Baha'is of somewhere around 300 000 or 0.5%, we see a much higher level of religious (and ethnic) diversity in the diaspora.

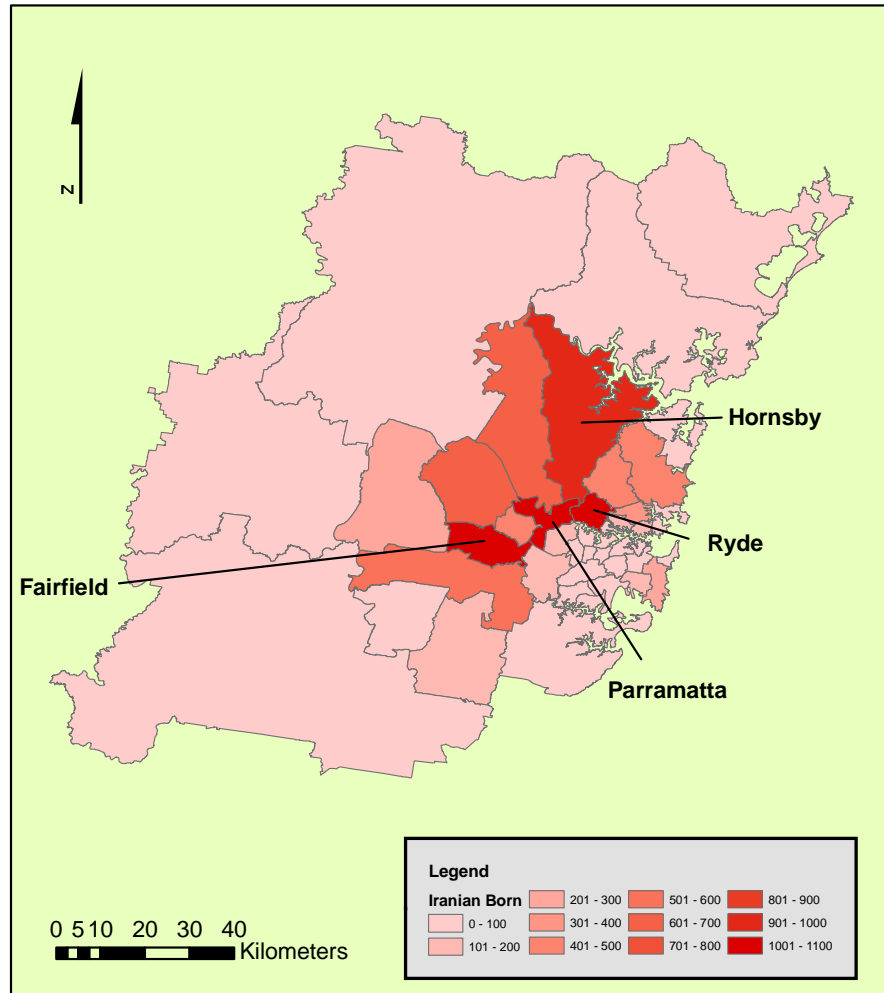


Figure 5.5: Distribution of Iranian born population in Sydney by local government area in 2001 (Source: ABS, Census Data, 2001).

The distribution of Iranian born individuals around the Sydney Statistical Division is shown in Figure 5.5. Hornsby in the north of the city, Ryde in the central west, and the Parramatta and Fairfield in the west of the city all feature as significant areas of residential location for the Iranian born in Sydney. With around 1000 residents in each of these municipalities, they represent spatial concentrations that are relevant in discussions of community formation and recognition.

The different religious groups tend to concentrate in different areas of Sydney. The Assyrian Christian population from Iran are concentrated in Fairfield in an area favoured by other Assyrian Christians. Baha'is favour Parramatta and Baulkham Hills, although, as will be seen later, many Baha'is are periodically involved in 'home front pioneering'¹⁰¹ across the breadth of the urban area, resulting in a wide spatial spread of Baha'is. The Persian Shi'i Muslim Iranians tend to settle in both lower and higher socio-economic areas (Hornsby, Parramatta and Fairfield) reflecting the variable socio-economic backgrounds and the diversity of immigration from refugees to business migrants. These communal stratifications will be discussed further in Chapters 6 through 8.

5.6.2 Canada

Canada, like Australia, has followed an aggressive immigration program since the Second World War (see Chapter 4). The Canadian population of 30 007 094 in 2001 includes 22.4 million people who consider themselves to be of an ethnic origin other than Canadian, English or French (STATCAN, 2003). In Vancouver, unlike in Sydney, the Iranian migrant communities do not represent the largest concentration of Iranians in the country. Toronto, Canada's largest city, is also Canada's primary immigrant destination with a total immigrant intake of over 110 000 per year for the three years from 2000 to 2002. These figures were close to 50% of the Canadian immigration intake each year (CIC, 2003). In contrast, Vancouver as a preferred destination for all migrants to Canada falls behind both Montreal and Toronto. Vancouver received approximately 14% of all immigrants, around 30 000 migrants, for each of the three years from 2000 to 2002. Despite this secondary position in the national immigration statistics, immigrants account for almost one half of Vancouver's growth between 1981 and 1996 making up about 35% of the population (CIC, 2000: 1-2).

¹⁰¹ Home front pioneering is the intranational movement of Baha'is to administrative areas requiring more Baha'is in order to form an LSA. This internal religious migration has not been studied to date. In a small scale pilot study in Vancouver conducted as a part of this research it was found that many new migrants entering the 'Baha'i community' in Vancouver were influenced in their settlement pattern by the desires of the NSA (see Chapters 7 and 8).

The Iranian-born population for the whole of Canada as at 2001 was 71 985, and like the case for Australia, included immigrants across a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds. Iran has been a top ten source country for both refugee claimants and investors, entrepreneurs and the self-employed.¹⁰² This population had increased markedly from the 1996 figure of 47 410, a more than 50% increase. In Vancouver, the population of Iranian-born in 2001 was approximately 17 620, some 24.5% of the national figure (STATCAN, 2003). This figure was up from 10 060 in 1996, a 75% increase over the intervening five year period.¹⁰³ The distribution of Iranian-born in the Greater Vancouver Regional District in 1996 is shown in Figure 5.6. The Districts of North and West Vancouver and the City of North Vancouver, all located on the north side of Howe Sound, are popular locations amongst the Iranian-born community in Vancouver.¹⁰⁴ Other significant concentrations of Iranian-born are to be found in the Cities of Coquitlam and Burnaby. The distribution of Iranians is relatively concentrated in these areas. In North and West Vancouver shops, restaurants and services supporting the Iranian born can be found, particularly along Lonsdale Street in North Vancouver (see Chapter 4).

When the figures for Iranian-born are opened up to include responses based on ancestry, the 2001 figure for Vancouver increases to 20 490 for those who consider themselves as being of Iranian ancestry (STATCAN, 2003). This suggests two possibilities. Firstly, that there are less Armenians and other groups who do not subscribe to an exclusive Iranian or Persian ethnicity in Vancouver. This was confirmed empirically through my own unsuccessful attempts to locate Armenians from Iran in Vancouver. The second implication of this data is that there is a different relationship to the 'Iranian community' than in Sydney. This is particularly relevant for this analysis as it indicates that the two cohorts of Iranian background in Sydney and Vancouver, despite following a similar trajectory in terms of the chronology of immigration and the relative size of the cohorts, may have different perceptions of the

¹⁰² Between 1986 and 2001 Iran ranked 7th as a source country for migrants entering Canada as 'investors', 'entrepreneurs' and 'self-employed'.

¹⁰³ Of these 10 060 in 1996, 9 750 Iranian born migrants arrived between 1976 and 1996.

¹⁰⁴ The name Vancouver relates to both the Greater Vancouver Regional District (GVRD) and the City of Vancouver, which is a sub-district of the city as a whole. To avoid confusion I will refer to the City of Vancouver by its full title and use term Vancouver to mean the Greater Vancouver Regional District as a representation of the total urban space of Vancouver.

extent of, or even existence of, an ‘Iranian community’. This will be discussed further in the following three chapters.

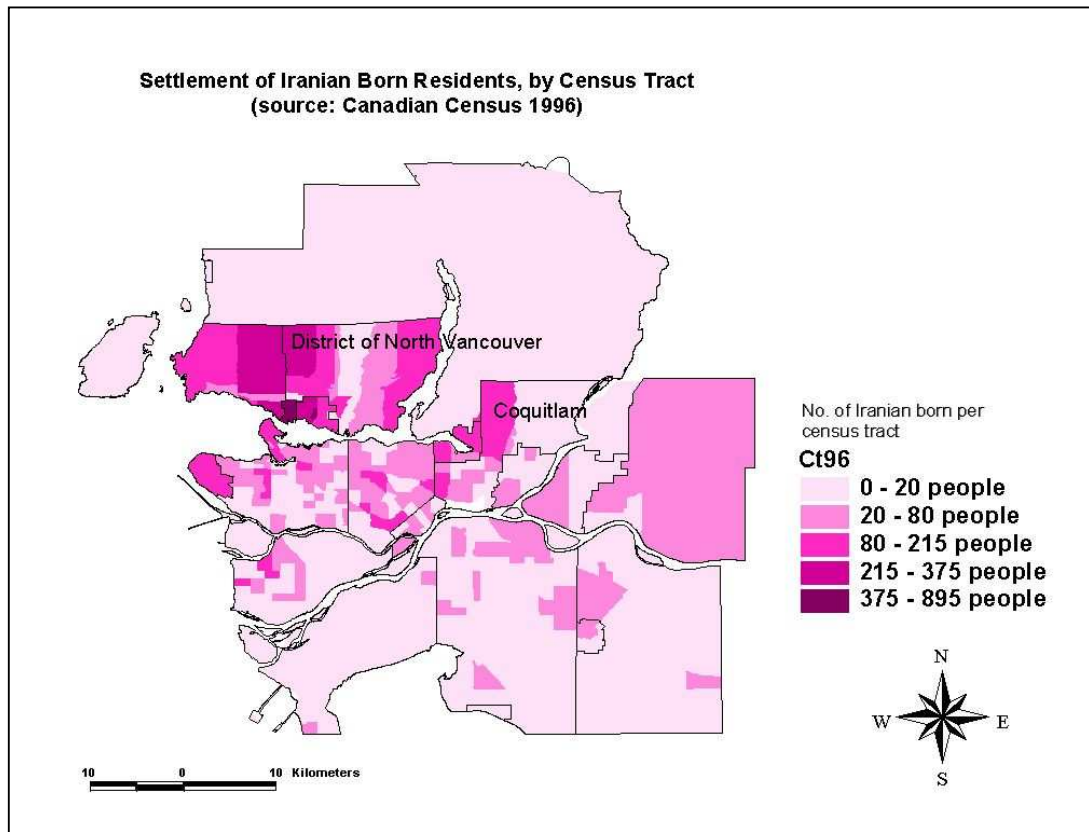


Figure 5.6: Distribution of Iranian born in Vancouver by municipality in 1996¹⁰⁵
(Source: STATCAN, Census Data, 1996).

5.6.3 Britain

Rather than having an emphasis on growth as in Australia and Canada, British immigration policy tends to emphasise the restriction of rights to access. At the same time, Britain's post-colonial relationship with the nations formerly of ‘The Empire’ has necessitated rights of access for members of the Commonwealth. Hence there is a tension over immigration that is less apparent in Canada and Australia. The percentage of international-born in Britain is, as a result, much lower than for Australia (21.6%) and Canada (25.6%), at around 8.3%, or 4.9 million people out of a

¹⁰⁵ At the time of fieldwork in Vancouver 2001 Census data for distribution at Census Tract level was unavailable.

population of 58.8 million in 2001 (National Statistics, 2004). Yet despite this fact the absolute figures for annual immigration to Britain are similar to the two ‘immigrant nations’ of Australia and Canada. In 2000 the number of work permit holders and dependants admitted to Britain was 91 800, whilst the total acceptance for settlement was 125 100 (Dudley and Harvey, 2001: 1).

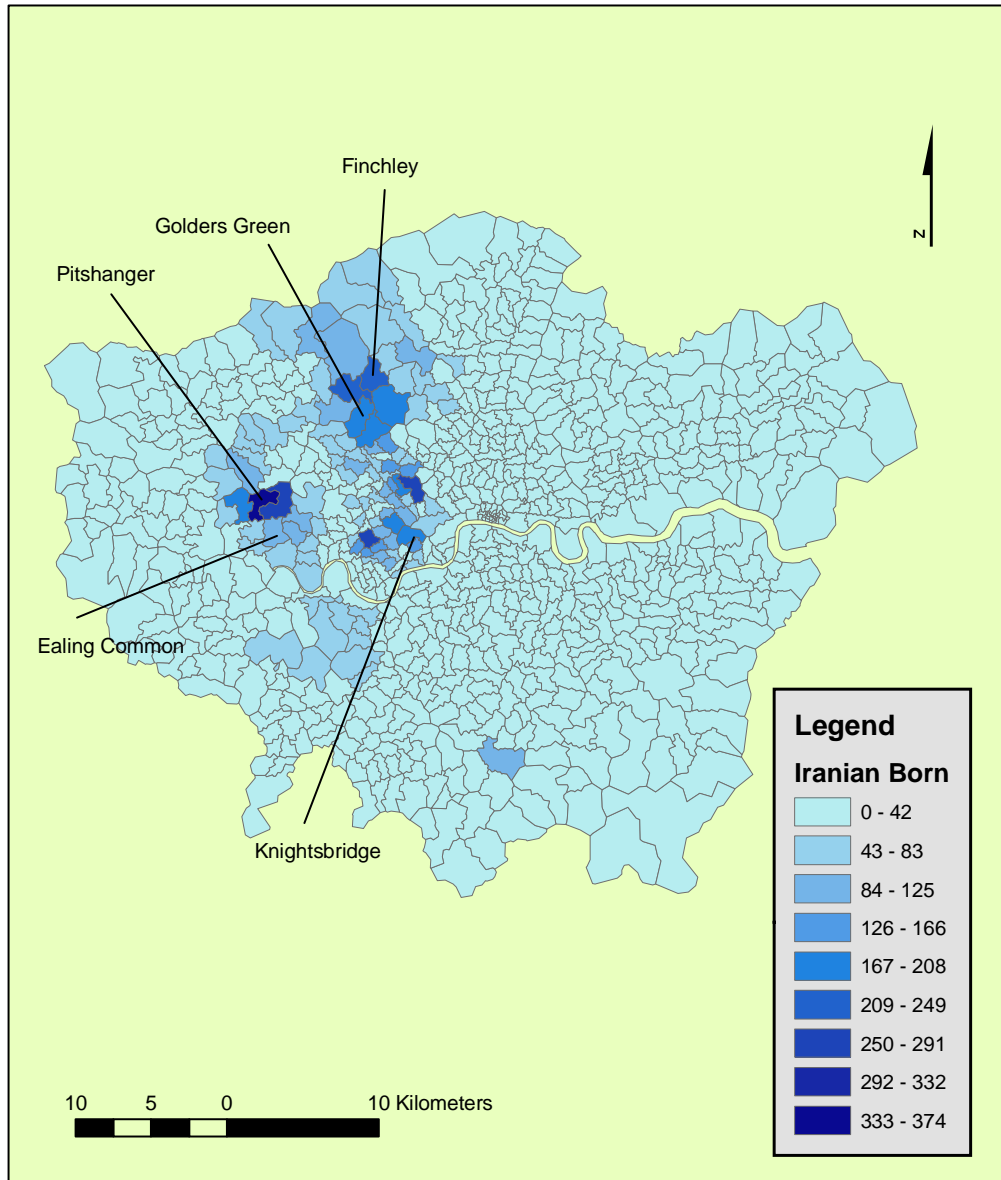


Figure 5.7: Distribution of Iranian born in Greater London by borough in 1991¹⁰⁶ (Source: Office for National Statistics, Census data, 1991).

¹⁰⁶ At the time of London fieldwork the 2001 Census data for distribution at borough level was unavailable.

This seeming contradiction can be in part explained by the marked difference in the diversity of the population of London compared to the rest of the nation. The proportion of Londoners who are foreign-born is much higher than Britain as a whole at 23.5%, or 1.9 million out of a population of 8.3 million. This percentage is only slightly less than that for Vancouver and Sydney, where the foreign-born make up 37.5% and 28.7% respectively.

The population of Iranian-born residing in the United Kingdom at the 2001 Census was 42 492. Unlike Vancouver and Sydney, London is a city of much higher population and relative density. These facts impact on the visibility of community as will be discussed below. The total Iranian-born for Greater London in 2001 was 20 398 (up from 16 851 in the 1991 Census), which is similar in number to the Vancouver and Sydney cohorts and represents almost half of all the Iranian-born in the UK.

The distribution of the Iranian-born across London is shown in Figure 5.7 where a distinctive orientation can be seen in the north west sector of Greater London radiating out from what is the more established 'community' in the higher socio-economic areas around Kensington and Knightsbridge. In a similar manner to both Sydney and Vancouver, there is a mix of socio-economic background that maps itself onto the urban space. These distinctive spatial arrangements will be discussed more fully in the later chapters, and in particular in Chapter 8 with regards to mobility and issues of class association and separation.

5.7 *Second Generations*

When attempting to include the second generation from Census data there are inconsistencies between the methods used in the three national examples. The second generation, as defined in this research, includes individuals who were born in Iran and those who were born in the country to which their parent(s) immigrated (see Chapter 3). Birthplace data thus only includes those born in Iran and fails to include those born in Australia, Canada and Britain in the respective Census figures. Attempts to estimate the size of the communities of migrants have been made through various methods. In the 2001 Australian Census a question on ancestry was included in an

attempt to track those who did not ‘belong’ to the community of their birth. In this way, both migrants born in Iran who do not consider themselves as ‘Iranian’, and those born in Australia who consider themselves ‘Iranian’ are accounted for in a more complete manner in the data. The introduction of a question on ancestry into the 2001 Census related to a question first asked in 1986, but which had been excluded in the two intervening Censuses of 1991 and 1996. When the nativity figures are expanded to include those who identify as being of Iranian ancestry, the numbers drop from more than 10 000 for Sydney to 8 801 people who consider themselves as being of Iranian ancestry. Whilst this question does allow the capture of second generation Iranian individuals who were born in Australia but consider themselves in some way ‘Iranian’, those who were born in Iran but see their Iranian-ness as subsidiary to other forms of national or ethnic identity were also able to express themselves. In particular, three groups which are normally included in Iranian birth data but who were able to express their (possible) primary ethnic/national identity were those of Armenian, Assyrian/Chaldean or Kurdish ancestry. These factors render data on the second generation inconsistent between the three cities and of questionable value where they are available.

5.8 Introducing complexity in the Iranian communities

When discussing the Iranian community in any of the three sites in this study it is important to realize the complexities that exist beneath the Census birthplace statistics. As has been highlighted previously, the notion of an Iranian community needs to be understood not just in terms of birthplace, but also (at least) in terms of religion and ethnicity. As illustrative of this, the Iranian-born cohorts in each of the three cities include a wide variety of languages. As an example of the linguistic diversity of the Iranian cohort, of the ten thousand Iranians in New South Wales, only 5826 (or 47.5%) speak Persian¹⁰⁷ (Farsi) in the home. In addition, a further 1 588 (12.9%) of Persian speakers were Australian-born, indicative of an established second generation who speak Persian in the home as well as English in the wider community. To support this, of the 16 760 Iranian-born in Australia who spoke a language other than English in the home 79% spoke English very well or well. Other languages

¹⁰⁷ At this stage I will use the terms Persian and Farsi interchangeably with regards to the national language of Iran. A more detailed discussion of the importance of the distinction between ‘Persian’, ‘Farsi’, and ‘Iranian’ has been introduced in Chapter 1 and will be further discussed in Chapter 6.

spoken in the home by the Iranian-born in NSW include Armenian (1403), Assyrian (2877), Bengali (18) and Turkish (37) (Community Relations Commission for a Multicultural New South Wales, 2003). These figures for Farsi are much lower than for the more recent arrivals to Australia as indicated in Figure 5.8.

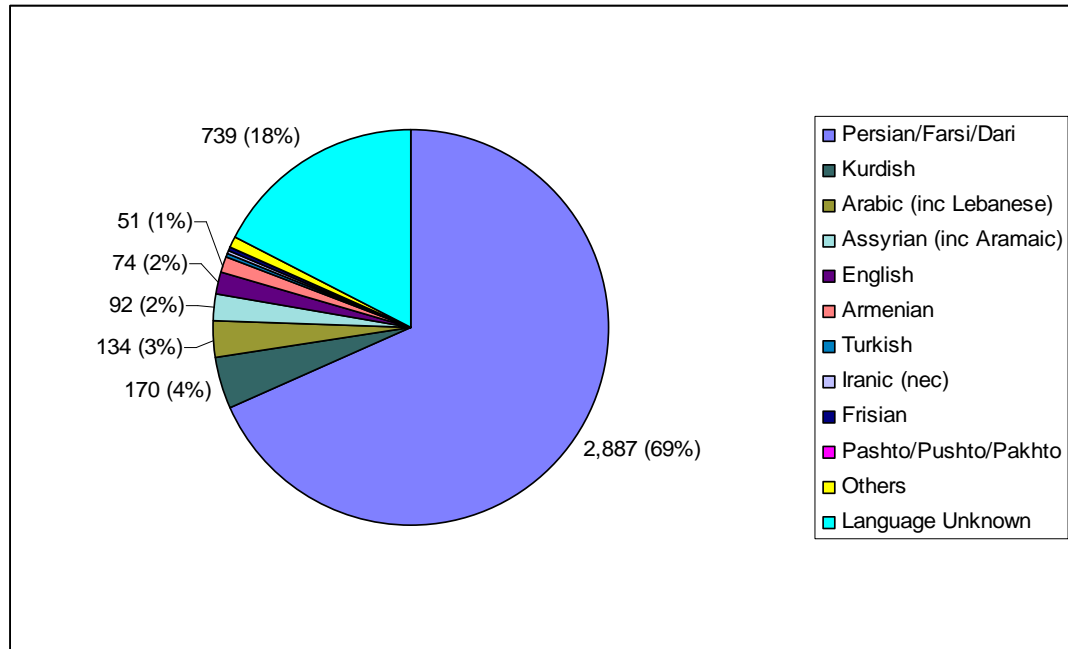


Figure 5.8: Language spoken by Iranian born migrants entering Australia with intention to remain from January 1998 to December 2003 (Source: DIMIA, Settlement Database, 2004. See Appendix 6 for full details).

The implications from this are that more recent arrivals do not include the same levels of minorities as earlier migration, which is to be expected as the numbers of minorities with the social mobility to immigrate may have been reduced through the flows over the last 20 years. Moreover, the environment for minorities has become (relatively) less threatening in Iran under the new era of ‘reform’ in Iran. Whilst this differentiation between language communities will be discussed further in later chapters, it is useful to note at this point that for some of the Iranian-born having a different language from the majority Persian is a point of differentiation, as is the case for the Armenian community from Iran in Sydney who have tended to associate with the wider Armenian community. As will be discussed further in later chapters, these differentiations are also manifest, to a lesser degree, in the second generation. Yet, for others, language is placed within a hierarchy of belonging, since whilst one language

may be spoken in the home, say Azeri or Baluchi, Persian remains the language of primary community affiliation spoken between members of the ‘community’ at formal and informal gatherings. Chapters 7 and 8 detail a more comprehensive discussion of the complexities including religion and language that intersect and problematise the national Iranian cohort as a ‘community’.

5.9 A Visible Community

In order to create a ‘sense of place’ (Massey, 1994) for the Iranian cohorts in the three cities that adds to the quantitative picture painted thus far, this final section turns to the visibility of the ‘institutional’ community in the urban environment. The consideration here of issues of visibility will help to link the discussions of Chapter 4 on policy and representation with the discussion to come about the complex forms of ‘Iranian’ communities, and the alternate communities that decentre discourses of Iranian-ness.



Figure 5.9: Three Iranian shops just off Lonsdale St, North Vancouver (photograph by author).

Institutionally, the Iranian-born are less visible in the fabric of the urban landscape than other ‘migrant’ groups, such as the Vietnamese in Sydney, or the South Asian population in London. Whilst the different relative sizes of the populations have something to do with this, it is also a manifestation of the degree to which the Iranians are both diversified in communal ethnic, religious or linguistic background, as well as the lack of institutions associated with Iranians. This will be discussed in-depth in the following chapters. However, here we will look briefly at the presence of small businesses that cater to the Iranian communities.

The presence of community markers, both permanent and ephemeral, in the urban landscape serve to focus community identity in these locations, creating communal places from urban spaces.

Figure 5.10: Signage in Farsi and English in the window of Iranian baker, just off Lonsdale St, North Vancouver (photograph by author).



Figure 5.11: Persian Kebab (and Greek Souvlaki), just off Lonsdale St, North Vancouver (photograph by author).

Figure 5.12: Persian businesses on Lonsdale St, North Vancouver (photograph by author).



In Vancouver, Lonsdale Street in North Vancouver is an area where several Iranian restaurants and other small businesses are found (see Figure 5.9). The presence of signs and notices in windows in Farsi serves to signify the space as an Iranian place (see Figure 5.10 and 5.11).

The explicit geographical location of the Iranian community in North and West Vancouver is tied to the appearance in the landscape of these physical manifestations

of community. Grocery stores, restaurants and other small businesses have agglomerated over time on and around Lonsdale Street in North Vancouver and represent a steady increase in Iranian influence over the urban space (see Figure 5.12).

The centrality of Lonsdale Street to the ‘Iranian community’ was recognised by both the respondents I spoke with from the second generation (see Chapter 6) and members of the wider Vancouver community who were not formally affiliated with the ‘Iranian community’. More so than in Sydney and London, the ‘Iranian community’ was a discernible entity in the urban environment.



Figure 5.13: Persepolis Restaurant on Military Rd, Cremorne in Sydney. The bar can be seen through the doorway (see Chapters 6 and 7) (photograph by author).

In contrast, the Sydney and London ‘communities’ were far less visible, to outsiders who generally had no idea that there were Iranians in any number in each city, and to the members of the second generation who were often surprised that a researcher, as a non-Iranian without prior contacts with ‘Iranians’, was aware of a ‘community’ where they themselves often had trouble discerning one.

OK, if I was going to be really ... If I had to generalise I’d say that the majority of Iranians in London, seem to be doing OK. And ... you’d probably find them in Kensington and Chelsea. Um ... some, you know, aren’t, but that’s ... kind

of the perception I have. Although I only really, I only really know the Baha'is and they're quite diverse.
Respondent 30, female Baha'i, London.



Figure 5.14: Anahita Restaurant in Lane Cove, Sydney. The use of Farsi in these restaurant signs is limited (see Chapter 9) (photograph by author).

In Sydney, the location of restaurants in the urban landscape helped to focus the geographic location of 'Iranian community' even when there was no attendant feeling of an encompassing community. However, unlike Vancouver, the focus was far more variegated spreading across several nodes of community, each of which were often signified by the presence of Iranian businesses. When asked about the location of a Sydney Iranian community one respondent noted,

I think around Chatswood area. Around Parramatta area. And more North Shore, you know, Hornsby, St. Ives. Killara... It was increasing. Especially the last year or two. I noticed it more and more. There (were) more Persian shops, more Persian businesses.

Respondent 34, male Muslim, Sydney

The location of restaurants in Chatswood, Lane Cove, Cremorne, Parramatta and Blacktown (see Figures 5.13-5.15) by the Sydney respondents served to ground these suburban spaces as at least partially Iranian (although, not to the extent of the Vancouver relationship to Lonsdale Street). The mix of concentrations of Iranians living in higher socio-economic areas in Hornsby and St Ives, and on the 'North Shore' is in some ways related to the presence of these restaurants, whilst other areas of lower socio-economic settlement around Fairfield, Ryde and Parramatta (and the visibility of restaurants in these places) problematise a unitary vision of Iranian 'community' as an urban spatial form.

In London, shops and restaurants around Kensington/Knightsbridge, Golders Green/Swiss Cottage and Ealing were also highlighted by respondents as markers of community (see Figures 5.16 and 5.17). Whilst many London respondents generally spoke of the Iranians as a diffused community, these visible features of Iranian community affiliation formed the central focus of discussions of the location of the Iranian born by the second generation (see Chapters 6 and 8).

I think it's a temptation to think of them as ghetto dwellers, but I don't think it's true. I think there's concentrations around restaurants. ...

C: Which restaurants do you go to?

Yazd, Hafez, I go to a new place ... I can't remember what it's called but it's great.

C: So Yazd is in High Street Kensington?

Yeah, exactly. Kensington is kind of where people think the Iranians are. ... I guess they're much more spread out but they kind of gather in those areas ... (but) it would be wrong to think of it as a definite concentration, like a ghetto.
Respondent 26, male Baha'i, London.

C: Where do most families from Iran live in London?

Oh, you mean where's the Iranian area in London. Kensington. No Knightsbridge, not Kensington. ... That's where all the Iranian restaurants and shops and things are.

C: Do you go to them; does your mother go to them?

Yeah like for kebabs or stuff like that yeah. But our grocery shopping we do in our local area. But if we want something, if we go out to a restaurant ... we'll pop over to one of the Iranian shops to get some sweets or something.
Respondent 28, female Baha'i, London.

C: Whereabouts do most families from Iran live in London?
... Finchley area, I think, mostly, around here. Yeah I suppose. ... A lot of Iranian shops around and video shops.
Respondent 19, female Muslim, London.

More so than in Sydney, the London 'community' was recognised as centred around Kensington. This centre for Iranians was associated with an older cohort of migrants who came to London during the reign of Shah Reza Pahlavi from the 1950s onwards. Respondents recognised the geographical concentration of 'Iranians' partially through the location of these visible signifiers of community.



Figure 5.15: Orchid Persian Restaurant, Penshurst St, Willoughby (near Chatswood). The sign shows a couple dancing to music (see Chapter 8) (photograph by author).

Whilst the Iranian born are found concentrated in various areas of the three cities (the northwest of London; North Vancouver, West Vancouver, Burnaby and Coquitlam in Vancouver; Hornsby, Ryde, and Parramatta in Sydney), the location of businesses run

by ‘Iranians’ for ‘Iranians’ serves to focus these national communities within the urban space.

But I would say because there’s high concentrations in Kensington, Maida Vale and north west London generally ... that’s where you’ve got the Iranian shops that have opened up and supermarkets, restaurants.
Respondent 20, male Muslim, London.



Figure 5.16: Iranian shops in Golders Green, London (photograph by author).

Figure 5.17: Iranian shops in Kensington, London (photograph by author).



The location of community was also signified by less overtly visible markers by the respondents themselves through their photographs of street signs and area signs, or other shops and businesses taken as a part of their Phase Two ethnographic photography analysis (see Figure 5.18). The recognition of ‘Finchley Road’ as a signifier of the place where Iranians live and frequent, placed the ‘Iranian community’ within the London urban milieu through linking ‘Iranians’ to the mundane landscapes of the urban environment.



Figure 5.18: “The surrounding areas around Finchley: Golders Green, Maida Vale, actually Finchley, Swiss Cottage, there is a vast population of Iranians there ... a lot of friends of mine, a lot of businesses, a lot of restaurants. All along Finchley Road.” *Respondent 25, female Muslim, London* (photograph by respondent).

Figure 5.19: Mercedes Benz outlet in Swiss Cottage, London (photograph by respondent).



In a related way, the photographs produced by respondents created a sense of urban spatial interaction that served to define relationships with specific urban areas, linking these places to ‘Iranian’ community activities. Photographing a Mercedes Benz outlet in Swiss Cottage in London (Figure 5.19) tells us about where the Iranians shop and also a little of their socio-economic relationships and aspirations (see Chapter 8 on consumption and class). Similarly, showing an image of Manly Dam in Sydney (see Figure 5.20), where some Iranians have gone to mark *sizdeh bedeh*,¹⁰⁸ or photographing the beach in Vancouver where the respondent sometimes likes to walk (See Figure 5.21), places the respondents within the urban landscape, as Iranians *and* as Australians, or Canadians, or Britons, as part of the urban landscape.

The visibility of the Iranian community relates to the physical urban markers, such as restaurants. In Vancouver, the community was widely recognised by ‘Iranians’ and by

¹⁰⁸ *Sizdeh bedeh* is a celebration related to New Year (*Norooz*) that will be discussed in Chapter 6.

the wider community as fixed in space. For the other cities, whilst there was some recognition of urban spatial fixity by the respondents related to the location of businesses, it was understood that the wider community did not necessarily see ‘the Iranian community’.



Figure 5.20: “The ones of the water are of the dam right behind our house. Sort of like a street away ... It’s called Manly dam ... and it’s important because we grew up there ... On those rocks ... there’s an aboriginal art thingy. ... I guess it’s sort of like the clash between Persian culture and Australian culture ... that’s what it stands for.” *Respondent 37, female Muslim, Sydney* (photograph by respondent).

Figure 5.21: “This is Jericho Beach. ... I sometimes go with my family but usually I go by myself just to get some fresh air from school ... In the background is the city ... downtown Vancouver.” *Respondent 39, male Baha’i, Vancouver* (photograph by respondent).



5.10 Conclusion

The quote at the beginning of this chapter by Bozorgmehr, Sabagh and Der-Martirosian (1993) hints at the complex relationships that interrupt a simplistic view of the ‘Iranian community’. The ‘Iranian community’ is more complex than it seems to ‘outsiders’ from their vantage of walking through one of the ‘Iranian areas’ of Los Angeles. This chapter has begun to uncover some of the complexity. As shall be shown in the next three chapters, the image of a homogenous Iranian experience in the diaspora, whether it be in Los Angeles for Bozorgmehr, *et al.*, or in SVL for this

research, cannot engage with the complex experiences of those from an Iranian background, and particularly those that live ‘between nations’, the second generation.

This chapter has set the stage for the analysis to come, drawing first on historical data of the Iranian reality leading up to and following the 1978/79 revolution and how the complex mosaic of communities in Iran have fared under the theocracy. The plight of religious minorities and political opponents has fuelled the large migration to the nations of the West resulting in diasporic communities of Iranians that are themselves intersected by other communal forms, such as by religion and linguistics. The quantitative analysis that follows the historical data endeavours to uncover some of the patterns of settlement in the diaspora using data from the three national field sites to help describe the Iranian community experience. However, it is the third section, where the spatial distributions of Iranians are given more depth through a fledgling qualitative analysis of some of the evocative ‘places’ of ‘Iranian community’ in the urban landscape, that it is possible to see the strengths and weaknesses of the preceding analyses. The quantitative and the historical analyses are not enough in and of themselves to construct a more complete picture of the complex field of relationships that exist within and beyond the ‘Iranian’ national community. Through an analysis of these complexities over the next three chapters it is hoped that the centrality of discourses of national identity will be destabilised; not just for the ‘Iranians’, but for their dialectically opposed arbiters of acceptance, the national ABC identity.

6 NATIONAL DISCOURSES

The racial/cultural identity of 'true nationals' remains invisible but is inferred from ... the quasi-hallucinatory visibility of the 'false nationals' – Jews, 'wops', immigrants, indios, natives, blacks
(Etienne Balibar, in Bhabha, 1998: 31).

'Visible' ethnicity tends to be negative, inasmuch as it is much more usually applied to define 'the other' than one's own group. ... The ethnic-racial homogeneity of one's own 'nationality' is taken for granted, where it is asserted ... even when the most superficial inspection might throw doubt on it. For to 'us' it seems obvious that the members of our 'nationality' cover a wide range of sizes, shapes and appearances, even when all of them share certain physical characteristics, such as a certain type of black hair. It is only to 'them' that we look alike

(Hobsbawm, 1992: 66).

Following on from the last chapter, in order to investigate dynamic narratives of belonging, this chapter and Chapters 7 and 8 examine how people negotiate their place in society, as individuals and as members of multiple communities. Through an appreciation of the complex relationships elaborated by these second generation individuals it is possible to develop further the ongoing critique of national multiculturalisms. By looking at the similarities and differences in the way respondents think about themselves and negotiate their everyday experiences, both within and between the different cities, we can begin to destabilise the centrality of national discourses within processes of dynamic identity relations. A future for multiculturalism beyond the restrictions of the national scale depends in part on a recognition that the nation remains fundamental in discursive identity relations, and yet, it is but one way to think about identity.

For the second generation, living between nations, the dominance of national discourses of belonging problematises their modes of being. Their positionality as in, but not necessarily of, the nation has the potential to challenge the legitimacy of their claims to belonging. In short, the second generation are more likely to be placed in a quandary when asked, "Where are you from?", or "What is your identity?" than a new migrant or a member of the constructed national core community. This position relative to the nation makes the second generation from an Iranian background a

pertinent case study. However, as mentioned in previous chapters, it is a mistake to think that this ‘problem’ of belonging is limited to the second generation; that they are just in a transitional phase between the sureties of the national belonging of their parent(s) and the national belonging of the ‘host’ society. Instead, it is necessary to see in this analysis the kernels of choice, constraint and history (of structure and agency) in identity negotiations to which all people are subject. The second generation from Iran may be asked to justify their identity more often than many other people in ABC, but their situation is not unique. The dilemmas they face over identity are common to all people seeking to interact within societal relations.

This chapter is particularly concerned with the negotiation of ‘national’ identities amongst the second generation from an Iranian background. Whether the respondents recognise themselves as ‘Iranians’ or ‘Australians’, ‘Britons’/‘Englishmen’, ‘Canadians’ is a question that does not challenge the prevailing dominance of national discourses of belonging. Hence, this first discussion will look at how people negotiate their identities within the prevailing discourses, and what opportunities and limitations these particular individuals have to express everyday self-identification; their position in society/ies. In order to achieve this, the discussion will first turn to the way the second generation from Iran are embedded within discourses of national belonging through a combination of the agency over identity decisions, the structuring of identity choices and the enduring attachment of Iranian national belonging. As tensions over Iran as a ‘deviant nation’, as seen from the West, manifest themselves, one challenge for the second generation is to negotiate the sense of ‘threat’ associated with Iranian-ness. Under these conditions, the alternate national ascription of ‘Persian’ has a part to play in the discourses of belonging in the diaspora. How this construction of a ‘coping strategy’ through recourse to Persian identity plays itself out amongst the respondents forms the next phase of the discussion. Finally, the analysis turns to a particular manifestation of this coping strategy through a discussion of the university clubs and societies to which some of the respondents belonged and the perceived challenges of their contemporary positionalities as Iranians.

From this chapter’s discussion of some of the negotiations that take place within the discourses of national belonging, the analysis then moves on to a wider ranging discussion of the other possible communal relations that serve to challenge the

unquestioned dominance of national identities. Chapter 7 turns to the significance of religious identity as a major point of differentiation within the ‘Iranian diaspora’, whilst Chapter 8 extends on this to include discussions of alternate communal affiliations, such as class, linguistics and gender through which the second generation from Iran express their complex identities and thus detailing how their empirical reality helps to decentre the dominance of purely ‘national’ belongings, unsettling not only ‘Iranian’ migrant identities, but also the bounded Australian/British/Canadian identity.

6.1 ‘Where are you from?’: Iran as an ontological position

At the outset, the respondents entered into the research process carrying with them a set of assumptions and expectations that in many cases centred on the nation and national identity. The interviews conducted with respondents began as a discussion of their place as ‘Iranians’ in the ABC landscape. When asked about identity and community directly, many would firstly describe themselves as either Iranian or Persian (a distinction that will be discussed below). When given a selection of possible categories along a trajectory between Iran and Australia, Canada or Britain they conformed to this restricted nationalist discourse, on some occasions giving responses that they would not normally use in ‘everyday’ interactions, but that appeared rational as possible choices nonetheless.

Just Iranian would do, I think
Respondent 19, female Muslim, London.

Many respondents were used to answering the question, “Where are you from?” within an acceptable dialectical positionality relative to the legitimised ABC national body, by casting themselves as Iranian.

I guess it’s the best way to describe it: the Iranian community. Coming from Iran.
Respondent 12, male Baha’i, Vancouver.

C: Do you think there is a group, or groups, to which you belong that could be called a community?

Yes. I guess the Iranian-Australians. I mean that's a community. And also, Australia, itself, should be a community, because everyone, when you consider it, is an immigrant. You know, definitely from here. ... Yeah, and then just the Iranian community as well. I mean, it's in your blood.

Respondent 37, female Muslim, Sydney.

The national forms are “the best way to describe” their communal affiliations and personal identities. Alternatively, some adhered to religious communal forms when asked about community belonging and this will be discussed in detail in Chapter 8. However despite this, throughout the interviews, these same respondents had no difficulty in falling into discussions about their ‘Iranian’ selves.¹⁰⁹

This concession to construct communal Iranian forms was apparent even when these constructed Iranian communities were limited to sub-sections or cross-sections of the total Iranian born cohort and their families in each of the city sites.

I am fascinated by the fact that I'm not involved in their [the Muslim/majority/migrant Iranian] community. And yet they seem to me to have a community. And I don't know if that's because they don't feel welcomed or because they really love, you know, the cultural aspects of that ... So ... maybe you don't need an Iranian community label at all. ... but the fact that it exists, I don't know

Respondent 30, female Baha'i, London.

The hegemonic epistemology of national belonging or national identity has the dual effect of legitimating the discussions of belonging for the stereotyped national bodies whilst at the same time delegitimizing those that exist outside the national sphere of acceptability, beyond the ontology of the nation. What it is to be Australian or Canadian, or British (or English) becomes the ‘reality’ against which inclusion is measured, placing ‘us’ against ‘them’ through a discrete set of national markers. For ‘migrants’, who fail to fulfil the requirements of acceptable belonging, such as being ‘white’ or speaking English, this places them in an ontological position of inferiority. Lorraine Code refers to this position of unquestioned subordination as the individual’s ‘underclass epistemic status’ (1991, in Sandercock, 2003: 75). In Code’s work, she refers to the subordinate position of women as a set of power relations that reproduce

¹⁰⁹ Whilst this is no surprise it needs to be discussed as this research does not take national identity as a given. It is the intention to step back from the unquestioned dominance of (white/male) national identity to interrogate its place in identity relations.

themselves, as women come to accept their subordinated position as normal. In gender relations Code claims the hegemonic status relations blind women to the possibility of change. In order to overcome the inequalities in society they must first recognise that their subordinate position is subject to change. As Sandercock (2000) notes, Code's framework of positionality in society set along gender lines can be extended to the questions of difference and action amongst migrant groups in postcolonial nation-states. In order for migrant groups, however they are framed, to find a voice as individuals within the sphere of acceptability, they must first escape the 'underclass status' to which they are seemingly constrained. Migrants, like women in Code's work, must be able to see the possibility to escape their normalised subordinate position in society as part of national migrant communities set in opposition to the 'natural' citizen. As Ghassan Hage notes, they need to find an empowering hope that allows them to actively engage with change in the present (Hage, 2003). As discussed in Chapter 2, this is a program of change that must be a collective effort (Sandercock, 2003:75) involving both those subordinated (the migrant 'other') and those who subordinate (the national 'us').

The question "Where are you from?" is at the root of discussions about the legitimation of identity space within the nation.¹¹⁰ Within this question are set the boundaries of acceptance and the terms under which acceptance will be negotiated. Asking this question is an expression of power in the hands of the legitimate national. This question belongs to the gatekeepers of national belonging, Hage's (1998) natural citizens, who are assumed to have the right to ask this question of those who appear not to belong. It is not merely the catchcry of the conservative, or the neo-fascist seeking to elide the migrant from the national landscape, but also of the liberals and the progressives as they seek to include 'the migrant voice' (see Chapter 2). What is missing is the self-actualised power of the migrant to ask of the natural citizen where they are 'from', because it is assumed that they are from 'here' by virtue of meeting the criteria for belonging. This discussion of who is and who is not acceptable is framed within discourses of national belonging, evenly allocated across space. The crisis in public identity is a crisis in national identity, as an exclusive set of markers

¹¹⁰ I use the term identity 'space' to indicate the inherent link between the national cultural community and the bounded territory of the nation-state. The right of nationals to ask the question, "Where are you from?" (in a similar way to the query, "Who goes there?") is predicated upon presence *within* the territory of the national community (see discussion of 'the nation' in Chapter 1).

are constantly sought to overlay the territory of the nation. When I expressed my position in the existent power relations of my society by asking of my respondents, “What is your identity?”, they generally conformed to their underclass epistemic status and responded within the expected/accepted bounds of identity politics – they told me their nationality. In my role as researcher, as sure as I was Australian, by virtue of my unspoken association with the essentialised national attributes – ‘white’, English speaking – my respondents were Iranian, constructed in dialectical opposition set within, not merely ethnocultural bounds, but national bounds understood as a territorial association with the emotional and institutional belonging to the nation.

Given these arguments it is little wonder that when I asked the respondents to talk about their ‘identity’ the initial responses were generally framed within national discourses. However, expressing national identities only partially accounts for an individual’s identity. As respondent 30 notes above, she feels in some way excluded from an ‘Iranian’ community, reflecting both a limitation in the inclusive nature of this national construct and her complex position somewhere ‘outside’ of this Iranian-ness, alluding to a need to express more complex identity relations.

The dominance of issues of national identity in discussions of belonging are inherent within the questions, “Where are you from?/What is your identity?/ To what groups/communities do you belong?”, particularly when discussed by a white researcher with a non-white subject (see Chapter 3). Additionally, the use of the term Iranian and Iran throughout the interview process established an assumed hierarchy of social truths, at the base of which was the truth of some sort of coherent Iranian migrant ‘community’. This emphasised their migrancy despite their reality as interstitial Australians/Canadians/British of the second generation. In a very general sense, this led to a variety of different ‘starting positions’ for the respondents based partially on religious differences between the groups in each city, but also related to the specific nature of the contexts that each city site represented for second generation individuals from an Iranian background.

6.2 *Iran or Persia*

The imaginings of the second generation of their homeland are influenced by many factors, such as the length of time away from Iran (and whether they have returned to ‘visit’ – see Chapter 7) and the degree to which they relate to their enduring ethnic identification as Iranians (possibly influenced by the nature of their immediate family’s relationship to Iran). Another important factor is the contemporary social and political reality and the recent history of Iran itself (see Chapter 5). These relations are made no clearer than through the relationship to debates over the naming of the ‘true’ nation as Iran or Persia.

The name Iran was officially attached to the modern nation-state on the first day of the Persian New Year in 1935 (Kashani-Sabet, 1999: 219). The designation of the nation-state as Iran was intended to remove the terms ‘Persia’ and ‘Persian’ from the international arena, for, as noted in a ministerial memo, “Whenever the word ‘Pars’ is uttered or written, immediately foreigners will remember the weakness, ignorance, misfortune, the dwindling independence, confusion ... of old Iran” (Kashani-Sabet, 1999: 218). The insistence on the change from the Arab/Greek-origin Persia to Iran, a Farsi term that translates as ‘land of Aryans’,¹¹¹ was imbued with the progressive civilising features of modern nation-statehood. As Kashani-Sabet notes, “‘Iran’ embodied the flourishing present while ‘Persia’ recalled the country’s ‘past circumstances’” (1999: 218). The precise history of national nomenclature was not widely known by respondents. However, some showed they were well aware of the complex history.

The reason at the time that he (Reza Shah) gave wasn’t that he was going to appease Hitler obviously. The reason he gave was that the British had given us this name, Persia. To name it after, there’s a province called Fars in the heart of Iran. It’s where Persepolis is. It’s where Shiraz is. And that’s basically where the heart of the culture, of Iranian culture. ... That province is called Fars, and it may have been called Pars. I’m not sure. And the Arabs, they don’t have ‘p’ in their language. So that may have been why they changed it to Fars ... after the Arab invasion of Iran ... So they may have told the British

¹¹¹ The term Aryan has been linked to ancient Iranian usage describing lineage and language. Darius the Great, King of Persia (521 - 486 BC), noted in an inscription in Naqsh-e-Rostam (near Shiraz in present-day Iran), “I am Darius the great King... A Persian, son of a Persian, an Aryan, having Aryan lineage”.

that it was Pars. And they may have just changed it into Persia. So anyway, Reza Shah, he said that the land used to be called Iran in ancient, ancient times. In the times of like the Persian Empire, of the Achaemenids, Cyrus the Great, Darius the Great ... He said that Iran was called that during those times and this was the sort of the colonial name that we'd been given.
Respondent 10, male Muslim, Vancouver.

Whilst the connotations for Reza Shah's Iranian government of the name Persia were a reminder of the failures of the Qajar rulers (1796 CE – 1925 CE) to successfully construct a 'modern' nation, implying a pre-modern backwardness that marked the late 19th and early 20th Century, for the respondents 'Persia' and 'Persian' is most often associated with more positive feelings of nostalgia. The 'Persian culture' in the diaspora, is often set in contrast to the Iran of 20th Century modernity, or the Islamic Republic of Iran, as will be discussed below.¹¹² The difficulty in unthreading the history of the Persian Empire or the received history of the Iranian nation, combined with the contemporary negative associations with the notion of Iran, all conspire to produce a confusion over which is the most suitable signifier for a particular situation. As Anthony Smith states about nations in general, "it is almost impossible to disentangle the elements of pure 'invention' from those of a 'rediscovery', 'revival' or 'reconstruction' of pre-existing elements" (A. D. Smith, 1993: 14).¹¹³ Hence, which is the received history is unclear for most of the second generation.

6.3 The Utility of Iran

An important factor that needs to be taken into account in the analysis of the signifiers the respondents utilised in their interviews is the context of the immediate discussion. Firstly, it must be noted that the dominant discourse of identity used in wider society, outside of the immediate 'community' of 'Iranians' (and non-Iranian Baha'is – see below), centres on using the term Iran, rather than Persia. The nation-state of Iran is a part of the international community of nation-states, and as such is the standard signifier of identity. Conversely, Persia as a 'nation' or 'Empire' is a relic whose contemporary manifestations as Persian identity are in disjuncture with the

¹¹² Also see Chapter 5.

¹¹³ At the same time, Anthony Smith also notes with reference to the Persian Empire that the succession of conquests by Arabs, Turks and others since the Sassanids (225 CE – 640 CE) and the resultant influx of immigrants, and the eventual conversion of the Empire to Islam under the Safavids (1502 CE – 1736 CE), all failed to extinguish the sense of an enduring Persian ethnic identity (A. D. Smith, 1993: 26).

understanding of Persia as an ‘ancient Empire’. Whilst there may be a constructed historical continuity of Persian identity concurrent to the national space of Iran, for many respondents this understanding is not widely recognised by populations outside the migrant Iranian communities. It is these ‘outsiders’, and in particular the white ‘natural citizens’, who are the source of the questioning of belonging faced by the children of Iranian migrants.

But sometimes I say Persian, and then they go, ‘Oh, where’s that?’
Respondent 47, Muslim female, Sydney.

I use them interchangeably ... Sometimes if I’m being mindful, then I say Iranian. It’s more politically correct, ‘cause people sort of go, ‘Where’s Persia?’, like, ‘What’s Persia?’. Some people don’t know ... and it doesn’t tie people in with the Iran that it is now. It ties it in with the Iran that was before. But, I mean, I don’t mind, either one for me.
Respondent 37, Muslim female, Sydney.

The fact that many respondents indicated to me that there was little understanding of Iran as Persia amongst white Australians, Canadians and Britons, meant that the assumed starting point for the conversation about origins and identities would generally begin with discussions about Iran rather than Persia.¹¹⁴ Using the term ‘Iranian’ produces less interrogation of meaning than using ‘Persian’ and thus facilitates discussions allowing the conversation to move on from the questions of ethnicity and belonging. All of this occurred regardless of the way individuals actually felt about their personal association with the terms Iranian or Persian (see below). Even those who indicated that they thought of themselves as Persian exhibited a degree of ambivalence over the term, relying on both Iran and Persia as foci of ‘national’ identity in everyday use, in order to be understood without excessive explanation. Others claimed Persia was easily recognised. Yet in general, people recognised the expediency of using Iran over Persian in discussions with non-Iranians.

For some respondents, the decision to use Persia or Iran was more explicitly linked to the etymology of the terms. One respondent made the distinction between Iran as a Farsi word and Persian as a non-Farsi/English word. In the Farsi language it is more

¹¹⁴ Some Baha'is were consistent in their usage of the term Persian and indicated that the context would not change their views (see below, and Chapter 7).

appropriate to speak of Iran. Persia and Persian, with their derivation from the Arab and Greek usage, can thus be seen as more appropriate for use when speaking to English-speaking people.

C: Can you read and write in Farsi?

It's interesting, why do you say Farsi?

C: I say Farsi because ... if you talk about the language...

Farsi is Iranian, or Persian ... Most people wouldn't understand Farsi, most English people. I've said to them I speak Persian, that's what the English, I think, as far as I know. I never say to anyone I speak Farsi. I say to them, in English, I speak Persian. The language is Persian. I never say I speak Iranian, either. ... Farsi is the Persian word for saying it, the language.

Respondent 22, male Muslim, London

As this quote shows, some respondents were more insistent on the linguistic background of terms such as Farsi and Persia/Persian. This linguistic construct, along with other linguistic communities will be discussed further in Chapter 8.

6.4 *Invoking the Glory of Persia*

Iran's contemporary validity at the time of Reza Shah's push for national unity was set in a wider inter-'national' modernist environment, and grounded on the construction of a continual history of 'national' existence in the form of the homogenously constituted Persian Empire (as is the case for Anderson's Thailand [1983]). The name change from Persia to Iran instituted by Reza Shah's government from 1934 in an attempt to recast Iran as a modern nation in the international community was ironic in that the Iranian national project was increasingly pursued internally through an understanding of Iran as Persian (Kashani-Sabet, 1999: 219). The 'Persianisation' of the state and the nation sought to bring Iranian citizens together under the banner of a shared 'Persian' language and a shared 'Persian' heritage through education and centralisation of control in order to secure the borders and undermine the tensions of non-Persian groups that existed within the territory of the modern Iranian state. The nationalist project of Reza Shah valorised the pre-Islamic Zoroastrian past as a means to undermine the power of the Islamic clergy,

with the ultimate aim of entrenching a secular state.¹¹⁵ It also constructed a cultural core relating to when ‘the Empire’ was powerful and the territorial boundaries extended beyond the present state borders. The change to ‘Iran’ symbolically (re)claimed territorial control in the face of contemporary territorial threats from the Turkish (following from the Byzantine and the Ottoman) to the northwest, Arabs to the west, and Russians to the north.

Because ... really, Persian is probably more accurate. Because our family, like my side ... originate from Turkey. And at one stage that was part of the Persian Empire. ... So there’s all that kind of linkages through generations of genealogy, if you want to [look] there.

Respondent 47, female Muslim, Sydney.

“Iranian. I don’t use Persian. It doesn’t really exist. That’s because I’m not very nostalgic about the past because I’ve never lived there. I wasn’t in the past so it doesn’t make much sense to call myself (Persian).”

Respondent 24, female Muslim, London.

As respondent 24 notes, the temporal and physical distance from an embodied ‘Persian’, pre-Iranian, nation makes it difficult for young people, and particularly the second generation in the diaspora, to relate to ‘Persia’. Yet at the same time, in the diaspora, the Persian culture becomes mythologised as the embodiment of positive ‘cultural’ virtues homogenously spread across the territory of the ‘glorious’ Persian nation/empire, an established identity of high culture embodied by the sensitivity of the great poets and thinkers (Hafez, Ferdowsi, Rumi and Biruni) as well as strong and valiant leaders (Darius the Great, Cyrus the Great), along with the archaeology, art, music and ‘history’ of the ‘Empire’.¹¹⁶

I see a lot of people use Persian. Of course, they like the whole Persian thing because before Persia was an Empire and it’s ancient and civilised.

Respondent 11, female Muslim, Vancouver.

¹¹⁵ Whilst attempts to neutralise the influence of the clergy ultimately failed, and whilst in reality the *mullahs* remained an important part of the political landscape of Iran, they did so within an increasing mythologising of the glory of the pre-Islamic Persian Empire (Kashani-Sabet, 1999).

¹¹⁶ The lion as a symbol of Iran represented on the pre-revolutionary flag typifies the strength imbued in the old Empire (see Figure 6.8 and associated discussion below).

I've never called my self Persian actually ... I think the idea is that Persian sounds much more grand and nice ... but you are what you are.
Respondent 24, female Muslim, London.

I guess Persian, people like to use it because it sounds more exotic.
Respondent 37, female Muslim, Sydney.

The essentialised historicisation of Iran/Persia as the imagined glorious forebear to modern theocratic Iran, as an 'exotic' place, a 'grand and nice' place of culture, integrity and intellect, devoid of complexities and negative features, constructs a nation lacking the political and religious diversity, with its associated tensions and conflict, present in contemporary theocratic Iran (and to some extent in the diaspora).

'Persian' cultural events as expressions of national culture in the diaspora, whilst also significantly centred on popular culture production, evoke traditional links to Persian cultural history. These include regular poetry readings, tours by classical Persian musicians playing distinctively Persian classical instruments (see Chapter 8), and the celebrations associated with the Persian New Year, amongst others. Going to the Persian restaurant, in all three cities, was another important regular feature of the reproduction of Persian cultural sensibilities amongst the second generation (see Chapter 5 and Chapter 8). In the company of family or friends, it is in the Persian restaurant that, beyond the consumption of 'traditional' food, 'traditional' Persian dancing takes place to the sound of 'traditional' Persian music, both popular and more classical, almost all of which is produced in Los Angeles, the centre of diasporic cultural production for Iranians (Naficy, 1993) (see Chapters 5 and 8).

When asked about the events that they had attended that others of Iranian background attended, the second generation described a variety of family-based events, functions and less formal family gatherings. All of these cultural events form the background to the reproduction of Persian/Iranian identity from the first to the second generation. These Persian cultural events are significant as nationally delimited 'ethnic' events that conform to national multicultural discourses; they are the 'food and dance' of Fleras and Elliot's (2002) Food and Dance multiculturalisms. Acceptable as national expressions of identity and yet separate from the 'white nation'. Despite the

construction of the dialectical Iranian cultural Other, the realities of second generation involvement reflect a more complex picture of different 'Irans'.

6.5 *National Cultural Forms: Celebrating New Year*

This section analyses Persian 'national' cultural events and the degree to which the respondents attended and how relevant they felt they were to them as individuals and as members of specific 'communities'. The centrepiece of the cultural calendar for Iranians in the diaspora is the New Year (*Norooz*) celebrations, which occur around the vernal equinox in the last two weeks of March. The celebrations mark the commencement of both the Baha'i calendar and the official Iranian calendar, and have their origins in the Zoroastrian religion. Events which occur around this time of year include the *Norooz* celebration itself (see Figures 6.1 to 6.4), which is centred on the *haft seen* (seven items starting with the letter 's'), *chahar shanbeh souri* (an event involving jumping over fire), and *sizdeh bedeh* (lit: 13 out). The *haft seen* is a collection of seven items starting with the letter 's' that is symbolic of the processes of growth and renewal associated with the coming of Spring and the new year. The *haft seen* (see Figures 6.1 and 6.2) includes grass, or wheat (*sabzeh*) which is traditionally grown for the haft seen, the spice mix *soumac*, garlic (*seer*), apple (*seeb*), vinegar (*serkeh*), *samano* (a paste made from the juice of germinating wheat mixed with flour), and wild olives (*senjed*). Also routinely included in the *haft seen* are hyacinth flowers, some coins, painted eggs, goldfish, candles, a mirror, and the Quran. The presence of dried and fresh fruits is reminiscence of the ancient feasts to celebrate and pray to the deities to ensure the protection of the winter crops (Price, 2004), whilst the candles represent the fire of renewal from Zoroastrian religion.

Events such as *chahar shanbeh souri* and *sizdeh bedeh* that accompany the celebration of *Norooz* are significant events that can draw the 'Iranian' community together. The event of *chahar shanbeh souri* involves an act of purification by jumping over a fire whilst reciting a short mantra in Farsi (see Figure 6.5). As a ritual, this act predates Islam and has its roots in the Zoroastrian religion. As a result, the post-revolutionary government banned the annual event as it was not aligned with the state religion. In reality the ritual has continued in Iran on an annual basis, prompting the government to relax its restrictions in recent years. The importance accorded to

the maintenance of cultural traditions amongst the first generation has ensured a high degree of involvement of the Iranian ‘communities’ in these annual events. However, in Vancouver serendipity has seen this event rise in profile over recent years. In Iran, *chahar shanbeh souri* is traditionally held in the local street or in someone’s yard as a small community affair. In London, and also in Sydney, the diasporic maintenance of this tradition is also a small-scale occurrence. This has ensured that these events often escape media attention.¹¹⁷ In Vancouver, the imposition of fire bans has forced Iranians to gather in the one area where they could gain an exemption, in Ambleside Park in West Vancouver, close to the larger concentrations of Iranians in Vancouver. The event at Ambleside Park has become larger over time with the present event attracting several thousand Iranians with their families and friends to what has become a very public event for the ‘Iranian community’. Many of the second generation I spoke with in Vancouver attended this event, and those that did not, were aware of its existence, both through informal communications and through the media.

In each of the cities, respondents mentioned gatherings for picnics to mark *sizdeh bedeh* near water so that the *sabzeh*, the grass or wheat, can be thrown into the water, as tradition dictates.



Figure 6.1: The *haft seen* at a Norooz celebration in Lonsdale Mall, Vancouver (photograph by author).

¹¹⁷ They also routinely escape the attention of Iranians and their families in the diaspora. Several respondents, particularly amongst the Baha'is, in Sydney and London did not know of such events happening.



Figure 6.2: The *haft seen* in the family home of a respondent (photograph by respondent).



Figure 6.3: A *Norooz* event in Lonsdale Mall, North Vancouver attracts a large crowd (photographs by author).

Figure 6.4: *Norooz* celebration in a respondent's home in Vancouver (photograph by author).



There's *sizdeh bedeh* on the thirteenth day after *Norooz* where you go for a picnic and, ah, usually there's a certain park in Cockfosters where Iranians gather. It's a tradition on the thirteenth day you have to leave the house. And you have to go to the river. Have you seen the *sabzeh*? You know, the green sprouts we grow. We throw that in the river. They take that in their cars and they drive to the place where we have a picnic where there might be a stream or pond. ... We usually go with the family. Like we get in the car and go to the River Thames and throw it in. I've been to Cockfosters a couple of times. I'm sure they'll be there this year.

Respondent 23, male Muslim, London.

I don't know any Iranians who aren't Baha'i. I know there is an Iranian community. They have *sizdeh bedeh* ... which is ... I don't know what it is ... It's held in a park and a lot of Iranians go there (and) some of them are Baha'i.

Respondent 15, female Baha'i, Sydney.

C: What about *sizdeh bedeh*?

I go to that. ... We usually go to Peace Arch, White Cliff, or ... Ambleside or English Bay. ... We go with my parent's family friends.

C: The *mehmuni* group.

Yeah, exactly. It's like a *mehmuni* group, and its close friends and we go and I can take like my cousin if I want. It's kind of open.

Respondent 41, female Muslim, Vancouver.



Figure 6.5: *Chahar shanbeh souri* at Ambleside Beach, West Vancouver. People jump over fires to cleanse the soul of the previous year's ill will (photograph by author).

6.6 National Cultural Forms: *Mehmuni*

Where *Norooz* and its associated events represent formal fixed celebrations of Persian cultural identity in the diaspora, reciprocal family visits, or *mehmuni*, form an important informal field of cultural relations. These semi-structured family visits figured most prominently in the discussions of everyday cultural maintenance with the respondents. The *mehmuni* occurs in the family home amongst a group of families who share food and company. These visits are by invitation and imbue reciprocity amongst the ring of families involved.

I think what you'll get with every family is they have their own little group of ... 4, 5, 6 families that get together on a regular basis once a month. ... And it goes around different peoples houses once ... It does a circle ...

C: The reciprocity...

Yeah.

Respondent 20, London, male Muslim.

Like my mum will start complaining to my dad that we have to have a party because we've gone to all these parties at people's houses ... and it's our turn.

C: There's a strong sense of cultural obligation in that sense?

Yeah, definitely. Definitely around Persian New Year. After the New Year, for weeks people are going back and forward to visit each other. And first people have to go to the eldest people's homes. They are the first ones to receive guests. And then the younger ones start having gatherings. It's sort of you pop by.

C: Is there a structure?

Unspoken structure, yeah.

Respondent 10, male Muslim, Vancouver.

The families can be related or not, are not restricted by religion, and the number of families is not fixed. However, most respondents indicated that where relatives were living in the same city they would be involved. In the absence of relatives, relationships of friendship, possibly engendered through collective experience, make up the group.

We've got a lot of family friends in Sydney. Not family, just friends. We have a lot of *mehmunis*. ...

C: So these are people your parents met through cultural events and things like that?

Yeah, probably the biggest connection is living at the (immigration) hostel. ... When we came we weren't friends ... (but) we had something in common ... We had someone to speak Persian to.
Respondent 34, male Muslim, Sydney.

These visits are important places of exchange and interchange between the first and second generation and as such are central in the reproduction of 'cultural' identity to the children of Iranian migrants. For some, the maintenance of language centred on the ability to communicate with older relatives and the friends of parents at *mehmuni*.

C: With whom do you speak Farsi?
My parents, my parent's friends. When we have, like, dinner parties. I mainly have to speak Persian because, you know, their English is not as good. So they can understand. So mainly my parents and ... first generation Iranians.

C: What about your brother?

I speak English with him.

C: Persian friends?

English.
Respondent 16, male Baha'i, Sydney.

Attendance at *mehmuni* was generally encouraged by the parents of respondents, with one parent (often the mother – see Chapter 8) usually more insistent and concerned about attendance. However, most indicated that beyond pleasing their parents, their attendance at *mehmuni* was less than it had been when they were younger.

C: Do you, ah, feel any obligation to go to these events?

We go to them ... we certainly used to go to them a lot more than we do now, but yeah, if I am not doing anything I'll go. But they usually happen on a Friday or Saturday night so probably I go to every other one.

C: Your parents are fine with that?

Yeah. There are certain ones which you would go to if it's at say my uncles, or my mums cousin, You know, its pretty cool anyway we have a good time.
Respondent 20, male Muslim, London.

When I was younger I had to go because I was young and I had to go with my parents. Now I only go if I actually like the person. You know, I don't go because I have to. I think I'm a bit too old for that ... but ... if I've been invited I can't really say no.

C: So sometimes you can get out of it and sometimes you can't?

Yeah. If they've specifically said my name I can't really get out of it ... My mum would look silly if I didn't go.
Respondent 24, female Muslim, London.

Whilst *mehmuni* was not limited to either religious group, the Baha'is were less likely to take part, particularly when the parents had moved to a more cosmopolitan stance or had rejected their 'Iranian-ness' as a coping mechanism for their exile. Where they did practice it there was often considerable ambivalence over its cultural value.

C: Do you and your family take part in *mehmuni*?

Ahm, yeah. Yeah.

C: Did you know it as *mehmuni*?

No (laughs). I know the word but, yeah no.

C: It's associated formally with *Norooz*.

Oh, right.
Respondent 30, female Baha'i, London.

Around times of importance, such as New Year, Baha'i festivals, occasions of importance ... we try and ... go visit our relatives, our Persian relatives, as a sign of ... because of the Persian custom. Not Baha'i custom, but a Persian custom ... A lot of the time a Persian family visits another Persian family. It's like, you have turns. ... Like a social obligation. ... Well we don't take it as seriously as some people might. I don't know, because we've been out of Iran for a long time. ... We also do it with Baha'i friends as well. ... It sort of ends up becoming the way it is for our interactions with non-Persians as well. Because it's our culture we expect that ... a lot of the time (we) apply the same standard. And the same customs.
Respondent 14, male Baha'i, Sydney.

C: Do your parents practice *mehmuni*?

Not in a formal way, but it's kind of open door policy. You bump into someone and they come around. They may or they may not. There's certain bits of Iranian culture which are still very much in my family. Their outrageous hospitality is still very much there. Its quite embarrassing hospitality sometimes. ... I think my mum's probably, she's definitely got more white, or English 'ra ra' friends, you know, than Iranian friends.
Respondent 26, male Baha'i, London.

C: What about *mehmuni*? Do you...?

Mehmuni, yes. That means yes like a...

C: Visiting?

Yeah, visiting.
Respondent 28, female Baha'i, London.

Although *mehmuni* is informal in structure for most of the year with no set timing built into the systems of reciprocity, around *Norooz mehmuni* hierarchies and reciprocities, for some, become more rigid in their application. The thirteen days from *Norooz* to *sizdeh bedeh* are characterised by more formal visits amongst the *mehmuni* families, with the most senior members of the group, both in age and status receiving visitors first, followed by the next most senior, and so on down the line of age and status.¹¹⁸ This more formal cultural tradition was more likely to be undertaken by Muslim respondents than Baha'is, as the Baha'is tended to treat New Year more as a religious rather than a cultural event (see Chapter 7). Similarly, Baha'is were more likely to express disinterest in other 'Persian' *Norooz* events in general, as these tended to be in contrast with the more religious connotations of Baha'i *Norooz* celebrations.

C: What about times around *Norooz*, do you do anything?

Not really. My family's never been big in that kind of thing. ...There's usually stuff happens in London so I would go if I could but I don't ...
Respondent 33, female Baha'i, London.

¹¹⁸ Whilst following age, status or 'experience' was also important and it appeared to be centred on males rather than females, although it was unclear if any of these relationships were exclusively the case.

These national cultural forms are not universally subscribed to by first generation Iranians in the diaspora with a significant schism appearing between the two religious groups (see Chapter 7). For the second generation, this difference along religious lines was partially reproduced as Baha'is were less involved in these national events than their Muslim counterparts. However, the degree to which the second generation Muslims took part also changed with the second generation more likely to be less interested in these national cultural events. These community events evoke nostalgia that the first generation can actively relate to their experiences with the same celebrations in the homeland. For the second generation, their nostalgia is not necessarily related to the homeland, instead being related to their youth in the diaspora. The connection to Iran evoked through these events can be seen as more complex and diffuse for the second generation. Regardless of their relationship to these signifying events, it appears that at least superficially all of the respondents recognised these events as Persian/Iranian, even when they themselves may be merely spectators from afar. This is particularly the case in Vancouver where the visible public expression of *Norooz* and *chahar shanbeh souri*, reported widely in the media, help to reproduce a distinct 'Iranian' community experience amongst both the wider public and the second generation themselves.

6.7 *Persian as a Coping Strategy*

The decision whether to use the Persian signifier is predicated, for some, on a desire to express their relationship to that part of themselves that is not Australian/Canadian/British. However, for others (or at other times), it is a coping strategy to avoid being targeted as a terrorist or a fundamentalist Muslim through their association with the normatively constructed 'Iranian' known through media representations (see Chapter 4).

Throughout the interview process, the bulk of the respondents indicated, both consciously and subconsciously, some unease with the standard nomenclature used to describe them. For the children of Iranian migrants living in the diaspora these limitations to national discourses of identity produce and reproduce the individual as Iranian, or hybridise them as Iranian-Australian, or Iranian-Canadian, or some variant on that theme. Individuals expressed some agency over the process of naming through

recourse to the idea of the Persian nation discussed above as a cultural and political entity that exists in contrast to the connotations associated with the contemporary vision of Iran. These individuals identify as 'Persian' in order to work within the established national discourses of identity, whilst challenging the limitations of 'Iran' as a signifier of identity. For many second generation individuals from Iran, both Muslim and Baha'i, the idea of a glorious Persian Empire, bastion of culture and power, is very alluring in the face of contemporary problematising of Iranian belonging in Western understanding. Iran as represser, Iran as fundamentalist religious state, or Iranians as terrorists, or threatening asylum seekers, are neatly avoided in discussions of identity through recourse to Persia.

People try to not say Iran as much because foreigners hear Iran and they think Iraq. Iran, Iraq, same thing. Or they think hostages. You know, or they think Iran and they think terrorism. But they think Persia and they think of Persian rugs and Persian culture, and ancient Persia, Persian Empire, Persian cats, things like this. So a lot of people outside the country like to say Persian. For me, personally, I mean, if it helps in not being identified with terrorists, and hostages ... and ... that sort of thing, then I'd prefer being called Persian.
Respondent 10, male Muslim, Vancouver.

I like Persian because it has that more antiquated, kind of, you know, sort of (thing) about it. And most people don't know that Persia is Iran (laughs).
Respondent 47, female Muslim, Sydney.

C: Are you aware of different people you should be using the different terms with?

I think at this time ... You don't want to go into the States and go, hey I'm Iranian. But if you say Persian it kind of draws attention away from the word Iran.
Respondent 41, female Muslim, Vancouver.

The respondents sometimes indicated dissatisfaction over the use of the term 'Iranian', which manifested itself through the interchange of terms.

I'd say maybe I'm kind of too naive about the ... diversity of the *Iranian* community here. You know, and I think part of that's because I'm quite ignorant about *Persian* society generally.
Respondent 30, female Baha'i, London – emphasis added.

The ambivalence over the use of 'Persian' and 'Iranian' reflects in some part the tensions between representing the self as self-evidently of Iranian background, whilst also attempting to avoid the negative connotations associated with Iran.

I know Persian sounds nicer, and ... with closer friends I use Persian. But ... with my friends or whatever at (university), I make sure I balance it. 'Cause I don't want to make it sound like I'm using the nicer word for something that I'm trying to hide. So I sometimes say Iranian.

Respondent 7, male Baha'i, Vancouver.

The Baha'i respondents appeared to show a general disengagement with the Iranian national identity preferring on almost all accounts to use the term Persian or Persia in discussions about themselves, the communities they inhabit and the country of their ancestry (see Chapter 7).

C: Do you say Persia, or do you say Iran?

I say Persia. ... 'Cause I think personally, it sounds better than Iran. People get confused, like Iraq? No, Iran. 'Cause like, I don't know, Iran doesn't give me a ... Persia people think of as a better country. Say Iran they (non-Iranians) don't think of it.

Respondent 16, male Baha'i, Sydney.

I say Persian almost all the time instead of Iranian, yeah. ... And I don't know why. It sort of comes off easier, and ... just the confusion between ... Iran and Iraq. If you say Persian then someone will almost automatically know its Iran. So I just sort of use that.

Respondent 4, female Baha'i, Vancouver.

Again, in the experience of the Vancouver respondent above (respondent 4), the wider recognition of a Persian/Iranian community has a part to play in the decision to use the Persian signifier. In a related manner, the lack of visibility in Sydney and London tends to alienate this automatic connection between the two national forms resulting in an apparent difference in the degree to which the wider public could be expected to understand that Iran is Persia, or vice versa. Beyond the differences observed between the way the two religious groups in the sample understood and utilised the Persian/Iranian identity, some differences were observed between the three cities. In Vancouver, tensions over belonging to an 'Iranian community' appeared to relate to the ongoing tensions between the United States and Iran that have their roots in the

US hostage crisis of the early 1980s. One possible explanation for this is the proximity of the US, the traditional enemy of contemporary Iran, a situation made no less comfortable by the inclusion of Iran in George W. Bush's construction of the 'Axis of Evil' in his 2002 State of the Union address. Further to this, the more visible Iranian community was widely recognised as being congruent to 'Persian' allowing more freedom in the use of the term with non-Iranians. In London, the 'Iranian Embassy hostage crisis' of May 1980¹¹⁹ has had a similar effect of casting the Iranians as 'terrorists' within the local British community. During the course of the fieldwork in London several newspapers referred to the heroism of the SAS soldiers who stormed the Embassy. In Sydney, the normatively negative status associated with being 'Iranian' was still present, but did not appear to have the same level of importance and relevance as it did in the case of Vancouver and London. A large number of respondents in all three cities from both religious backgrounds expressed a degree of discomfort over being associated with these representations of Iran as the 'home of terror' and of Iranians as terrorists and fundamentalists.

Several respondents from Vancouver insisted that the reason they chose to eschew the term Iranian was because of the difficulty of saying Iranian in the North American English accent.

I usually use the term (Persian), because it has less syllables and is easier pronunciation than Iranian (ĕ-rā nĕ-ān), or Iranian (ĭ-rā nĕ-ān), or Iranian (ĭ-rā nĕ-ān), different pronunciations of that.
Respondent 11, female Muslim, Vancouver.

I usually use Persian ... Persian is also easier for Canadians to pronounce. Because when I pronounce, Iranian (ĕ-rā nĕ-ān) I pronounce it like Iranian (ĕ-rā nĕ-ān), or like, oh, Iran (ĭ-rān). Persian is easier because if they ask where, I say Iran (ĭ-rān). I don't know, Persian seems to flow better than Iranian (ĕ-rā nĕ-ān). It is easier, it meshes better with the Canadian language, I think.
Respondent 12, male Baha'i, Vancouver.

¹¹⁹ Iranian militants opposed to Ayatollah Khomeini took hostages in a six-day siege of the Iranian Embassy in late April and early May of 1980. The successful SAS rescue was broadcast live creating an enduring image of Iranians in London (http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/may/5/newsid_2510000/2510873.stm, accessed: Dec 1st, 2004).

Yeah, Iranian (Ī-rā' nĕ-ān), Iranian (Ī-rā' nĕ-ān) ... I use that and Persian. But what comes naturally, perhaps, is probably Persian, just because it's easier to say, because it's faster.

Respondent 7, male Baha'i, Vancouver.

The reference to the difficulty of pronunciation could be seen as an avoidance strategy. For some, it was possibly less difficult to mention the problem of pronunciation, than to mention that the nation to which you have some level of belonging was the subject of serious discussions concerning its legitimacy as a nation and as a community. Iran was seen by some as a 'pariah state', although no respondents denied the legitimacy of at least some negative claims. Additionally for some, the pronunciation issue was stated in conjunction with other reasons for avoiding the term 'Iranian' in discussions of identity and belonging.

Several respondents spoke of other second generation Iranians that they knew who denied their Iranian identity as a technique to ease their transition into the wider society. Several noted the use of Italian identity as a surrogate for Iranian identity to explain their dark appearance in the white population. In this way, Italian migrants, as a more established migrant community in all three cities were constructed as more acceptable national ethnicities within the national space.¹²⁰ This instrumentality (see Ip, Inglis and Wu, 1997) over the deployment of Iranian (or Persian) identity in its extreme, through the denial of Iranian background, whilst alluded to by respondents, was not studied directly as prospective respondents did not wish to be involved with an 'Iranian' study (see Chapter 3). Some respondents did profess to utilising Iranian identity in an instrumental manner, and this will be discussed below.

6.8 Persian Clubs and Societies: re-imagining the nation

As discussed in Chapter 3, major sources of respondents for this research were the clubs and societies on university campuses in each of the three cities. Without going into depth here, these institutions were thought to be good starting points because of

¹²⁰ The allusion to a 'white' ethnicity is also related to the Aryan centrality within Persian/Iranian origin myths.

the age of the respondents and the possible length of time in each country¹²¹, and the fact that tertiary education for the second generation is valued highly by migrants in general, and by the Iranian populations in particular. It is interesting at this point to discuss the form and histories of these institutions for as we will see they are embodiments of the national imaginings of their constituents.

Persian or Iranian clubs and societies were found in several of the universities and colleges in each of the cities. In Sydney, social clubs organised by and for students of Iranian background were investigated at the University of Sydney, University of New South Wales (UNSW), and Macquarie University. In Canada, the clubs involved were located at the University of British Columbia (UBC) and Simon Fraser University (SFU), with some specific involvement through Capilano College.¹²² In London, the primary institutional contacts were located in King's College London, University College London (UCL) and The London School of Economics (LSE).

'Clubs and Societies' as institutions of collective engagement on university campuses are intended to create an environment of collegiality and social participation. Individual societies or clubs are funded by the central student union and their members to organise 'social and cultural events' for their members and non-members. These individual club or society events are augmented by wider engagement in specific themed activities that bring together the fraternity of clubs and societies to celebrate significant events in the university calendar, or events of national and/or global significance. Women's Day, International Week, Spring Fair, Freshers Fair, O-Week, Conception Day, amongst many others bring the clubs and societies into the open, in booths decorated with distinctive cultural paraphernalia designed to woo potential members into joining and to pass on information about the activities of the groups on campus and beyond. The themes of clubs and societies appear to be reasonably consistent from university to university with faculty and departmental societies formed along disciplinary lines and clubs (or societies) formed along either lines of interest, such as film or theatre societies, sports, or along religious lines (see

¹²¹ With the revolution occurring more than 20 years ago, those who were born immediately after 1979 in the diaspora would be around university age.

¹²² Students from an Iranian background at Capilano College had only recently formed a club. However, several media students were working on an ongoing research project titled "Window on Iran" (www.windowoniran.com/pil/htm).

Chapter 7), or finally, along national cultural lines. It is this last group of clubs that the Persian/Iranian clubs fall within.

Not all Persian/Iranian clubs were run by the second generation with several in the sample being controlled by newer arrivals of young first generation from Iran, most of whom were permanent residents rather than students who had migrated only for the period of their education. The UBC Persian Club, the Persian Association of Macquarie Students, the UCL Union Persian Society all were controlled by executive members who were from the first generation from Iran during the course of the fieldwork. However, in each of these cases there were founding members or past executives from the second generation whose motivations shall be investigated here. Others, such as the UNSW Persian Society and the Persian Student's Association at the University of Sydney, were founded by first generation members but included members from the second generation.

The name of these clubs and societies are very relevant, as we will see below, with almost all preferring to take a variant of 'The Persian Club' as their name. For some, the use of the Persian signifier, helps to avoid the difficulties associated with 'Iran' and being an 'Iranian' described above.

C: You called it the Persian society

... I wanted it to be something like the Persian Society, you know. ...

C: So you never considered calling it the Iranian society?

No. I never did. Because, with my friends when we speak like, we say Persian. If I was speaking in Farsi with my friends I might say Irani.

Respondent 34, male Muslim, Sydney.

But it is more than a coping mechanism, in that the Persian club is generally designated as a 'cultural' club, devoid of political and religious schisms. Thus, it invokes a mythical cultural homogeneity, part pre-Islamic Zoroastrian and part Islamic (but only in the ceding of significance to the great poets who have influenced this cultural construction during the Islamic period). In this sense it is an attempt to produce an Iranian cultural institution that can overcome, or even embrace, the diversity present in the diaspora which separates the 'community of Iranians'. These

student clubs have been motivated both in their origin and in their continual rebirth with each educational session, by these calls to unity along Persian ‘cultural’ lines.

When I first set up the Iranian ... when I first set up the society it was funny, ‘cause I called it the Persian Society. The reason I called it the Persian Society was simply because, ah, when it came to these Freshers Fairs that we were talking about, they’re alphabetical and I didn’t want to be Iranian stuck next to the Islamic Society, right. Because a lot of people would turn away.
Respondent 20, male Muslim, London.

As the home page of one of the university club’s website states

Be Proud of any links you have with Iran, irrespective of whether you arrived last week or if you have never been there. (Our club) is a non-political, non-religious society aiming to bring everyone together to promote the Persian culture, traditions, language, history, music and hospitality.
<http://www.kingsiraniansociety.com/Main.htm>, accessed: 1st Dec., 2004).

There is recognition of political, religious and ethnic diversity amongst Iranians that motivates these attempts to bring together a unified Persian/Iranian community on campus. It is an emphasis on commonality based on national ascription and a concurrent denial of difference of political opinion, and religious and linguistic difference. This call for Persian/Iranian unity also marks the recognition of generational difference between the first and second generation. According to some respondents the first generation have a more complex understanding of Iran that leads to the reproduction of political, religious, linguistic and other separations in the diaspora. For the second generation these schisms tend to be less apparent, although they still exist (see Chapters 7 and 8).

The lack of unity amongst Iranian migrants and their children and the institutional sparsity across the urban landscape are also motivations to the founders of these clubs and societies.

C: What was your intention in the beginning?

To bring them together. That’s the problem. I think here, especially in Sydney, they’re very stubborn, you know. There’s not a really good ... strong ... force, like idea, to bring them together. I just thought, you know, even if its small scale at uni, try and bring everyone together.
Respondent 34, male Muslim, Sydney.

It kind of wounded my heart, I could say, to see so many Iranians at university who were so far away from the culture, who didn't speak Persian. And I said, oh god, I want to do something, I want to do whatever I can here. Since this place (the Persian Society) is kind of set up now, and we made it bigger and bigger and bigger. And now it's really big.

Respondent 22, male Muslim, London.

One of my dreams was, I wish we could have one main society for all the universities, and we could have one committee who could organise things and it could all go better.

Respondent 22, male Muslim, London.

For some it coincides with the attempts to promote 'cultural events' beyond the bounds of the university in the wider community.

We thought, yeah there is a niche in the market so if we're doing these events ... we think we organise quite good events. ... Ah, we thought let's try to do an event say once every other month, and get these people together. If we make a bit of money from it, then it's even better.

Respondent 20, male Muslim, London.

Within the project of unification of the 'Iranian' students, 'political' and 'religious' concerns were seen as the largest barrier.

So when a student first joins the university there's a fair where all the clubs and societies set up a stall and promote. So we go there and we put up a few flyers, we've done some photos. We talk to them about it. First thing we mention is this is not a religious or a political society. Basically we're just here for socialising, tell you a bit about Iran and get us to integrate. So I stuck up posters saying 'Irani?', which is 'Are you Iranian?'

Respondent 20, male Muslim, London.

To be honest our first word was, we don't get involved in religion. We don't get involved with politics. If you want to do it, go and do it. But not at our events. ... We try to steer clear of that. ... If I was sitting there at Freshers Fair, and I wanted to introduce someone to the society I want them to know, look, don't worry. I am not taking your name down so that one day you're going to go to Iran and you're going to get hanged. There are so many worries ... so our attitude was stay clear ... We are not interested in it.

Respondent 22, male Muslim, London.

For some, the anxiety of possible transnational ramifications of involvement in 'political' or 'religious' organisations fuelled their decisions about whether to get involved or not.

There are issues do with the security of Baha'is in Iran, because if Baha'is become too involved in Persian organisations ... what could happen is ... the information can be quickly sent back to Iran and, without knowing, you could affect the situation of Baha'is in Iran, which is very, very, ah, cautious, sort of. It's very unstable. At any moment something could happen again. And human rights are denied, currently, but further things could happen, if the Baha'is become too involved in Persian organisations and community groups, and stuff like that. So Baha'is do make that conscious decision. I know in the past they've been encouraged to not associate too much with these organisations in Australia. So Persian Baha'is in Australia avoided becoming too active in those Persian groups.

Respondent 14, male Baha'i, Sydney.

Like its homeland precedent, the attempts to unify the Iranian people in the clubs and societies through a denial of diversity and attempts to implement a united imagining of language, religion, art, politics and history, have been incomplete.

Whilst most clubs were avowedly non-partisan in religion and politics, a small number were clearly under the control of a more conservative and religious executive. The vacillation in political control over the supposed 'unity' of cultural voices amongst campus 'Iranians', was possibly due to the changing nature of the student body within the university (a larger representation of new arrivals which included a larger proportion of more actively religious individuals). However, it was more likely that these differences reflected the responses to the tensions between different factions for control over how the 'Persian' society should represent Iran and Iranians. The changing nature of Persian societies over time towards what was perceived as 'more successful events' was noted by some. Several people, particularly practicing Baha'is and Muslims, spoke of the more secular clubs that had a focus on 'clubbing' and having 'parties' with the presence of alcohol as not being 'really Persian'; on other occasions the more conservative clubs were not successful in attracting large numbers to events because they did not appeal to the more liberal and secular 'Iranians' on campus (see Chapter 7). At the furthest extreme tensions temporarily dissolved the clubs as religious and secular factions squabbled over the most appropriate type of events to organise.

And, it's interesting, I don't know if you know, Imperial had so much ... conflict ... in their society, in the sense that ... with regard to a lot of religious people getting involved. More than religious, political things ... and their society broke up a couple of times.

Respondent 22, male Muslim, London.

Despite the fact that some university clubs were run by more recent arrivals, specific members of the second generation appeared to be prime motivators of the push to a unity of Persian vision which was all inclusive. Their location as diasporic second generation individuals separated from the homeland legitimised their position to imagine it, whereas new migrants were seen as bent on leaving the past behind as they dived headlong into the culture of consumerism and, as some noted, hedonistic bouts of drinking and violence (see Chapter 8).

People around me in the Persian Club ... especially when they first come from Iran, they try to distance themselves as much as they can from Persian culture. They try to integrate themselves as much as they can, here. For example, (one friend) ... joining the fraternity ... was his idea. I went because I was his friend ... And he's done everything he possibly can to be accepted by the fraternity members. You know, he helps out, he does everything he can for them to accept him. And his English is ... you almost wouldn't know he's only been here for like six years...

The longer time out of Iran, the more they miss it. ... (my friend), as well ... he still comes with us to the concerts. Even though he goes out with Canadian girls, he says, 'there's nothing like a Persian girl'. ... He says, 'let's go to a Persian restaurant'.

Respondent 10, male Muslim, Vancouver.

Without contact with the dynamic reality of life in Iran, the imagining of Iran becomes more essential over time, mirroring in some ways the limited imaginings evoked amongst non-Iranians by simplistic media representations (although never to the same degree). For the second generation, the impact of the time away from the homeland does have a part to play in the complexity of identity relations that are maintained and reproduced through such fora as the clubs and societies.

6.9 *Flags and National Clubs*

Regardless of the types of events that they run, a central feature of the promotion of the clubs to new members appeared to consistently centre on the ancient Persian

Empire and its cultural traditions, such as *Norooz*. At the stalls and stands that these clubs and societies operate to attract new members at the beginning of the university semester, there is usually a range of ‘cultural’ paraphernalia, from books on the archaeology of Persepolis, through to poster-sized images of important archaeological sites around Iran, or evocative landscapes or poetry, sometimes in the original Farsi, and other times in English (see Figure 6.6). There is often a bowl of sweets, symbolic of the small food items traditionally placed out for guests who visit the home, particularly for *mehmuni*. Ribbons and balloons in the national colours of red, green and white are strewn around the stalls and, finally, some stalls have the flag of Iran.



Figure 6.6: Image of significant archaeological sites and architecture in Iran on the first page of a clubs online discussion group (<http://au.groups.yahoo.com/group/aryana1979/> , accessed: 1st Dec., 2004).

The appearance of the national flag and the national colours is typical of the ‘national’ format of the clubs and societies on campuses across all of the universities in the three cities. However, in the case of Iran, the national flag is a contested national icon in the diaspora. The old flag, the *Shirokhorshid* (see Figure 6.7), is composed of the green white and red tricolour with the symbol of a lion holding a sword with the sun in the background. This flag was adopted officially by the first constitutional parliament (the *Majlis*) in 1907 and remained the official flag up until 1979. The fifth article of the constitution detailed the ‘official flag’ (*biyraq-i rasmi*) of the nation of Iran as consisting of “the colours green, white and red along with the lion and the sun signs” (Kashani-Sabet, 1999: 115).¹²³ This flag has been associated with the Pahlavi regime, and is held symbolically by many anti-theocracy individuals and groups, such as the Royalist supporters of the monarchy, as the rightful flag of Iran. The current flag (see

¹²³ The symbolism on the flag, the lion and the sun, were found in various forms on pre-modern flags from the 10th Century CE onwards. The lion motif possibly derives from Sultan Masoud Gaznavi in the early 11th Century, whilst the addition of the sun motif has been variously related to the second month of summer, Mordad, which has the symbol of the lion and sees the sun at its zenith, or to the ancient Iranian religion of Mithraism which held the sun as sacred. (<http://www.farhangsara.com/flag.htm#Amir%20Kabir's%20flag>, accessed: 12th September, 2004).

Figure 6.8) consists of the tricolour with the lion, sun and sword motif replaced by a “special emblem of the Islamic Republic” (Article 18, Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran, 1979). The green and red colour bars are fringed with the motto *Allah-o Akbar* (God is Great). This flag replaced the Pahlavi flag and has been recognised by the United Nations as the current flag of Iran.



Figure 6.7: The *Shirokhorshid* flag of modern Iran, 1907-1979.



Figure 6.8: The flag of the Islamic Republic of Iran, 1979 to present.

The political and religious tensions between groups who continue to support the monarchy through the son of Shah Reza Pahlavi and those more critical of the monarchy, or more conservative in their religious leanings and hence more open to the recent regime and its moves to reform, are manifest in the tensions over the legitimacy of the flag. The use of the flag in the everyday running of the ‘national’ cultural clubs and societies on campuses in each of the three cities has been a point of

contention amongst members that has on occasion threatened to split the membership, or threatened the continuance of the clubs in their present forms.¹²⁴

One of the main tensions occurs when the Shirokhorshid is used because it represents a link to the past and an imagined glorious pre-Islamic Persian Empire. The sun is often linked to Zoroastrian fire worshipping, and hence fits with the 20th Century construction of national Iranian myths centring on this religion as the cultural origin of the modern nation-state. However, this flag is often seen by others as a tacit Royalist emblem and hence implicitly partisan and political. In a recent example, the newly formed Persian Student Association of the University of Sydney adopted the Shirokhorshid as a club emblem, with the intention of indicating the ‘cultural’ and apolitical nature of the club. When this iconography was used to advertise on campus the club president received several queries from concerned members and non-members as to the suitability of this representation of Iranian/Persian culture. As a result the executive called a meeting to discuss the ‘issue of the flag’, which I attended along with some 15 club members. Following a sometimes heated discussion of more than one and a half hours it was decided to put the question to a vote. The options were whether the old or new flag should be used, or perhaps a completely new design for a logo at the flag’s centre, or if there should be one at all. At the time of writing this issue had not been resolved and several members had indicated that should the result not fall in their favour they would quit the club in protest. One option that was put forward, which has also been used with relative success in other clubs where the flag has become an issue, is to have the tricolour without any icon in the centre and without the Islamic text fringing. Throughout the course of discussions about the suitability of the Shirokhorshid as a club emblem, more conservative, religious members were predisposed to the new flag. However, others who were more secular, but did not support the Shah’s regime also supported the new flag. Those who most aggressively denounced the new regime, whether open Royalists or not, tended to support the Shirokhorshid or no flag options. Whilst there was a separation along political lines, there was no clear cut separation between the first and second generation members with some second generation arguing in support of the new flag as an internationally recognised flag of Iran. The only real separation between the

¹²⁴ Some respondents alluded to wider tensions over the flag amongst the first generation, the analysis of which falls beyond the scope of this present study.

second generation and the more recently arrived members was that these newer arrivals tended to frame their arguments in support of the new flag through the centrality of Islam to the identity of Iran – perhaps reflecting a greater degree of connection between religion and nation amongst newer arrivals.

In another society tensions occurred when both flags were used.

C: Did you have the old flag or the new flag?

I had two small flags, and they were on the sides, and they were the old one, because I got them for free (from the) *Mujaheddin*. They were handing them out...

C: Because they are political?

Yeah, yeah. I had those two, and I had my aunty send one from Iran, so I had like a big one, and that had the Allah in the middle.

C: Did you have a problem with having both of them up?

Yeah. One person did actually ... and they said you should have nothing there ... if we wanted to mention that we were non-political and stuff. And I said that that's ... good, because ... In the magazine for uni, a friend gave me like half page to fill out with my own thing. And with that I introduced the society and talked about what we're about, and what we're not into. And in that I mentioned that we're not political, we're not religious. Strictly Persian, you know.

C: Did people appreciate the fact that you had done that?

Yeah, yeah. I think that kind of argument didn't scare anyone away. And I didn't want to do that. I didn't want to be political. I don't want to be involved with that.

Respondent 34, male Muslim, Sydney.

The tensions over the correct form and representations of the national culture reflect the positionality of the diaspora interstitially set between the old and new Iran. This complexity extends, for the second generation in particular, to their place between the homeland of Iran and the society in which they live, a point highlighted in the next section on hyphenated identity.

6.10 Hyphenated identity – opportunities and limitations

As has been outlined previously, the individuals in this study, whilst having some level of control over negotiations of identity, are also subject to the processes of control that exist in particular contexts. That is, negotiations over identity are expressed through instrumental relations (i.e. they ‘use’ identity), through Anthony Smith’s ‘ethnic’ relations (1993) (i.e. they ‘have’ identity), and contextual relations (i.e. they have identity ‘thrust upon them’), all operating in concert to produce and reproduce the individual. Hence, whilst individuals expressed complex interactions with the decision to adhere to either Persia or Iran as an identifier, it is also important to remember that their ‘choice’ extends only so far and is interrupted by the travails of context and the ties of a more enduring identity. Just as Holton (1996) notes that the nation is best understood as coming into existence through a complex interrelationship between the imagining of Anderson and the enduring ethnicity of Smith, the relationship to national identity is also guided by these limitations, rendered more complex by the reality of the context within which each individual is set. The individual’s decision to select either the idea of Persia or Iran in any given situation, the ability to express the instrumentality of identity, is set against both the deeper notions of self, be they religious, ethnic, or otherwise construed, and the socio-political context within which the individual is set. In this section we shall investigate some of the opportunities and limitations of the context, highlighting the impact of the different spaces to express Iranian, or Persian identity in each of the three cities.

In the Vancouver and Sydney samples, respondents were able to recognise the availability of hyphenated national identities as representations of their interstitial status in their ‘journey’ towards becoming good citizens of the nation. Whilst not being able to fully recognise themselves as Australian or Canadian by virtue of their existence outside the field of whiteness, neither were they Iranian. Yet in Sydney and Vancouver, under the terms of multicultural recognition they could take on the legitimate form of the hyphenated identity (see Figure 6.9). In Sydney, when asked if

they related to themselves as Iranian (or Persian)¹²⁵, Iranian-Australian, Australian-Iranian, or Australian a variety of responses were given.

Yeah ... I would say Iranian-Australian ... But, if you'd asked me a few years ago, I'd say Australian.

Respondent 48, female Muslim, Sydney

Similarly circumstances were found in Vancouver, where hyphenated identities were seen as legitimate options by many respondents. In both cities, respondents predominantly expressed their sense of self-identity, at least within the rarefied bounds of the question, through recourse to the hyphenated identities that accurately reflect their interstitiality. For respondent 48, the space to express her interstitial position had become more apparent with time. In her case she felt she had developed a greater understanding of her Iranian self. However, her choice is also predicated on having the socio-political space for more complex expressions of identity.

Even when they did not feel they were able to express themselves as Iranian-Australian or Iranian-Canadian or one of the other hybrid national forms, they appeared to recognise the possibility of their existence, relating them to other people's situation but not their own.

It's hard to answer that question because I consider myself very much Canadian, because of the environment that I've been exposed to. I think it has shaped very much who I am today. But, you know, if I was raised in Iran, I would be completely Iranian, you know. But I have a bit of both, and whether I should put one in front of the other, I feel that I'm half-half. I'm Canadian-Iranian, and I'm Iranian-Canadian.

C: Do you ever call yourself these things?

No I don't. I mean I actually go by I'm Iranian, because that's actually where I came from, but I'm a Canadian citizen.

Respondent 41, female Muslim, Vancouver.

The most significant results were found in the London sample where none of the respondents ultimately recognised the hyphenated form as a means of communicating

¹²⁵ By this stage in the interview it had been established whether the respondent preferred to use the term Iranian or Persian. The present question was asked based on these results.

their identity in everyday life. As a result, many responded by simply stating they were Iranian or British regardless of their place of birth.

I think Iranian. I don't know why. I've never said I'm Iranian-British ... I've always said I'm Iranian.

Respondent 24, female Muslim, London.

However, some worked through their positionality as between nations to produce a hyphenated response. For one respondent, her position was a stark reminder of the limitations of the arguments of Norman Tebbit.

I don't feel 100% British and I don't feel ... I would ... I would regretfully say ... Iranian. Only regretfully in a sense that I've been here and learnt to feel that way but I don't feel I can support England in football matches.

Respondent 33, female Baha'i, London.

If someone asks me what origin I am I would say I'm Iranian. If someone asked me where I'm from, I'd say I'm British.

Respondent 28, female Baha'i, London.

I'd say Persian. I only hesitate because I don't actually feel ... Persian, because it's not Iranian. Iranian is really kind of current and I don't feel kind of like I am that connection. And although, if I say British, British gets confused with English which I really don't feel...

C: Complicated?

Yes (laughs). ... But I'd never use Persian-British. That's interesting, British-Persian, no.

Respondent 30, female Baha'i, London.

Even when the respondent determined that they had a hyphenated identity, say Iranian for ethnic/cultural background and British for citizenship, they generally expressed surprise at the question exposing the possibility as something they had not considered. Just as for respondent 41 from Vancouver above, there was little if any understanding of the hyphenated identity as an actual response to the question, "Where are you from?" Across the whole London cohort there was confusion over the idea of Persian or Iranian identity hyphenated with British or English. And whilst this can be seen as merely semantics, there remained, for the second generation from Iran in London, no

opportunities to express their identity as British-Iranians, or some combination thereof.



Figure 6.9: One respondent places himself within the fabric of multicultural Australia through his conscious inclusion of the Sydney Harbour Bridge (photograph by respondent's mother).

As indicated by respondents 33 and 30, tensions over national belonging in the London cohort centred on a distinction between British citizenship and English ethnicity.¹²⁶ Under the terms of the threats of globalisation, Hall (1997: 177) claims that the English ethnic identity has been narrowed into a more distinct definition, particularly through the actions of Margaret Thatcher, whose reliance on the fear of being 'swamped' by undeserving migrant others drove her push to reinforce a racialised construction of English belonging. This racialisation of Englishness combined with the recent resistance to EU incorporation along with the realisation of Scottish and Welsh political devolution, points to a growing recognition of Englishness as distinct to Britishness. As Hall notes, perhaps prematurely, Englishness is "something that we are only now beginning to see the true nature of, when we are beginning to come to the end of it. Because with the processes of

¹²⁶ For a discussion on the limited access to English ethnicity amongst Bangladeshi migrants in Britain, see John Eade (1998).

globalisation, that form of relationship between a national-cultural identity and a nation-state is now beginning, at any rate in Britain, to disappear” (Hall, 1997: 175). The construction of an ethnic fear, both from within the nation-state in the form of the threatening migrant, and from without as the territorial sanctity of ‘the Empire’ is threatened (the Falklands war; the EU; and more recently, such ‘invasions’ as the flow of asylum seekers through the Channel Tunnel), has drawn English ‘ethnicity’ into the centre of contemporary debates.

Throughout the fieldwork period in London, these themes of English versus British identity and the possibilities of belonging were informed by emerging threats to Englishness. The supposed multicultural focus of British political recognition of difference was, and continues to be, secondary behind the necessity of this English national cultural maintenance. Whilst this is also the case in Australia and Canada, the concrete implications of the fight for national recognition were felt most clearly for the second generation from Iran in the London sample where the sanctity of Englishness precluded any possibilities of the respondents becoming English. This sanctity is in part structured by the (lack of) political commitment to multiculturalism (see Chapter 4) and the inability to see the UK as a ‘migrant nation’.

Multiculturalism has created spaces in Australia and Canada for expression of these hybrid identities, not merely as expressions of a need for social space to express more complex associations/identities but as a politically sanctioned recognition of their existence within national discourses of belonging to the nation. Of course, this does not indicate an actual full belonging to the nation, as such, only a relationship to the legitimate belonging as expressed through the binary us-them national relation. According to Hage (1998) in order to fully belong to the nation they would have to become ‘white, like the rest of us’. However, it does recognise the potential, even if it is rarely if ever actualised, for ultimate belonging, an opening up to the opportunity of becoming as expressed through hyphenated identity spaces. For the respondents in Sydney and Vancouver, there exists a path to recognition that emerges through this interstitial phase of hyphenated Australian or Canadian, a promise of things to come if and when they become legitimised as a full member (of the nation). For the London respondents, this promise of future acceptance is less easily seen, reflected in their inability to recognise the legitimacy of hybrid ethnicities as an expressive place where

they can feel the same potential for belonging. British identity, as expressed through citizenship, does afford some degree of inclusion (see Chapter 7). However, for the second generation from Iran it was recognised that this was partial and, for some, only served to emphasise their exclusion from English whiteness.

At the same time, it is necessary to recognise the limitations in the terms of the question. As discussed, the respondents in all three cities, through their reflexive positionality and their contextual relations, differentially internalise complex forms of identity. The question of their recognition of a hyphenated existence merely highlights the limitations of context (e.g. the limitations of British multiculturalism) to cope with these complex questions of negotiation. As we will see below in Chapters 7 and 8, this decision as to where the respondents feel themselves existing relative to full recognition as an ethnic national is not simply expressed through the recognition of hyphenated national possibilities. However, the fact that the London respondents failed to see the existence of hybrid possibilities is indicative of wider tensions over national identity, that are perhaps in a greater state of crisis in contemporary Britain than in Australia or Canada, though there are similar tensions in Canada and Australia. The British case exemplifies the fact that the project of multiculturalism has a part to play in producing an active recognition of difference. By producing spaces for the expression of hybrid identities, Australian and Canadian multiculturalism have been successful, at least in part, in providing a degree of toleration of the migrant Others and their children that exist in the national space. But as has been stated previously, a recognition based purely on national belonging, whether it is as a hyphenated Iranian-Australian or merely as an Iranian living in Britain, ultimately fails through its own limitations in not being able to recognise more complex associations that may cross the boundaries of the nation, drawing the nation into more active discussion, decentering the nation and rendering it as a truly mutable subject.

In this discussion of reified nationally compartmentalised identities it is important to also keep in mind that these essentialised constructions represent mere positions in a dynamic field. As Hall (1992) notes in his work on 'new ethnicities', rather than think in terms of identity it is better to think of the process of identification that avoids the static construction of identity through the constant possibility of 'becoming' something else. It is this idea of becoming that underlies a dynamic relationship to

identity that avoids the homogenous and the permanent. Taken in this way we can see how the decision to discuss a range of options of identification constructed along national or hybrid lines is inherently limited. This was noted by many of the respondents who often included the qualifying 'but ...' in their responses to the above question of national belonging: "I suppose I'm British, but ..."; "I would probably say Iranian-Australian, but ...". To take the results of this question and over-emphasise them as a definitive indication of the way the second generation from Iran think of themselves would be too simplistic, which thus leads us onto the discussions of complex and dynamic alternatives to national identities that follow in the next chapters.

6.11 Conclusion

The negotiations over these national identities are driven by the relationship to the homeland, whether it is seen as Persia or Iran, and the relationship to the land that is the respondent's current home, Australia, Canada, or Britain. In trying to understand the relationship between the interstitial second generation subjects and their dual national identities the post-national functionalist position gives the individual full agency over decisions concerning identity. However, the nation-state and national identity are not merely a mechanism in an array of identity 'tools' utilised by second generation individuals in order to negotiate their ongoing role in society, a role that works across scales as individual, family member, community member, national citizen, through to transnational sojourner or global citizen. This reductionist instrumentalism "risks divorcing the quest for individual cultural identity from its institutional bases. There is also the danger, common to instrumentalist approaches, of neglecting the wider cultural environment in which elite competition and rational preference maximisation take place" (Hutchinson and Smith, 1996: 9). Both Hall (1992) and Bhabha (1990, 1994, 1998) recognise the limitations of the instrumentalist approach, and, like Hutchinson and Smith, point to the contingencies that need to be taken into account.

Whilst some of the second generation expressed their unease with contemporary connotations of Iranian-ness through denial of Iranian identity, others recognised it was not so simple a matter to turn off the emotional attachments to Iran, family and

community. For them, being 'Iranian' was an inalienable part of them. The use of the Persian signifier allowed the negotiation of the two conflicting paths, the difficulty and the necessity of being (at least partially) Iranian without stepping outside of the national discourses of identity and belonging. At the same time, it is not enough to say that the respondents behaved in an ambivalent manner with respect to the use of the terms Iranian and Persian merely because they used both terms seemingly interchangeably throughout the interviews. It is more important to look at the context of each case to determine the status of the power relations and the particular intention at that moment to more clearly understand why the individual deployed the particular identity marker at that time. This process of disentangling the national identities for the second generation, limited as it is to discourses of national identity, produced incomplete understandings of how the individual operated in society on a day-to-day basis. There were 'lines of flight', paths of least resistance along which expressions of national identity became apparent when discussing the negotiations of identities with the respondents, and whilst people expressed a degree of agency over their choices in the way they represent themselves, there were also wider political and cultural factors at play.

The consideration of the differing relationships to an enduring ethnic identity, and the nationally imbued socio-political context in which they live their lives, combine with the individuals attempts to exert agency over the negotiation of identity to produce a complex field of identities. These complex identity relations, even whilst limited to the simplicity of national discourse of identity, follow some patterns, but follow no patterns in their entirety; the results are always partial. This partiality hints at the need for the state of permanent reflection that would make up a multicultural future. We now need to look beyond the nation to its alternates, in order to destabilise the epistemic position of the 'underclass' national migrant that limits identity. The themes that interrupt the logic of essentialised national identities will form the focus of the next two chapters, beginning with a discussion on the significance of religion.

7 RELIGIOUS IDENTITIES

Traditions are variable from person to person, and even within persons, and are constantly being revised and transformed in response to the migration experience. There is very considerable variation, both of commitment and of practice, between and within different communities - between different nationalities and linguistic groups, within religious faiths, between men and women, and across the generations

(Hall, 2000: 220).

Recently, Muslims have emerged as the principal focus of racist antagonisms ('Islamaphobia') based on cultural difference

(Parekh *et. al.*, 2000: 31).

The last chapter focused on the ways the second generation from Iran negotiated identity within the dominant discourse of national belonging. In this chapter and the next the analysis turns to the identities that challenge this dominance, alternate identities that decentre homogenously constructed and territorially delimited national identities. In the first instance, this chapter concentrates on the central role played by religious identity in the construction of Iranian-ness, whilst the next chapter will turn to alternate communal affiliations that further problematise the singular 'Iranian community' perspective.

In popular understanding Iran is an Islamic nation. Media representations of women in the *hijab* reigned over by male clerics (see Chapter 4), and the increasingly popularised politics of Samuel Huntington (1993) that sets Christianity versus Islam in an oppositional world politics of the 'clash of civilisations', help to unify this vision. Under this regime of representation Iran is constructed as a paragon of Islamism, an emblem of the Islamic world arrayed against the (Christian) West. It is a 'state sponsor of terror' and a 'nuclear threat', a position summarised under the epithet 'Axis of Evil'. From the outside, the rise of the theocracy from the 1978/79 revolution has served to erase diversity from the Iranian landscape, entrenching the dialectical separation of the Christian Western 'us' from the Oriental Muslim 'them'. This divide is more than a national divide, it is a religious divide. In the case of Iran, religion and nation have been welded together to produce a stereotype that conflates

Shi'i Islam with Iran such that to speak of one is to imply the other. The intimacy between nation and religion in stereotypes means that if the religious landscape of Iran and the Iranian diaspora is shown to be more complex, the analysis contributes to the decentring of the (fundamentalist Islamic) nation. It is towards presenting some of this religious complexity that this present chapter attends.

The unquestioned popular centrality of Iranian Muslim religiosity is problematised in this chapter through an empirical analysis of two main cohorts defined by religion in the Iranian diaspora to identify how these 'religious communities' do not fit the essentialised character of a homogenously Muslim Iran. The Baha'is and those of a Muslim background each unsettle simplistic notions of Islamic religiosity at the centre of Iranian stereotypes. This chapter will deconstruct the monolithic Islamic Iran through the discussion of how these religious identities cross-cut and interrupt dominant national identities. The analysis will first focus on the distinctive geographies of religion in the Baha'i and Muslim cohorts before turning to the specific ways that each group interrupts the Muslim Iranian construct. The Baha'is decentre Iranian stereotypes through their very existence as a religious minority in a supposedly united Muslim nation. Like other minority religions represented in the Iranian diaspora, Baha'i communities exist both within and beyond the 'Iranian community', crossing national boundaries to construct commonalities between people of different nations. Further, the unique global view of the Baha'is, which will be discussed below, challenges the nation's validity as a geopolitical container of social action, confronting not only Iranian identity, but also Australian/British/Canadian identity with its cosmopolitan critique. For the Muslim cohort, the associations drawn with Islamic 'fundamentalism' through representations are too simplistic. As has already been mentioned in Chapter 5 many of those who have fled Iran were from the more secular urban middle and upper classes. The relationship between these more 'cultural Muslims' and the stereotype of conservative Iranian Islam will be investigated here in order to show how the second generation from a Muslim background decentre the nation through their secular relationship to Islam as a key aspect of their Iranian-ness. Following from this, the analysis moves on to look at the differential responses to racism. The racial stereotyping of Iranians centres on the religious aspect of identity, with the contemporary global geopolitical discourse of the 'War on Terror' exacerbating the perceived threat of 'Muslim Iranians'. However, for

the two different groups of Baha'is and Muslims the processes of racial categorisation have different impacts. As this section will outline, even within the Muslim cohort, there is differentiation in the responses to racism. The discussion then turns to the tensions between religious and cultural conceptions of Iran in the diaspora before finally focusing on the distinctive transnational networks that the different religious cohorts are involved in, driven by the Baha'i notion of 'service' and facilitated by the improvements in access to the internet and the increasing options to undertake 'the return' to the homeland.

It is important to start this analysis of alternate identities that decentre the Iranian national stereotype with religion. This analysis of religious differentiation across a range of cultural and social contexts will show how religion, as the central aspect of Iranian identity, is far more complex in the diaspora amongst the second generation than the stereotypes represented in media and political rhetoric.

7.1 Geographies of Religion: Baha'is

Within the urban landscapes of the three cities the distinctive patterns of settlement of Iranians is guided to differing degrees by religious ascription. The Baha'is from Iran have a definite geography of religion that drives urban settlement patterns and thus, in turn, impacts on the degree to which they interact with other 'Iranians'. By looking at the institutional structure of the Baha'i Faith across scales in the urban landscape we can uncover particular geographies of urban settlement and cultural interaction that are influenced by their religious ascription.

As discussed previously in Chapter 5, the structure of Baha'i communities extends from the Local Spiritual Assembly (LSA), where a quorum of nine active members of the Baha'i Faith must be present within a defined 'local' area, through to the National Spiritual Assembly (NSA) and on to the highest point in the global hierarchy, the Universal House of Justice, located in Haifa, Israel. As adjuncts to this structure, there are currently seven Baha'i 'houses of worship' on each of the continents (see Figure 7.1) which represent places of pilgrimage and worship, but do not directly figure in

the day-to-day structures of Baha'i observance.¹²⁷ The national assembly is an implicit part of Baha'i life acting as mediator and coordinator of the actions of the LSAs and other associated religious institutional forms, such as associations of Baha'i youth, which exist within the bounds of the nation.



Figure 7.1: The Sydney Baha'i House of Worship is an important point of pilgrimage but does not figure in the day-to-day maintenance of religious action (photograph by respondent).

In addition to the role of the NSAs as a discrete scale of the administrative hierarchy, the nation-state is accorded relevance in the processes of expansion of the Baha'i Faith. Whilst the religion officially decries proselytism (see Hatcher & Martin, 1985: 174) explicitly avoiding the employment of missionaries to conduct the conversion of non-Baha'is, the religion does have as a central motivating feature the voluntary action of 'pioneering' whereby individuals and families move into areas for the purposes of expanding the religion.¹²⁸

¹²⁷ The Houses of Worship are located in Delhi, India; Frankfurt, Germany; Kampala, Uganda; Panama City, Panama; Sydney, Australia (see Figure 7.1); Apia, Western Samoa; Wilmette, Illinois, USA.

¹²⁸ A further concept that drives the expansion of the religion is 'service', which is discussed below.

We decided to move to Prince Rupert ... because in order to have a local spiritual assembly you need 9 members, and there was a shortage of Baha'is. So my parents wanted to pioneer there.
Respondent 5, male Baha'i, Vancouver.

As a result of this Baha'is, including Iranian Baha'is, are spread out over the urban (and rural) space.

I'd say North Shore ... and maybe, like the Western suburbs. ... I don't know any in the south. I know the Baha'i community in the south is small as well. So mostly North Shore, and Western suburbs, I think.
Respondent 15, female Baha'i, Sydney.

C: Are there any Boroughs here that don't have representation?

Just city of London. Around the border of the city. ... I mean there's certainly a concentration of Baha'is in the West End. Kensington, Knightsbridge, ah, Iranian Baha'is, sorry. It's almost as if they are the only Baha'is there.
Respondent 26, male Baha'i, London.

The decision to move into an area as a pioneer can be influenced by the explicit desires of the central bodies of the religion. The Universal House of Justice sets down in its formal planning mechanisms areas earmarked as of importance for pioneering activity, with goals set as to the number of new LSAs to be established over defined periods (Hatcher & Martin, 1985: 176). Beyond these explicit manifestations at the global level, the individual NSAs also have a part to play in the individual decisions of Baha'is who live within the nation, or who enter the nation. Several of the respondents in each of the cities sampled alluded directly and indirectly to the influence of the NSA over the specific decisions over where to migrate to in the national space.

Well, when we were moving to Australia my parents got in contact with the ... head office of the Baha'i Faith here and they asked where would it be best for us to go. And they said, well, there aren't many Baha'is in the Eastern Suburbs so could you go there. And we went to Bondi.
Respondent 15, female Baha'i, Sydney.

So newly arrived Persian Baha'is receive this (information kit) and it gives them information about the culture, and about Australian culture. And about

what things are, what opportunities there are; the Baha'i communities they might be more needed to go to outside the big cities. All this sort of information that they need to know and it's hard to get.
Respondent 14, male Baha'i, Sydney.

I don't know, at least in this country at least ... (there) are pioneering calls. We really urgently need someone in the Scilly Isles and, you know, someone will go.
Respondent 26, male Baha'i, London.

When we had notified the NSA that we were coming we hadn't specified where we wanted to go and so they said Prince George, so we went there.
Respondent 4, female Baha'i, Vancouver.

However, the Iranian Baha'is continue to favour certain areas of the city (see Chapter 4) reflecting tension between the relative isolation of religious service and the desires to be near co-nationals. The benefits of chain migration for the first generation, such as being close to other Farsi speakers and services for the 'Iranian community' have resulted in a degree of concentration in settlement. For the second generation there appeared less need or desire to move or remain in particular areas that guaranteed access to the same relationships and services. For the second generation the benefits that the first generation accrued through spatial proximity had little meaning.

Where pioneering relates to international migration to propagate 'the Faith', 'home front pioneering' represents the internal movements facilitated by the need to form and maintain the quorum in local communities. In Sydney, Vancouver and London (SVL), some respondents mentioned home front pioneering as a motivation for urban resettlement decisions within the urban space.

C: So when your parents married and came back to Greater London that was for...?

That was home front pioneering, as it was when they moved to Crawley, which is south London. Next, Gatwick, exactly the same reason they moved to Crawley, to make up the numbers to form an assembly.

I think before the key motivation was to get 9 Baha'is in a Borough. I think the past three or four years there's been a move towards opening up new areas (outside London). ... Especially, when there's no Baha'is there. That's a real

drive. And not just in the Borough but if there's a cluster of Boroughs with no Baha'is quite often a Baha'i will go there.
Respondent 26, male Baha'i, London.

C: Why did they first go to Delta?

Because, at that time, they just wanted to ... It didn't really matter where they wanted to live. But they wanted to go to Delta, kind of as pioneers because the Baha'i community was very small at that time.
Respondent 12, male Baha'i, Vancouver.

Thus, the particular location of Baha'is across the urban (and rural) landscape is influenced by the need to produce new religious communities and maintain existing communities through intervention in the settlement decision-making processes for both international migrants and intraurban movers.

7.2 Geographies of Religion: Muslims

In terms of the Muslim cohort, religious ascription was not explicitly set through interrelationships with religious institutions. For many of the respondents, religion was not something that was necessarily explicitly practised. Where religious observance was performed as a central part of 'being a Muslim' the role of the mosque or Islamic centre became of central importance. Yet, unlike the Baha'is, this attendance at the mosque was not bounded as a clearly local relationship within the urban space. Many who attended the mosques and Islamic centres in the three cities travelled large distances across the city to be there. Most of the mosques and Islamic centres in the three cities were Sunni, with only a small number of Shi'i religious centres. This dearth of religious institutional representation across the urban space in part reflected the high levels of 'secular' Muslim ascription (see below) amongst Iranians of Muslim background. In Sydney, the Imam Husain Islamic Centre in Earlwood came into being in 1997, following a protracted development approval process (see Dunn, 2000). This centre¹²⁹, coordinated by an Iranian Imam who was originally sponsored to come to Sydney by an abattoir to bless Halal meat, is an important Iranian Shi'i religious space in Sydney catering to a Persian/Farsi

¹²⁹ The term mosque was avoided through the development process due to its negative connotations in the wider community.

constituency. In London, the Holland Park mosque is more established, possibly due to the more established Iranian community which includes a ‘pre-revolution’ cohort. This mosque is not the only Shi’i place of worship in Greater London, with a mosque in Maida Vale and in Stanmore. However, it is the only mosque catering to the Farsi speaking community (see Figure 7.2), whereas the Maida Vale centre caters to Arabic speaking communities mostly from Iraq, and the Stanmore mosque caters to Shi’i Pakistani and East African communities. In Vancouver, the sense of a secular Iranian community living a cosmopolitan lifestyle on the ‘North Shore’ is reinforced by the lack of a permanent religious space for Shi’i Muslims. There exists a temporary congregation which was utilising a public space at regular intervals, although during my field work even this temporary institutional structure seemed to have become less regular. A ‘new’ Shi’i mosque at Burnaby was not operating at the time of the fieldwork.



Figure 7.2: Men chanting in Farsi in commemoration of *Ashura* in the month of *Moharram* outside the Holland Park Mosque (photograph by author).

In each of the three cities, religious observance was not limited to these centralised locations, with respondents sometimes utilising more convenient local Sunni mosques. This was not necessarily ideal, since differences in the forms of prayer between the two religious groups marked the individuals as Shi’a. Whilst this practice

did occur, it was seen by most who took part in religious action at Sunni mosques as not the most desirable scenario.

C: Do you ever go to the mosque?

I haven't been in a while. I used to go almost every week when I first got here.

C: Where would you go if you did go?

Once or twice I did go with my dad, to the Auburn one. Even though it's not like our sect ... When I first went to university I was at Newcastle, and ... I don't know how to do it, but I just followed along with what everyone else was doing.

C: Who was everyone else?

Some other guys from uni ... They were Lebanese, Turkish ... all Sunni.

C: But that didn't matter?

No.

Respondent 34, male Muslim, Sydney.

There's actually a Shi'a, Shi'ite mosque in Stanmore where we live...

C: How long has that been there?

It's been there for a long time. But ... because there is a large community of Shi'ites in east Africa, in Tanzania, who actually live in London as well ... It's basically for that community. A lot of Iranians in that area go as well, simply because it's a Shi'ite mosque.

Respondent 20, male Muslim, London.

One way to observe the spatial differences in religious practice is through the interrelationship between the national forms of the religion and the local and global forms. Unlike the case for the Baha'is, the lack of institutional religious structure for Shi'i Muslims means that observance is usually a non-local experience in SVL. In fact it is more appropriate to see the Muslim congregation as a city-wide congregation focused on particular mosques and Islamic centres. But it is not merely a preference to undertake religious observance in the Shi'i tradition that influences the choice of mosque. As is typified by the London example, the national forms of the religion become a significant feature of the decision making process. This decision is based not only on the choice of language, although this is obviously of critical

importance,¹³⁰ but it also manifests itself as another layer of *national* community bringing the ‘Iranians’ together through religion. These mosques and Islamic centres become known as Iranian whilst others are Lebanese or Pakistani or some other national signifier.

C: So do you attend the mosque?

Yes.

C: Whereabouts?

Well I go to an Iraqi mosque. We’ve got this Arabic background as well which is quite complicated. Because my parents are half Arabic and half Iranian. ... That’s why I go to Arabic mosques more than Iranians. I don’t know. I don’t think ... The majority of them (Iranians) aren’t into religion that much.
Respondent 19, female Muslim, London.

C: Whereabouts are the other mosques that Iranians go to?

... Those are the main two. Iranians may go, there’s a place in Tooting. That’s mainly run by Pakistanis ... Iranians who live nearby may go there ... But that’s about it really.
Respondent 23, male Muslim, London.

Through linguistic specificity and national communal affiliation the religious forms are explicitly tied to the discourses of national belonging for Muslims.¹³¹

A further feature that ties the importance of national belonging to the religious experience of Iranians is the relationship to a sense of global Muslim community, the *umma*.

C: If ANU had a Persian Society would you consider joining it?

I might look into it, but because my point of view is like ... I am one of those people who are very non-nationalistic. So the more I distance myself from identifying myself with one type of group I find the better it is for me. That’s how I feel.
Respondent 35, male Muslim, Sydney.

¹³⁰ See also Chapter 8 on linguistic communities.

¹³¹ Along these lines it would be interesting to see if there existed stronger relationships between Iranian Muslim congregations across different cities in the nation, than between other Shi’i national groups in the same city.

Pan-Islamic identity, pan-Islamicism, is increasingly seen through the media and conservative political rhetoric as the unification of religious elements against the actions of 'the West'. Huntington's (1993) increasingly popular 'clash of civilisations' calls for a greater recognition of these forms as the new rallying point, a cry which has become all the more relevant in the 'War on Terror' as Muslims everywhere are conflated in the media and popular discourse as terrorists bent on the destruction of Western hegemony (see Chapter 4). Only one respondent, quoted above, showed a predisposition to the pan-Islamist form over the national form, stating that he preferred to go to Mosques and Islamic Centres that were not wholly catering to the Iranian community. Yet for the other Iranian Muslims this simple categorisation of a pan-Islamic reality is erroneous. Instead, as Muslims they were differentiated, and differentiated themselves, simultaneously along religious and national community lines, producing at one level a global religious reality, but at another level a stratified and contextualised relationship to religious identity that tied the individual and the group to explicitly local and national experiences.

In the British case, the constructed British-Muslim identity draws on the essentialised simplicity of pan-Islamism to produce a signifier to encapsulate Muslim action in Britain. However, the second generation from a Muslim background in London did not feel a sense of inclusion in the constructed British-Muslim identity.¹³² Instead they noted that British-Muslim identity applied to 'South Asian' Muslims, and in particular, the Pakistanis and the Bangladeshis. As one respondent who was born in London and had never been to Iran noted,

I think it would take something away from it ... say if you divide them by religion, Zoroastrian-Iranians, Muslim-Iranians. I think that would take a certain thing away from the Iranian-ness. That's the problem that the Pakistani second generation have in London, in England. They consider themselves British-Muslims. They don't consider themselves as Pakistanis, the word Pakistan doesn't even come into their description of ... I would think I would personally find it sad if someone referred to me as a British-Muslim and just left the whole Iranian thing out, because there's a lot more Muslims than Iranians, and I would always call myself an Iranian living in Britain, living away from his homeland ... I wouldn't want to be divided by sect or religion,

¹³² See Dwyer (1999, 1999a, 2000) for a discussion of the negotiation of British-Muslim identity amongst Pakistani and Bangladeshi youth in Britain. Also see Chalmers (1998) and Eade (1988) concerning Bangladeshi identity and Englishness.

or north, or south, or west or east. I think there's something complementary to the Iranian people, we hold together.

...

My Asian friends would consider themselves ... British Muslims or British. Whereas my Iranian friends, the ones I'm friendly with, would always consider themselves as originally from Iran, living abroad. If you ask them where their home town is they would say Tehran.

Respondent 23, male Muslim, London.

Respondent 23 stated that his and his co-nationalists' home nation is Iran and their home city is Tehran. The Muslim respondents indicated minimal belonging to the British-Muslim identity, despite the strength of this construction in media representations (see Chapter 4) and political discourses as a blanket term for Muslims in Britain. This extends to the sense of what it means to be a practicing Muslim. For some respondents, the importance of a secular/religious interrelationship rendered this assumed inclusion in a global Muslim community, even one that is placed in a national context against the British identity, as more complex (see below).

7.3 *Baha'is and the nation*

Returning to the Baha'is, for the Baha'i respondents in the sample, in all three city sites, the role of the nation as a source of primary identification was rendered problematic through the theological relationship set down concerning how a 'good Baha'i' should think about the nation-state (Hatcher & Martin, 1985: 75-80). As has been set out above and in Chapter 5, the aim of global unity whilst maintaining respect for diversity is a cornerstone of the Baha'i Faith. Yet at the same time the Baha'i Faith "insists upon the subordination of national impulses and interests to the imperative claims of a unified world" (Effendi, 1938/1955: 42). This 'eschatological globalism' of the Baha'i Faith informs a quite distinctive relationship with the nation and multiculturalism.

We can view the nation-state as being of contemporary relevance to Baha'is as a vessel for contemporary action. Yet, it needs also to be recognised that the ultimate goal of global unity in diversity renders the nation-state as a barrier, where 'petty' affiliations obscure the religious message of Baha'u'llah. According to the writings of Abdu'l-Baha the nation is the scale at which a destructive difference manifests itself

in a “spirit of contention and strife which animates mutually conflicting and antagonistic peoples and nations” (Baha’u’llah & Abdu’l-Baha, 1944/1979: 109-110). It is in this sense of national difference as a barrier to global unity that many of the Baha’is interviewed expressed concern when asked to express their identity as a choice between the Iran of their ancestry or the nation in which they have lived the majority of their lives, or some combination of the two.

I don’t feel 100% British and I don’t feel ... I would ... I would regretfully say, you know, Iranian.

Respondent 33, female Baha’i, London.

Yet the European nation-state as a modernist historical form is also seen, from a Baha’i perspective, as a necessary religious stage on the way to global reality. Through the notions of ‘progressive revelation’ which are central to Baha’i theology, the stage-wise development of religio-political entities matches the succession of religious ‘dispensations’ that have led up to the present. As MacEoin states,

The social aspect of progressive revelation is that, from the start of the Adamic Cycle some six thousand years ago, a series of Manifestations of God has taken mankind through many stages of organic social unity. From the family, the tribe, the city-state, and the nation they have brought the human race to the point it has reached today, the first stage of a universal convulsion out of which is destined to emerge a unified, federated world state (MacEoin, 1976: 7).

This imminent world order is built on the nation-state, but at the same time is contingent upon its transcendence as a geopolitical form in the cyclic play of religiously ordained history. Thus, the nation-state must be viewed as in decline in order to presage the impending global unity. MacEoin supports this cyclic view with the writings of Shoghi Effendi who states that,

Nation-building has come to an end. The anarchy inherent in state sovereignty is moving towards a climax. A world, growing to maturity, must abandon this fetish, recognize the oneness and wholeness of human relationships, and establish once for all the machinery that can best incarnate this fundamental principle of its life (Shoghi Effendi, in MacEoin, 1976: 7-8).

The religious project of global unity that forms the basis of Baha’i thought parallels some of the opinions of the political and social commentators concerning the

emergence of a global reality during the late 19th Century, around the time of the ascension of Baha'ullah. Hobsbawm notes that the rise of the nation-state as a dominant European model for political and social association in the 19th Century was welded into a progressive liberalism that saw the nation as a stepping stone to global institutional and social-political unity.¹³³ The development of nations during this phase held within itself the constant assumption that nations were 'a second best to world unity' (Hobsbawm, 1992: 31). As Ernest Renan stated in his influential lecture of 1882,

The nations are not something eternal. They had their beginnings and they will end. A European confederation will very probably replace them. But such is not the law of the century in which we are living. At the present time, the existence of nations is a good thing, a necessity even (Renan, 1990: 20).

The success of nationalism held within it the seeds of its own usurpation in developmental liberal accounts of progress, and, for some, there was an impending global reality (Hobsbawm, 1992: 38). The evolution of Baha'i thought is thus best not seen in isolation, but as a reflection of progressive socio-political thought at the time of the writing of the majority of the Baha'i canon.

It also bears realising that the Baha'i Faith, coming as it did from its roots in Shi'i Islam, would also have been initially mired in the ongoing tensions over a wider 'Arab nationalism'.¹³⁴ The goals of a global Muslim reality that underlies the idea of the *umma*, both supports and negates efforts to form 'Muslim nations'. The common desire to form a community based on Islam in the form of contemporary nation-states is undermined by the universality of the claims to a global community, the *umma*. These tensions between nationalist movements in the 'Arab World', often grounded in aspirations to form Muslim nations, and the wider intentions of the formation of the *umma*, could have influenced the world view of the Baha'is during the formative

¹³³ For Hobsbawm, the era of triumphant bourgeois liberalism (1830-1880) saw a development of nations that "was unquestionably a phase in human evolution or progress from the smaller group to the larger, from family to tribe to region, to nation and, in the last instance, to the unified world of the future in which, to quote the superficial and therefore typical G. Lowes Dickinson, 'the barriers of nationality which belong to the infancy of the race will melt and dissolve in the sunshine of science and art'" (Hobsbawm, 1992: 38).

¹³⁴ 20th Century Iranian ethnicity (i.e. Persian), is partially defined in dichotomous opposition to Arab ethnicity (although there are extensive Arab communities in Iran). In the same way, Iranian Shi'i Islam holds as one of its defining attributes the difference to Sunni Islam. Yet, pan-Islamism is still a recognisable eschatological goal amongst 'Muslim nations', including Iran.

period in the late 19th and early 20th Century. It was during this historic phase that nation building was actively taking place across the Middle East, including Iran (Kashani-Sabet, 1999: Ch. 1 and 221-4).

Having established that there is an eschatological relationship to national belonging for those active Baha'is in the sample, the nation is not simply repudiated on religious grounds. The nation as a state entity, and as a territorially bounded cultural community, plays an important day-to-day role in the lives of Baha'is. As stated above, the hierarchy of communities in the formal Baha'i structure extends from the local through the national to the global, and the importance of interactions at a national scale represent both a pragmatic and religiously imbued commitment to the nation and its state.

As a realm of action, whether in an active phase of pioneering or whether living in an established community, there are expectations that Baha'is will conform to the prevailing local conditions. Baha'is are expected to learn the local language (see Chapter 8), conform to local laws and social mores, and to respect local political administrative boundaries when forming LSAs. These expectations to conform with local forms of culture and state translate into a respect for the formal and informal structures of the nation-state.

For Baha'is, these tensions over national identity and the relationship with the nation-state, as both a vessel for contemporary action and a source of distraction from the search for global unity, played out in the way the respondents dealt with questions of national identity and belonging. Responses varied from an acceptance of the necessity of the allegiance to national identity, through an acceptance of the use value or instrumentality of national citizenship, through to outright denial of attachment to any sense of national belonging, in lieu of the more important sense of global belonging.

C: Do you think there is a group, or groups, to which you belong that could be called a community?

Yes.

C: What would that be?

The Baha'i community.

C: ... At what scale?

Global.

C: Global Baha'i community?

Yeah ... There's all, obviously the local one ... and national, but ... international community, yeah.

Respondent 30, female Baha'i, London.

The importance of the notion of unity in diversity and global citizenship were played out not just through the discussions the respondents had with me, but also through the actions they described as central to their lives. Several respondents were in the process of studying university degree courses focusing on International Relations or Political Science, with a view to actively promoting and taking part in the push towards global unity.

C: Where do you want to go?

It depends, Europe, States, wherever I can find a good position.

C: Do you see this as part of your career motivations, but it also fits in with the Baha'i notions of movement as well?

It kind of does, and I guess it fits in with ... the notions of wanting to serve humanity and not our own country. I mean, your own country is very important, but serving humanity as a whole is what should take priority. That's how I interpret it.

Respondent 13, female Baha'i, Sydney.

Two respondents in the Sydney sample and a further respondent in the London sample had aligned themselves with United Nations bodies as a part of their studies, with one of these respondents moving to Geneva during the course of the fieldwork to continue her doctoral studies with the UN. The London respondent was a serving member of a European Baha'i Youth Council that coordinated youth activities across continental Europe and Britain,

C: Is this (council) in the spirit of the EU?

Yeah, as a stepping stone, not ... I mean, there's a recent message from the Universal House of Justice, which is the kind of wellspring of guidance for the

Baha'is, and it kind of underlines that the UN isn't a perfect system, but it's a move towards internationalisation. I'm fascinated whether regionalisation is the same as internationalisation ... If it's just going to be trade ... or if it's just going to be a common agricultural policy. That's not what Baha'is are interested in in the long run. ... What we are interested in is basic principles in how a good moral society should function.

Respondent 26, male Baha'i, London.

The relevance of national identity, for some Baha'is was stripped down to its instrumental nature as a functional relationship to citizenship.¹³⁵ Several Baha'i respondents went so far, when asked about their national identity, as to express a palpable lack of national identity, or at least to hesitate before deciding which identity would be most appropriate (both for them, and, I suspect, partially to fulfil what they thought I expected). For example,

I mean, it encompasses my nationality, but then based on where I've lived (my identity) is a different story. And based on what's influenced me is different than my actual nationality, my actual citizenship and all that.

Respondent 42, female Baha'i, Vancouver.

I mean when I look at my friends, the second generation Iranians, there is nothing really Iranian about them except maybe in terms of genetics ... Otherwise there's nothing really in common. So I think a lot of these terms are constructs and are fluid ... That's why I think, my religion says, basically we're all citizens of one country and these divisions that have been created are somewhat imaginary or constructed.

Respondent 5, male Baha'i, Vancouver.

In the London cohort, in almost every case, the Baha'i respondents chose British and the Muslim respondents chose Iranian when asked what national identity, or combination thereof, was appropriate for them, irrespective of whether they had ever been to Iran or not (see Figure 7.3). This tended to infer that on the most general level the Baha'i respondents in the London sample deployed national identity in a pragmatic instrumental manner as a functional and flexible part of the armoury of social capital. The Muslim respondents tended not to deploy national identity in the same way, relying instead on a more enduring sense of national ethnic belonging (see Chapter 6 and below). This general trend is based on the fact that the Baha'is

¹³⁵ This agency over identity was generally related to the notions of instrumentality associated with the identity component of citizenship (see Chapters 1 and 2; Bourdieu, 1986; Ip, Inglis, Wu, 1997; Ong, 1999; Kastoryano, 1998; Waters, 2003).

expressed, both directly and indirectly, tensions over national belonging based on the complex interplay of nation and religion. This interplay allows Baha'is to partially abstract national identity away from the self in order to fulfil religious obligations, in order to attempt to approach the religious goal of global unity.



Figure 7.3: The importance of British citizenship for one London Baha'i was reflected in this photo of his Union Jack boxer shorts (photograph by respondent).

Even those individuals in the London Baha'i cohort who professed a more instrumental relationship to identity at the outset, viewing it in a religious context as a barrier to being a 'good Baha'i', recognised the importance of behaving within the expectations of the national cultural, legal and political contexts, and of complying to the expectations of the NSA. Thus, even when expressing themselves as wholly 'above' the foibles of national belonging, they were tied to the nation, as a cultural and political entity, in complex ways. All of this, the need to be within the nation and above the nation, led to an overall sense of ambivalence, or equivocality, as the individuals tried to reconcile the expectations of their religion with the realities of grounded contemporary action. For the second generation, their interstitiality augmented this sense of ambivalence towards national belonging, whilst their parents were often more enmeshed in nostalgic yearning for Iran and a more active participation in 'national cultural' events (see Chapter 6). However, this was not

always the case, with some parents embracing a high degree of cosmopolitanism that was in turn reproduced in the second generation.

7.4 A Cultural Muslim Community

As discussed in Chapter 5, many who emigrated from post-revolutionary Iran were from the mobile middle classes, educated and secular, who had formerly been taking part in an increasingly affluent urban lifestyle in Tehran. Their children, the second generation, grew up in a diasporic environment that attempted to emulate the pre-revolutionary middle-class Iran, replete with the ‘progressive’ attitudes to secularism and education that were fostered by the urban Iranian middle classes of Muslim background (see Chapter 9). Many of the second generation spoke of their parents meeting as students in European universities before the revolution and staying on or returning to those countries when the revolution took place (see Chapter 5). The families of other interviewees left Iran during the Iran-Iraq war of the 1980s, during which the threat of conscription motivated many to leave Iran before their sons were ‘shipped to the front’. Both male and female respondents were involved in these flows as whole families left in the face of the increasingly onerous terms of conscription.

C: So did you come over as asylum seekers?

Yes. That’s right. We came over because ... the brothers, if they stayed there they would have had to do military service.
Respondent 24, female Muslim, London.

For these families, just as for those who left through the earlier period of the revolution, return was not an option under the rule of Khomeini.

As a result of the conditions of exile, the second generation have mostly grown up in a context of ‘secular Islam’. Their parents mostly have a relatively benign relationship to Islam that can be thought of as a ‘cultural Islam’ where their everyday secular and cosmopolitan social actions remain imbued with ‘Muslim values’ through the tight association of Iranian identity with Islam amongst those of Muslim background (see Figures 7.4 and 7.5). Rather than turn their back altogether on Islam, which implies, through its intertwining with Iranian identity, a denial of Iranian-ness, individuals

maintained a core sense of Islam as a benign part of their Iranian selves. I describe the relationship as benign not in the sense that there exists no conscious thought about their feelings of Muslim identity, but more in the sense that Islam is a fact of life that guides rather than rules the actions of the individual.

I don't see Islam as a religion ... I don't drink, but it's not because I follow Islam at all. I wouldn't call myself Muslim ... If something makes sense then I (keep it). Now some of the laws and regulations, either I interpret them wrong or I just completely don't agree with them.

Respondent 22, male Muslim, London.

One of the key claims to difference between the world views of Christianity and Islam is that for Muslims, religion supplies an explicit, rather than the Christian implicit, way of behaving in society that ensures the reproduction of the Muslim community. Societal action is prescriptive in the Muslim community so as to avoid the loss of community itself. In contrast to the separation of church and state that marks the European Christian model of political thought, the result of this interrelationship has played itself out as an intimacy between religion and politics in Muslim nation-states. As history attests, these power relationships do change over time and it is too simplistic to state that Muslim nations all operate in the same way through the intimacy of religious and civic life, a point most clearly made in the case of Iran's late 20th Century history. Across all Islamic states there is a diversity of social realities that reflect the different modalities of the interrelationships between religious and secular intention. Islam, both as prescriptive text and as negotiated reality, exists in contemporary Iranian society, and likewise in the diaspora (see Figures 7.4 and 7.5).

As has been stated, it is incorrect to think of Iran as a homogenous Muslim state operating as one under the rule of the theocracy. It is the imposition of religious power that has led to the rise of the Iranian diaspora as part of the contested response to the ascendancy of the theocracy. In Iran, and particularly Tehran, the tension between the religious and the cultural sense of Islam is played out through a variety of fields of action from the private individual, all the way to the leaders of government. Mohammad Khatami's reform movement reflects this tension between the conservative religious infrastructure that seeks to produce society according to strict Islamic rules of conduct, and the progressive Islamic movement that views religion as

more benign in society allowing the flexibility for individual interpretation in order to embody individual freedom of choice. Even beyond this conservative/progressive dichotomy many of those of a more secular disposition in Iranian society have become more and more vocal in opposition to what they see as the slow pace of reform. What 'reform' has taken place has been contested and has mapped itself out unevenly across the physical landscape. As respondents who had recently returned to Iran (see the discussion on the opening of opportunities to return to Iran below) noted,

In Iran you can drink as much as you want, if, you know, you know where to get hold of it, if you've got the money. And you can do whatever you want with the opposite sex.

Respondent 25, female Muslim, London.

In Iran, there are a lot of parties there, and it was good ... you were there because you want to be with the people who are there. It's a private society there, so you know who is there.

Respondent 11, female Muslim, Vancouver.

In one of the big parks in Tehran, there was like a rollerblade rink. Like an outdoor one. And out of the loudspeakers they were pumping out really loud sort of techno music. And I was sort of like, in a public park, you know, that they would just do that.

C: Was that a pleasant surprise, or was it more shock?

When I thought about it it was sort of depressing in a way because there was so many things wrong with it, like with the country, did Khatami come in just so people could go to parties? Is that what it's all about? ... And when I was there sort of a few weeks before the presidential election, and they were cracking down on parties. So there was like a New Years, Christian New Years Eve party there. And they sort of busted that up and took some people away and flogged them. In fact, I was at a party once and one of the Revolutionary Guards came up and apparently they first bribed him to go away. But they kept on partying. And the people I was with said, ok, we should just go now because he's going to come back. So he was going to bust it. So we just left, just to be safe. Yeah, there were so many things wrong with the country, that it was kind of depressing in a way that they think, oh wow, we can play music and things are going to be alright.

Respondent 36, male Muslim, Sydney.

There is no uniform ascription to a cultural Islam amongst Iranians of Muslim background. Some can be thought of as cultural Muslims, whilst some have wholly

secularised their lives, successfully alienating their Iranian identity from its Islamic base. Others are active Muslims taking what would be seen as a conservative religious view of how society should be managed.



Figure 7.4: Ninth day of *Moharram* in the Cricklewood (Iraqi) mosque in London (photograph by respondent).



Figure 7.5: Dancing at a *Norooz* party in a club in London (photograph by respondent). During *Moharram* and *Norooz* some respondents moved easily between parties and the mosque.

Others are less conservative in their interpretations of Islam seeing the possibility of progressive religious engagement through a ‘modern’ Islam embodied through

religious interpretation that is more inclusive of difference in society. Yet far and away the largest group within those of Muslim background in the three cities were individuals who thought of themselves as Muslim in a more utilitarian or pragmatic manner that is more liberal and manifests itself in many social contexts as a benign Islamism or a secular denial of Islamic religious action.

I don't say it's a ritualistic thing. I don't pray five times a day. I don't fast during *Ramadan*. In a sense that I react to things, because I've been brought up in a certain way and told certain things are correct and I can make my own way in life.

Respondent 23, male Muslim, London.

For most their cosmopolitan lifestyles as aspirational middle/upper class educated elites was not necessarily antithetical to their feelings of being Muslim. Their individual ideas of Islam were negotiated as a cultural identity that exists as a part of the individual, in much the same way as they were Iranian, such that the inconsistencies of a conservative interpretation of Islam were partially avoided. As one respondent noted,

The New Years was at 5pm on the 20th. And I went ... for the coming of the Year, around 5pm I went to (my friends) house because she has family and everything there ... And we exchanged gifts and said happy New Years and stuff. And we had the traditional. And then after that I went home and changed and went to the party, which was just the younger people ... It was just us having fun dancing and drinking and stuff.

Respondent 11, female Muslim, Vancouver.

This flexibility over the interpretation of Islam has allowed the respondents to, on the one hand distance themselves from the contemporary theocracy in Iran, and on the other, to avoid alienating Islam altogether from the imagined Iranian nation and national identity. Islam remains a cogent part of their Iranian identity as a set of core (national) values that inform everyday cultural and secular interactions. The conflation of Iranian national identity with Muslim identity with its roots in the 20th Century intersection of Pahlavi pre-Islamic imaginings of Iran with the ongoing dominance of the Shi'i clergy (see Chapter 5), has constructed a homogenous Muslim Iranian society that allows flexibility of interpretation whilst simultaneously eliding the imagined landscape of non-Muslim actors. This discursive national Islamism

means that even the most cosmopolitan and secular actions may sometimes be imbued with Muslim cultural values.

Another beauty I find within Iranian culture is that at the end of the day religion plays such an important part in our culture. And kind of vice versa, kind of. ... There are, I'm sure, things that I do that are religious, through habit, you know. I suppose superstitions as well, that you get caught up on as well, that sometimes relate to religion, sometimes are just superstition at the end of the day. ... You know someone can say, you don't drink you must be Muslim.

Respondent 22, male Muslim, London.

In contrast to the case for the Baha'is, it may be said the Muslim sample did not feel the same level of flexibility to deploy national identity/ies as they were tied into wider discourses of national belonging that embedded national identity in its interrelationship with Iranian Shi'i Islam as an implicit part of the self, in much the same way that Anthony Smith (1993) talks of the ethnicity of national belonging.

7.5 Racism and the 'Muslim Iranian'

As has been described in Chapter 4, the degree to which Iranians and Iran are (mis)represented in the press and demonised by politicians are linked to the appearance of significant events in the international arena that involve Iranians. The '9/11' terrorist attacks sent reverberations around the world fuelling an anti-Islamic sentiment in Western nations that has, in turn, aroused a more open racism against migrants and others identified as Muslim.

Like a week after September the eleventh, every time we went to school and open(ed) the newspapers there was all this negative stuff about Islam, and that was bad for me, being a religious person. I don't think the media reacted good to it at all. And the government sort of backed the media up in a way. Doing it together, and so the peoples reaction would go towards it as well 'cause it was all over the media. And I think it just destroyed their own pictures as well of the Muslims, and I didn't like that.

Respondent 19, female Muslim, London.

We had this terrible terrorist label, and now it seems to have come back on us again, so I don't know what's going to happen next year...

C: Where's that come from?

It's, you know, Mr Bush and his Axis of Evil. It seems to be coming back and I don't know what's going to happen, but it doesn't look good, 'cause they seem to have made a decision they are going to go for it (the War in Iraq).
Respondent 20, male Muslim, London.

For those of Iranian background in SVL it may be simple to assume that the individual's experience of racism has thus increased. What the research uncovered was a more complex relationship to racism linked on one level to the question of visibility.

For most of the respondents, when asked about their own experiences of racism, particularly following the World Trade Centre attacks, they expressed an awareness of people who had suffered racist incidents, from slurs to assaults. However, what was most interesting was that for most of these individuals they really did not see themselves as subject to the rise in anti-Islamic sentiments.

Probably now, when there's more anti-Muslim sentiment, they are going to face more ... people are going to come and they are more accustomed to their own culture ... that's going to cause them to have a harder time.

C: In the last two years, have you personally found any difference in the way people perceive you?

In the last two years ... I haven't found any examples.
Respondent 34, male Muslim, Sydney.

C: Has the wider public's attitude towards Iran and the people from Iran changed since the terrorist attacks on Sept. 11th, 2001?

Yeah, the people I've come in contact with. ... They look more down on the Middle East than they normally would.

C: Have you experienced racism due to these attitudes?

I haven't.

C: You haven't, but you've heard of other people?

Yeah. Not Persian people, but yeah ... Friends.
Respondent 42, female Baha'i, Vancouver.

On one level this can be understood as recognition that as either non-Muslims (e.g. Baha'is), or as 'cultural Muslims', or secular Iranians, they should not be conflated with, or mistaken for, 'Muslims' (that is, 'fundamentalist' Muslims). Those of Muslim background cast themselves as 'non-Muslim' despite the core national Muslim values that intersect in their complex identities as discussed above. This opens up the question of the perception of Otherness, where the second generation problematise the popular conflation of Iranian with Muslim in response to the rise in racist incidents. Whilst the first generation may be subject to racism due to their 'difference' (i.e. language, accent, clothing – see Chapter 8) the second generation have more flexibility to deny the relevance of the racist act through their positionality beyond migrancy (at least compared to 'new migrants'). Hence, some second generation individuals minimise their difference to the white centre, and maximise their difference to new arrivals and the older first generation. Despite possibly being mistaken by the press and by 'white' community members as a 'Muslim', because they had an Iranian background, the reality of their self-awareness seems to have allowed many to see the rise in racist attitudes as something that does not, and should not, happen to them. There was a feeling of disengagement in discussions about racism that again indicated a degree of agency over their interstitial position. This was particularly the case for the Baha'is.

I would say definitely, that ... people feel scared and they generalise the whole population.

C: Do you feel subject to that generalisation in any way?

No.

Respondent 42, female Baha'i, Vancouver.

For practising Muslims, the increase in racist incidents had a different implication. Here the popular conflation of Iranian with Muslim does find its concrete footing. This was particularly the case for those few practising Muslims that were female. For these individuals their visibility as Muslims, through the signifier of the 'veil', and, by extension, their association with the veils iconic visibility in the media, marked them as open for public attack. This impact of racism on female Muslims has been studied by others, such as Dwyer (1999a, 2000), confirming racism against these more visible signifiers of Islam. What has not been discussed as completely is the difference in the

way young Muslims and others who are subject to discrimination and racism respond to racism in the wider community. For those who are included in the conflation of Iran and Islam in the wider media but do not consider themselves as Muslims, whether they are Baha'i or cultural Muslims or secular, racism against 'Muslims' may not appear directly associated to them.

At the same time, some reflect on these simplifications as a universalising of what it means to be 'Iranian' that subjects them as individuals to uneven power relations in society. Even though they are not 'Muslim', their being implicated in an Iranian Muslim stereotype, or even an Arab or Middle Eastern Muslim stereotype, relegates them as somehow lesser citizens.

C: What does the wider community class you as?

That's the thing, and I hate to say it, Arab. And we're not. And unfortunately we're perceived as Arabs.

Respondent 22, male Muslim, London.

These two possible degrees of freedom as expressed by the second generation 'non-Muslims' (religious minorities, cultural Muslims and secular individuals from a Muslim background) indicate the relative fluidity available to these interstitial actors. When faced with racism, these 'non-Muslims' from an Iranian background have at least some agency over how they respond to these acts, by including themselves as an active subject or being included as a passive subject. As an active subject they interrupt the preferred meaning of racist acts, actively reconfiguring the meaning through their reading. As a passive subject they are subjected to the unmediated preferred meaning that reproduces them as 'Muslim' in accordance with a popularly supported representation implicating them in wider racial/religious stereotyping.

In contrast to the case for 'non-Muslims', practising Muslims from an Iranian background conform to the preferred meaning (Hall, 1981, 1996) of these racist acts. The media representations of anonymous dehumanised female Muslims, signified by the presence of the *hijab*, but also reinforced by their anonymity in visual representations, constructs a target for anti-Islamic racism in cities such as SVL. For practising Muslims of the second generation their visibility as 'Iranians', or 'Arabs',

or 'of Middle Eastern appearance' is signified by their skin colour, their language, their religion, and most apparently, through their attire.

C: Has this had any implications for you at a personal level?

The September the eleventh event did. I had a lot of problems with that, wearing a scarf and everything. And I've had a few friends in college that would get together and talk about it. ...

C: In a bad way?

Well, you had a lot of problems as in a sense, if you're Muslims you're linked to it anyhow, I don't know how. ... I had a lot of friends that had so many [stares] down the street walking around and they had so many problems.

C: Friends who wear a scarf?

Yes.

Respondent 19, female Muslim, London.

Here, instead of being able to deny involvement with the stereotype, a path more open to 'non-Muslims', possibilities for agency and resistance play themselves out in different ways. In one concrete example of a response to racism, one female Muslim respondent in London described her school peer group as the 'scarfies', referencing the fact that they were seen as different by virtue of their religious clothing (see Figure 7.6). Here the respondent expresses the right to reclaim power over the construction of difference appropriating the sometimes pejorative term for female Islamic dress, the scarf, or the headscarf, and using it as a term of self-recognition. When discussing the friends seen in Figure 7.6, the respondent indicated that they were Sunni Muslims none of whom were from an Iranian background.

These are my scarfie friends ... None of them are Shi'as. I'm the only Shi'a in the College, I think. ... I think, back in Iran it would have been (a problem) but over here it's just ... I think they're more united as Muslims.

Respondent 19, female Muslim, London.

Their act of appropriation of the pejorative as their own has become a sense of communal resistance that in turn overcomes possible differences between them. Constructing a Muslim community in her school environment through conforming to the preferred meaning of Islamic representations does not represent in this case a

passive, or disempowered, response to racism. Rather, these young women have taken advantage of their subjection to essentialised Muslim stereotypes as a point of commonality that overcomes the other modes of difference between them, be they along religious, national, intellectual, or any other grounds. This however, does not deny the racist act. Rather it recognises the various patterns of response to racism that range from the reappropriation of the terms of racism through to an outright denial of its application.

For others their relative visibility marked them as legitimately ‘non-Muslim’, saving them from being targeted by racists.

In a way, during the whole September 11 thing I was lucky, because I look to others like I’m Indian. Had the Indians blown up, been implicated, then I’m sure I would have got a lot of racist remarks, you know. But I didn’t feel that. But you know, my father and my sister and other family members, they did ... Yeah, they were harassed...

Respondent 48, female Muslim, Sydney.

C: Have you experienced racism due to these attitudes?

No. Me, I don’t look Persian either, so I get it pretty easy.

C: And that’s important, the way you look?

Well, people. A lot of people pre-judge. So they can say because you look Persian, or whatever, you’re a terrorist. And I think I have it easy because I look European.

Respondent 40, female Baha’i, Vancouver.

C: Have you experienced racism due to these attitudes?

I haven’t, no. Simply because of the way I look, I think. Because a lot of people when they go ‘Where are you from?’, they never guess Iran. ... They usually go ‘Italian, Spanish’. You know they usually go along those lines. And I’m like, ‘try Middle Eastern’. And I don’t wear a scarf either, so people don’t know that I’m Muslim. And so I haven’t no. But I know people who have.

Respondent 37, female Muslim, Sydney.

Racism for the second generation thus differed greatly along lines of both self-recognised religious affiliation, as well as the implied religiosity that visible markers afford those who perform racist acts. The form of racist acts, and the sense of

involvement in these acts related directly to the construction of a conflated Muslim Iranian in the media and to the centrality of visible signifiers such as the *hijab* that were discussed in Chapter 4.



Figure 7.6: London female respondent with her school friends, ‘the scarfies’ (photograph from respondent).

7.6 Clash of the Religious and the Cultural

Returning again to the university clubs and societies discussed in Chapter 6, when we look at the membership of the Persian and Iranian clubs at universities most members are cultural Muslims, or secular, with some small representations of minority groups. Of particular significance is the invisibility of two main groups, the Baha’i s and the more conservative practicing Muslim cohorts amongst the second generation attending these universities.

In the Persian clubs, alcohol consumption is a point of differentiation around which the memberships turn, with the more conservative Muslims mentioning the presence of alcohol at functions as a disincentive to join (see Figure 7.7).

Some people, again, a very rare minority, do not like to be anywhere where there’s alcohol. So they will avoid mainly, again it’s the club nights again.
Respondent 20, male Muslim, London.

Most of the Persian clubs were run by secular individuals. Yet in some instances, the clubs were run by practicing Muslims under whose influence the nature of the events were slightly different. Going out to clubs where the consumption of alcohol may take place was generally frowned upon in these cases. However, despite the religious activity of the leadership, these clubs continued to emphasise a non-sectarian cultural theme in order to fulfil the dual roles of attracting the Iranians on campus, and not presenting a religious façade to the wider university community. As discussed in Chapter 7, it was important for both the secular and the religious leadership of clubs and societies to avoid being seen as ‘fundamentalist’ clubs.

C: What about people like (the current president)? (He) is a very religious person?

Yeah, but he’s not narrow minded. He’s very open-minded. There are religious people who are extremely narrow-minded and blind ... You find that people who really take it very, very seriously, are very, very, very narrow-minded.

Respondent 24, female Muslim, London.

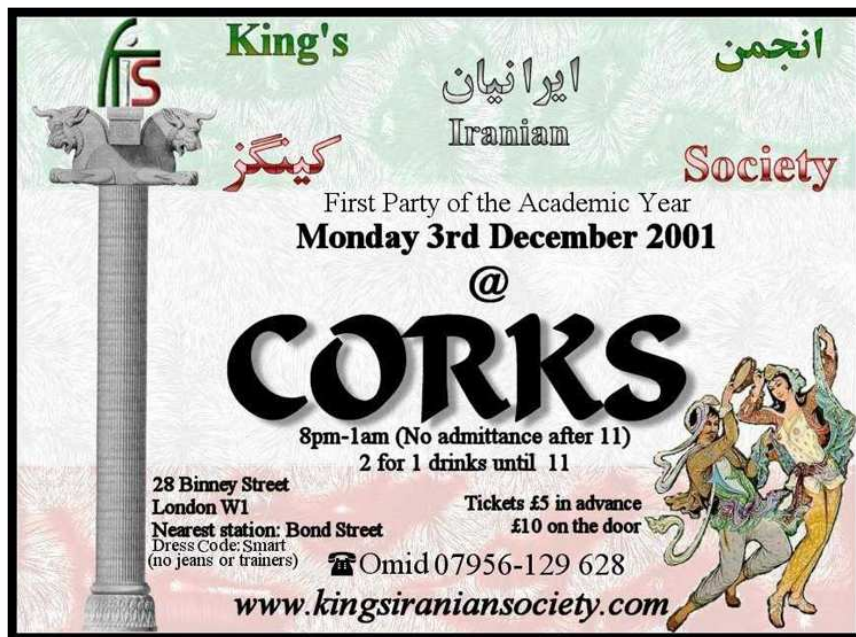


Figure 7.7: Kings Iranian Society party at Corks, “2 for 1 Drinks till 11”.

Practising Baha'is from an Iranian background on the university campuses were often involved in Baha'i clubs. Unlike the Persian clubs, which came under the aegis of cultural clubs and societies, the Baha'i clubs were explicitly religious having more in

common with the various other religious clubs and societies on university campuses, such as Christian, Jewish and Buddhist clubs. For the Baha'is on the campuses in all three cities, Baha'i clubs were an important institutional adjunct to the religious institutional structure of the Baha'i Faith. The clubs, whilst not limited to those of Iranian background, were nonetheless generally dominated by Iranian Baha'is, reflecting the wider demographic dominance of this group (see Chapter 4). As discussed above, the tension over national identity in the Baha'i Faith ensured that the Baha'i clubs distanced themselves from a purely Iranian representation, focusing instead on the global Baha'i community and its manifestation in the local and national community in ABC. The events organised by these clubs for members were generally of a religious nature, including 'devotionals' which involve prayer, discussion and interpretation of religious texts,¹³⁶ as well as wider open meetings to discuss issues of global significance, such as human rights and global gender relations. In the case of one Baha'i club, on the UBC campus in Vancouver, the club represented the only institutional presence in that political administrative area and thus took on the role of LSA with its associated events such as the 19-day feast (see Figure 7.8).

As for the practising Muslims, the Baha'is often expressed distaste for the type of events that the Persian clubs ran, again centring on the consumption of alcohol at dances and club nights (see also Chapter 9).

I still associate myself as in the Iranian community. Just I don't usually go the Persian Club dances. That's because I don't like the Persian Club dances.
Respondent 7, male Baha'i, Vancouver.

And they would have Iranian parties at a few clubs in London. I went to a couple and they did like Iranian music. And I remember being really shocked at some of the ... you know the only Iranians I know are Baha'is. You know it's really weird to see someone drink ... its funny.
Respondent 33, female Baha'i, London.

First year I joined it [the Persian Club] because maybe I felt like this was a way of getting into contact with the culture. But after that year I didn't feel like it was, so I didn't join it. ... They don't really do Persian things.

¹³⁶ The Universal House of Justice resists a strict definition of what a devotional entails beyond stating that it is a shared experience of prayer and worship (http://www.bahaidevotions.org/guide/devotional_meetings.htm , accessed: 2nd Dec., 2004).

C: What are Persian things?

Like I don't think a beer garden [party with alcohol] is very Persian. Or a doof garden [party with dance music] for that matter. It's a North American version of Persian culture, so it doesn't really interest me.

Respondent 8, male Baha'i, Vancouver.

These separations between the religious events of the Baha'is and the secular events of the (cultural Muslim) Persian club (see Figure 7.9) resulted in the separation of friendship groups on campuses along religious lines (see Chapter 9). However, despite the overtly religious focus of the Baha'i clubs, the groundings of the religion in Shi'i Iran leads to some conflation between the celebrations of Iranian cultural significance and the Baha'i calendar.¹³⁷ One such instance is *Norooz*, which also marks the commencement of the Baha'i calendar. These celebrations organised by both the Baha'i and the Persian/Iranian clubs on the various campuses do have some crossover of members attending what is an important cultural as well as religious event for Baha'is of Iranian background. Some Baha'i respondents spoke of the importance of *Norooz* as a religious event, whilst at the same time discussing the centrality of the *haft seen* or attendance at *sizdeh bedeh*, both of which are imbued with pre-Islamic cultural significance.

This is my mum (see Figure 6.2). And this is the *haft seen* that we had for *Norooz*. I asked her to be in it because this is something that she really likes, prides herself on having every year. She likes people to come see her Haft Seen.

Respondent 3, male Baha'i, Vancouver.

C: When you take the (*sabzeh*) and throw it...?

Yeah. So we'll we go with Iranian family friends? ... Just to any big park, nearby. And obviously we're in the UK so its not always very good weather, so sometimes we just go visit someone's house ... And that's with like non-Baha'i Iranians friends but that's you know ... That's the only other kind of ... events that I can think of (that isn't Baha'i).

Respondent 28, female Baha'i, London.

¹³⁷ Toolo and Shakibae (2000: 113) make note of the confluence of Islamic notions of migration, set down in the linguistic structure through words such as *hejran* (separation) and *hejrat* (migration), with Baha'i theological imperatives. The obligation and desire to teach their faith is related to the opportunity afforded by migration. For Baha'is, the propagation of the Faith is a basic tenet, thus tying the notion of Islamic migration to the core of Baha'i theology and practice.



Figure 7.8: “This is just that Friday night party. This is a picture ... people playing Persian music and dancing, and having a good time.” *Respondent 7, male Baha’i, Vancouver.* Dancing at the UBC Baha’i community feast to commemorate *Norooz* (photograph by respondent).

For other Baha’is the religious connotations of *Norooz* clashed with the ‘cultural’ events of the wider Muslim Iranian community. The *haft seen*, and events such as *chahar shanbeh souri* and *sizdeh bedeh*, were seen more as Muslim cultural events, not having direct relevance for the celebration of Baha’i New Year. Some respondents, whilst recognising *Norooz*, failed to recognise *sizdeh bedeh* and *chahar shanbeh souri*, or *mehmuni* (see Chapter 6).

In Chapter 6 the formal separation of Baha’is from Iranian Muslim was discussed. Such arguments not only reinforce the religious divide, but reify difference along religious lines in the Iranian diaspora. The promotion of formal separation along religious lines was also reinforced for some by familial expectation that warned of the dangers of fraternising with Muslims.

C: Do your parents think there are people who are unsuitable as friends?

Yeah, definitely. All the ... I guess you would say non-Baha’is, as in Iranian non-Baha’is, same age as me. ‘Cause like you see how they go ... Mum ... always says ... they smoke drugs, they drink alcohol and stuff like that ... She doesn’t like me hanging around with those type of people. She’s more happy when like we hang around with our Baha’i friends.

Respondent 16, male Baha’i, Sydney.



Figure 7.9: Joint *Norouz* party for the Persian clubs of London.

Similarly there are differences promoted by Muslim parents that conform to the negative rhetoric of both the Pahlavi state and the Republic.

C: Did your Muslim friends know anything about the Baha'i Faith when you started looking at it.

Oh, they don't ... Because of what happened, the history between Muslims and Baha'is, you know they're told certain things, and they believe that, based on what their parents have told them ... Most Muslims have this idea that Baha'i Faith is not a real religion.

Respondent 41, female Muslim, Vancouver.

The confluence of religious and national events at *Norouz* did not only have an impact on Baha'is. During 2002, there was another important clash surrounding *Norouz*, this time involving the practising (and cultural) Muslims. The 10 day commemoration of *Ashura* in the month of *Moharram* fell in conjunction with the week of *Norouz* causing people to have to negotiate both religious and national cultural days and events. One instance of compromise involved the Rustam Iranian School in London, which moved the date of its annual celebration of *chahar shanbeh souri* in order not to clash with *Moharram*.

C: So *Norouz* coming up do you see that as a cultural event or a religious event?

Well it's cultural more than anything. But it's coinciding with a very important month for the Muslims. So I'm having problems there as well. So while they're celebrating, the Shi'as have *Moharram* ... And *Norouz* is at the same time. So either you celebrate or you go with the religion side...

C: So how are you resolving those issues?

Well, the school has events usually around *Norooz*, we have parties and *chahar shanbeh souri* where on the last Wednesday we have to jump over fires and ... they've solved that in a sense. They've brought it back a week so it doesn't coincide with the Islamic calendar.

Respondent 19, female Muslim, London.

C: So did you go to any of the *Norooz* parties, or did you not go because you were doing the right thing?

No, there was one or two that I did attend, yeah ... this last Sunday I attended one, and ... there was a few very important days that *Moharram*, had passed it was ok. My mum would say, I think if she objected she would have said something.

Respondent 25, female Muslim, London.

This negotiation over religious and secular festivals reflects the shifting allegiances to religious and national identities amongst Iranians in the diaspora.

Finally, it is of interest to note that another of the religious societies present on all campuses, the Muslim clubs and societies, did not appear to have any Iranian members. In discussions with the executives of several Muslim clubs they stated that the lack of Iranians in their (usually large) membership possibly reflected the ongoing tensions between the Sunnism, to which these clubs subscribed, and the Shi'ism of Iranians.

7.7 *Transnational Networks*

For the second generation from Iran the question of access to Iran, the ability to take part in the act of return, has been a significant influence for many in their relationship with their more or less enduring sense of Iranian identity. Most of the respondents of this research were part of the migration flows that took place following the Iranian revolution in 1978/79. Whether they left under the cloud of political 'radicalism', as either Royalists or Communists, following the rise of the theocratic rule of Ayatollah Khomeini, or whether they were persecuted as deviant and heretical religious minorities, as was the case with the Baha'is, most of those who migrated did so as

exiles. And as exiles, they had lived a diasporic existence excluded from the country of origin, unable to return, often leaving immediate and extended families behind.

For many exiles, particularly those of Muslim background, conditions changed in the 1990s with Khomeini's death and the ascension of the moderate cleric Mohammed Khatami as president in 1997. Transnational business relations, some of which had survived the rule of Khomeini, began to lead to increased journeys of return to Iran from the diaspora. The implications of this for the second generation was that some children who had spent most of their lives limited to imagining the homeland could now act on their desires to return. What drove those desires is complex and is linked concurrently with the desire to meet family never seen, to see the country spoken about by their parents and other relatives and family friends, to give their imaginings a substance, even to compare the Iran in the media with the Iran in the flesh. For most of the Muslim respondents in all three cities the return, or the prospect of return in the future, was a 'visit', a chance to meet family and experience Iran.

C: Would you go back to Iran in the future?
... Visiting, yes. But I don't think I'd like to go there and live, no.
Respondent 19, female Muslim, London.

I wanted to find out where I was from. And also a lot of relatives are passing away, or getting married or getting older and I was at the point in my life where I wanted to discover my identity, my roots.
Respondent 48, female Muslim, Sydney.

Those in this study who had undertaken the return journey had done so under little illusion as to where they would live. Almost all who took part in return journeys said their life was based in Australia, Britain or Canada, and that they would not be seeking to return permanently to Iran. The reasons given extended from the lack of opportunity Iran held for living the lifestyle they sought, or were living. Also the religious conservatism of the society was put forward as negative to people who had lived their life in a relatively secular environment.

However, for some few respondents, the return to Iran held more than just an opportunity to visit. One London respondent, in particular, spoke of her

disenfranchisement with wider British society and the sense of Iranian-ness that she felt there. She was ambivalent about identity and described herself as neither British in Britain nor Iranian in Iran. Despite spending all her life in London, she felt no attachment to British society. Yet in Iran, even though she was not seen as 'Iranian' she felt a sense of inclusion by family and friends that was missing in her life in London. Returning to Iran offered her an opportunity to partake in community that was not open to her as a visible member of a migrant community, an Iranian (or 'Arab', or 'British Muslim'), in London. This sense of community outweighed the relative negatives offered by other respondents, such as lack of opportunity for educational and economic advancement and the impact of ongoing religious conservatism.

To be honest I wouldn't mind moving there, but when I want to move ... it would be to move there with a career, have a career there ... But, at the same time, all my family are there ... as long as my mum comes as well (laughs). Yeah, I've got no problem. And I can always come back here one day.
Respondent 25, female Muslim, London.

For another respondent in London, there was a sense of options opening up with the changing nature of Iranian society under the reforms of Khatami. Whilst he had never been to Iran, being born and raised in London, and had a promising future in the medical sciences, he felt that the future was open,

I would always call myself an Iranian living in Britain, living away from his homeland ... which is where I'm living at the moment. I may not be here in 10 years time.
Respondent 23, male Muslim, London.

One significant restriction, that has allowed the option of return of male Muslim respondents to be considered, is the flexible relationship surrounding conscription. Conscription into the armed forces was a significant 'push' for emigration for many of the families. In the latter half of the 1990s the opportunity to 'buy out' of conscription began to appear with its value set at between US\$5 000 and US\$18 000 depending on the present status of this process. This process was informal and variable, with the rise of international tensions surrounding the war in Iraq casting uncertainty over the ability to actually make the transaction and therefore guarantee that conscription would not be enforced on return.

I would like to go, but they have conscription. So if I do go I might be taken into the army for two years. Because it's a very unstable system you can't really trust what people say about it [conscription].
Respondent 38, male Muslim, Sydney.

This uncertainty was mentioned by several who were willing to wait for things to 'cool down' before considering their Iranian return.

With the opening of paths for 'the return' for some of the second generation, the notion of 'Iranian exile' put forward by Naficy in the early 1990s needs to be revised. As the structuring of exile is lessened 'the return' becomes for some a negotiated decision where the individual has a greater degree of agency. It is more a 'relative exile' where the structuring of exclusion is not uniform across the diaspora.

For Baha'is, the structuring of exile has remained. Whilst Muslims have been able, within limitations, to consider 'the return', Baha'is remain excluded from Iran as apostates. The executions and associated persecutions have waned through the 1990s marking if not a tolerance for, at least an active disregard of, Iranian Baha'is. However, recent tensions between the reform movement and the conservatives in political and religious circles have led to renewed persecution of Baha'is. As a result, Baha'is involved in the research were loath to put a date on a possible return, stating that the prospect of return would be entertained if and when it could be safely achieved.

If things get better, then of course, sure, but I don't have a burning desire to go.
Respondent 15, female Baha'i, Sydney.

C: Would you like to go to Iran in the future?

I'd like to go in the future.

C: Is there anything stopping you going to Iran now or in the future?

Probably the military service, that I think I might have to do ... I'd like to go back one day. Yeah, I think it would be pretty fun ... As a Canadian citizen. I don't have a passport anymore.
Respondent 7, male Baha'i, Vancouver.

Yet, for some Baha'is the door to the homeland was not totally closed so long as they were prepared to take the risk and if they could hide their Iranian and their Baha'i identity from the authorities. As one respondent noted,

I've got a friend who's been making quite a few trips recently.

C: Really, Baha'i?

Yep. But you wouldn't know it. He's ... only half Persian. He's got an English name, you know, and he's got your colouring. So I imagine that might make it easier, but I'm quite keen to go.

Respondent 30, female Baha'i, London.

The visibility of Iranian identity is once again essentialised here, as whiteness, signified not only by colour, but through his 'English name', becomes a mask for the 'Iranian' to hide behind in order to undertake the return.

Return journeys by Baha'is, particularly those who have achieved refugee status, also have political ramifications for Baha'is wishing to apply for refugee status in the future.

C: Is there anything stopping you going to Iran now or in the future?

Yes ... With the Baha'is, yes, it's not good to go back and forth. It's not as serious for people like me. But for Baha'is who have come ... I know that there's advice against Baha'is, who have recently come. You know they might be here a couple of years or something, who came out as refugees and are now going back to Iran for a holiday. ... It's really bad, disastrous ... for the credibility of the Baha'is. And so they're advised not to do this. ... So I think that ... it's not suitable at the moment.

Respondent 14, male Baha'i, Sydney.

The experiences of exile that emphasise the cyclical nature of cultural investment in Iranian identity oppose traditionally constructed progressive models of integration. The opportunity for return can infuse a longing that has been suppressed through the action of exile resulting in a resurgence of feelings about the homeland (see quote by respondent 48 above). Many parents of Muslim respondents were often eager for their children to return to experience Iran in the hope that this resurgence of feelings may engender a greater interest in cultural maintenance in the diaspora.

Yeah. I've had jobs. Back in Iran though. I go back there in the Summer. And my dad has a company there...

C: So you work with him?

No, no. He has friends, he has connections. It's just through him.

C: So you come through customs and they take you to a job.

Yeah, exactly. Ok, let's go and work in that bank. Last Summer I worked in a bank in Iran. The owner he knew my dad. It's hardly serious work.

Respondent 9, male Muslim, Vancouver.

Other parents warned against return as the current state of Iranian society would spoil their 'pristine' imaginings of Iran, possibly turning them against the investment in Iranian cultural maintenance that they had nurtured from afar. However, many of the prospective returnees described their expectations as not being too high, as they had heard of the difficulties present in Iranian society via several sources, including visiting relatives, new arrivals and the media, including the profusion of satellite television channels and the internet, with some regularly 'logging on' to read news concerning Iran (often produced in the diaspora). Even when the reality threatened to cloud their images of Iran, most still managed to rationalise their experiences in order to fuel a resurgent image of Iran as their homeland (even if it was not ultimately where they wished to live).

C: Are you going to go back?

I would like to buy my military service to have my freedom...

C: Just for a holiday?

I would like to give something back. I would like to work there ... for six months at least. I don't see myself living there. ... as in surviving there. My perceptions of Iran are through the eyes of a ten year old ... When I lived there I was ten and my perception of Iran is through these ten year old's eyes. Even now. It's very romanticised. It's a great country. I know realistically it's a very wrong perception to have because you grow up and you realise that it's not like that.

Respondent 23, male Muslim, London.

One couple's decision to observe a more traditional format for their upcoming engagement party was directly related to the female's recent experience of return.

Shahidian (1999: 210) and Tohidi (1993: 203) both relate cases of second generation individuals (in Canada and USA-Los Angeles respectively) who have conceded to certain rituals that surround engagements and weddings as a compromise to their parents' desires. This couple had described their respective upbringings as not particularly Iranian. However, the return journey to Iran had reinvigorated her desire to understand more about her Iranian side. For his part, the male respondent had maintained more of a continued interest in his 'Iranian heritage' through his involvement in Persian music as a musician.

The return, or the possibility of return, has a part to play in the processes of negotiation of the reproduction of 'cultural' features from the first to the second generation. There are complex compromises being played out by both generations, such as the previous discussions of *mehmuni* (see Chapter 6) and the type of friends that are appropriate along with the desirability of selective endogamy that will be discussed further in Chapter 8.

7.8 *Baha'i Service*

The notion of religious service has fuelled a transnational network of relations for many of the Baha'i respondents. Service was taught by Baha'ullah as the highest expression of human nature (Hatcher & Martin, 1985: 173) and is usually associated with either a voluntary term at the Baha'i World Centre in Haifa, or in one of the areas earmarked as of need of Baha'i attention. In particular, the idea of a 'year of service' is promoted globally amongst Baha'i 'youth', whereby they take part in a year away as a volunteer propagating goodwill through service to a community in need (and in turn, propagating the religion in new frontier areas).

When asked about the places to which they had travelled many Baha'is spoke of the places they had been to take part in service, or the places they wished to go to in the future when they took their year of service.

C: You did a year of service?

Yeah I did a year of service. ... I was working in a children's home [in Honduras] ... and I was teaching children English and things. It was quite ad-

hoc what I was doing. And then ... I went to the north of Honduras... and I was working on an agricultural development there ... They were both Baha'i inspired projects.

Respondent 28, female Baha'i, London.

When I make contact with the Baha'i community I do make contact with Iranians.

C: Whereabouts?

Geneva, South Africa.

C: Did you do your year of service in South Africa?

No, I just went to a Baha'i conference there.

Respondent 13, female Baha'i, Sydney.

These important networks of Baha'i youth, that are also augmented through a circuit of Baha'i conferences at local, national and international levels, aid in the production of the global perspective that the Baha'is seek to nurture. What role the internet and electronic communication play in the maintenance of these transnational circuits, for both Baha'is and for Muslims, are discussed below.

7.9 *Internet and the diaspora*

The rise of the internet and the profusion of new information communication technologies (ICTs) have facilitated an increase in the degree of contact within and between diasporic communities. The improved possibility of access to the homeland from exile deterritorialises the imagined homeland, in some ways transcending the 'long-distance' that separates the diasporan individual from the homeland. For those who wish to seek it out, the internet has become an important source of information about what is going on in Iran.

C: How important is the internet for you as a way to learn about Iran?

For sure as a source of information ... In terms of media you don't have to wait ... there's daily coverage. And I try and find tutors on the internet to help me with my Persian. And there's Persian texts online, so that really facilitates me to learn about Iran, to learn Persian and that.

Respondent 5, male Baha'i, Vancouver.

C: Do you go to different websites ... about Persia?

Yeah. I like some of the art. For the history, whenever I have enquiries of my own, I look it up. But its slowed down. When I first got the internet ... I'd go and check these sites out about Iran and history and that, but it's slowed down.

Respondent 34, male Muslim, Sydney.

Whilst both Muslim and Baha'i individuals in the sample availed themselves of the internet as a source of information about Iran, from a political, social and historical perspective, it was not used universally. Some, such as respondent 34, professed to revelling in a new found access to 'what it is like in Iran', only to lose interest after the initial flurry of internet activity. Additionally, the Baha'is were more likely to avoid searching the net for Iranian information, partially to avoid evoking diasporic connotations associated with the homeland, as will be discussed below.

In particular, in terms of direct communication with relatives (the 'cousins') and friends in Iran by email, the Muslim cohort in all three cities was more likely to initiate and maintain lines of electronic communication, whilst the Baha'is in general showed far less interest in maintaining email links. This lack of interest in either contacting 'Iran' directly through email, or indirectly through use of the internet as an information source reflects both the dearth of relatives remaining in Iran for some Baha'is and the relative disengagement with Iran as 'the homeland' (see above and Chapter 5).

C: Have you communicated by email or via chat rooms with people in Iran?

No. I don't know why, but that makes me feel uncomfortable to think about it. I don't know why it does, but I just can't really imagine. Because there's a lot of me that actually does reject the Iranian...

Respondent 13, female Baha'i, Sydney.

C: Have you visited any chatrooms or anything like that?

Yeah, I have. But it's mostly people from here who are in those chatrooms.
Respondent 10, male Muslim, Vancouver.

As respondent 10 notes, visiting 'Persian' chatrooms is just as likely to link you into the wider diasporic Iranian communities outside Iran, as it is to give you access to someone in Iran.

There is a differentiation found between the Muslim and Baha'is in using email to contact relatives and friends in Iran. This can be partially due to the impact of increased contact available to the Muslims through return journeys. Indeed, as described above, some expressed an explicit relationship between the 'return' to Iran and the reinvigoration of communication. Based on their contact, and facilitated by ongoing communication these individuals have invested in a stronger connection with Iran and the family members there.

C: Before you went to Iran did you contact anybody by email?

No.

C: So it's after meeting them there.

Yeah. I had never met my cousins. I had never met my aunts, two of my other aunts. And they loved me as if I was their own child. It was unbelievable.
Respondent 10, male Muslim, Vancouver.

However, this is not universal. For other Muslims contact was not facilitated by return.

Another cause for this differentiation along religious lines has less to do with the impacts of barriers to return as it has to do with the Baha'i relationship to the nation-state and national identity as a barrier to global unity discussed previously. As evidence of the 'transcendence' beyond national identities, many Baha'is showed a lack of comfort with the diasporic desire for return, manifest through a reticence to communicate by email with the 'homeland'. This was seen by some as a regressive act reflecting a politico-religious immaturity that they wished to escape. Respondent 13, above, in rejecting 'the Iranian', does so as a part of the process of casting herself

as a 'global individual'. This respondent, like several other Baha'is across all three cities, expressed a fondness for the United Nations (UN) and a desire to work for them in the future. When these same respondents who expressed a discomfort with maintaining contact with Iran, were asked about communication with Iranians in other cities or countries outside of Iran, the differentiation between them and the Muslim cohort disappears, with both groups expressing a more active engagement with diasporic electronic communications.

C: Have you communicated by email or via chat rooms with people from Iran in other cities or countries?

By email. Yes. ... That was through the Baha'i factions.... (in) Canada and Toronto.

Respondent 13, female Baha'i, Sydney.

C: Have you communicated by email or via chat rooms with people from Iran in other cities or countries?

Yeah I have a friend in Dubai ... I have some people in Los Angeles. I haven't really met anyone in Europe, otherwise I would.

Respondent 10, male Muslim, Vancouver.

C: Have you communicated by email or via chat rooms with people from Iran in other cities or countries?

Oh Yeah, yeah. Email definitely. ... Like Los Angeles, all over the US ... or like Israel, Haifa. A friend was in Haifa for a few years, and it was too expensive to call.

Respondent 3, male Baha'i, Vancouver.

C: Have you communicated by email or via chat rooms with people from Iran in other cities or countries?

Yes (laughs). Gosh, everywhere.

C: Relatives, friends, Baha'is?

Other Baha'is, yeah. The States, Canada, all round Europe, yeah.

C: People you meet at conferences?

Yeah.

Respondent 30, female Baha'i, London.

The active engagement with the global extent of communication by the Baha'is can be seen as a looking forward to a cosmopolitan future, compared to the uncomfortable national past represented by emotional ties to Iran. Transnational cosmopolitan networks are actively pursued by many of the Baha'is as an expression of their religious fervour. This is no better typified than through their 'year of service' (see above). Many spoke of their international contacts as being the result of contacts made whilst on a period of service. This action is also closely linked to the proselytising mission of the Baha'i Faith. For some Baha'is these transnational networks led to a stronger link with 'Iranian' co-religionists in other countries than with the Muslim Iranians in their own city.

Whilst the media has recently portrayed an explosion in the use of the internet in Iran, particularly amongst the young, coupled with subsequent repressions and sanctioning associated with free access to international information, in reality the internet and email played a relatively minor role in connecting the second generation to the 'homeland'. The assumption of an unlimited transnational communication that engenders Anderson's long distance nationalism runs the risk of overemphasising the importance of new information and communication technologies in maintenance of diasporic yearnings. As Skrbis notes, we run the risk of sliding into technological and social determinism if we fail to "resist the temptation to fetishise the importance of modern communication technologies and their impact on the identity formation of modern diaspora populations" (1999: 20-1). The transnational flow of communication remains tied to space, with differentials in access and the reality of trying to 'stay in touch' causing frictions which fix flows in space and time (Thrift, 2002: 34-9). Whilst some people in each city indicated that they used the internet to communicate with Iranians in other places around the world, including Iran, on the whole there were more who indicated they did not. The reasons given for not communicating ranged from the lack of access in Iran, to the lack of desire to communicate by the respondent, and the lack of sophistication in understanding technology by relatives and friends in Iran.

C: Have you communicated by email or via chat rooms with people in Iran?

No. I've written letters, a few (laughs).

C: But you've not used the Internet?

No. Especially in Mashhad. They're not as with the times as Tehran is.
Respondent 19, female Muslim, London.

Finally, whilst the second generation were less likely to contact the 'family' in Iran, all indications were that the first generation actively nurtured these virtual interconnections. Part of the reason for this is that these transnational relationships were facilitated by the pre-existing relationships developed prior to the separation of exile. Personal contact lay behind the virtual connection. It was this contact that was missing for the second generation in their position as 'relative exiles'. Thus virtual transnational relations need to be seen as extensions of real-world personal relationships. The virtual Iranian diaspora community remains fixed in the mesh of personal relations predicated on physical contact that serves in most cases to distance the second generation from Iran.

7.10 Conclusions

The question of religious identities, and in particular the present Western focus on Muslim identity, raises significant challenges to the current structures of national multiculturalisms. In Canada and Australia, the aggressive secularism (Werbner, 2000: 315-7) that exists behind the official religious tolerance, sees threat in new migrant identities configured around pious religiosity. Similarly, in Britain, new religious identities threaten the status quo. However, the British case is rendered more complex through a 'secular aggression' that is augmented by complex relations surrounding the existing religious nature of civil society, where Anglicanism offers itself as both a locus of support of, and resistance to, attempts to include religious identities within the discourse of new multiculturalisms (Lewis, 1997). Under these conditions of negative media stereotyping and political scapegoating Iranian identity has become conflated with Islam to construct a spectre of religious threat embodied in a national identity.

As this Chapter has shown, the complex negotiations of religious identities across space do not manifest themselves through congruence with the nation or national identity. Rather, religious identities (both active and more passive) intersect and

cross-cut the nation challenging monolithic constructs and serving to decentre national discourses of identity. For Baha'is, their existence as an Iranian religious minority interrupts the coherent landscape of Iranian fundamentalist Islam. Further, the distinctive cosmopolitan critique of the nation as concurrently the vessel for contemporary action and the barrier to global inclusion constructs an ambivalent relationship to national belonging. For the 'Muslim' from an Iranian background, it is their lack of religiosity which unsettles the stereotype of the fundamentalist Muslim Iranian. And yet these second generation 'Iranians' have not turned their back on Islam. Instead they have constructed a 'cultural Muslim' identity built on the selective interpretation of religious morality set in a secular framework. The ongoing importance of an 'Islamic' identity stripped of its religious efficacy is tied to the centrality that Islam holds in wider notions of being Iranian. For some, to turn their back on Islam would be to deny their very 'Iranian-ness'. It is partially for this reason that a cultural Muslim identity helps aid the separation from stereotypes of fundamentalism without alienating these interstitial actors completely from their Iranian selves, allowing them to express agency over discussions about their complicity in racist discourses, whilst remaining more or less 'Iranian'. For a minority of respondents Islam plays a more active role in their lives. For them, it is more difficult to interrupt the preferred meaning of racist discourses as they feel the tensions of a rising 'Islamaphobia'. For the Baha'is, their positionality as non-Muslims allows them to selectively avoid racist allusions to Islam as threat embodied in Iranians. They, of all the respondents, appeared to be able to express agency in the face of the structuring of Iranians as an Islamic threat, recognising it as a problem that happened to 'other people'. Whilst this analysis recognises the agency to avoid the full scope of the negative impacts of racist discourse, it does not seek to justify or lessen the importance of dealing directly with the ignorance of intolerance. Rather, it is important to recognise that there are people who are affected to a greater or lesser degree by racism dependent on their self-perception of complicity in the act of aggression perpetrated by racists against 'Muslims'.

Throughout this chapter the analysis has highlighted the differentiation between 'religious actors' set in national contexts. Whether discussing the complex politics behind the formation and continuing maintenance of university clubs and societies, or the differential importance of transnational networks of affiliation, and the importance

of 'the return' in (re)invigorating relations over distance, the Baha'is and the Muslims in this research have shown that decisions about religion are intimately set within the contexts constructed by the perceptions of the wider society about what it means to be 'Iranian'. Religion and nation are intimately tied in public discourse about Iran and unsettling one unsettles the other. For this purpose religion was selected as a starting point for discussing alternate identities. From here it is possible to move on to engage in the next chapter with the other 'communities' that unsettle the 'us/them' dialectic, in order to better identify the complex positionality of national belonging amongst its possible alternates. Identifying this dynamism will help to open paths for a more inclusive multicultural future.

8 INTERSECTING IDENTITIES

Identities are continually being made. We are engaged in processes of identification where, as Stuart Hall reminds us, change, contestation, heterogeneity and mixture are the key features rather than fixity, consensus, homogeneity and purity

(Eades, 1998: 156).

... differences are not necessarily either/or – many people are learning to live ‘in-between’, it has been said, or with more than one identity

(Parekh *et al.*, 2000: 36).

In the last chapter we investigated religious affiliation as one possible identity field that unsettles national discourses of belonging. The conflation of Islam with Iran in popular representations constructs a monolithic Muslim Iranian stereotype against which both Baha’is and Muslims from the second generation contextualise their day-to-day identity negotiations. Hence, to decentre the religious stereotype is to decentre the national stereotype. In this chapter we move beyond this intertwined religious-national discourse to more complex and detailed interactions that exist in conjunction with national and religious belonging to emphasise the contingent nature of identity and the difficulty faced in trying to accommodate these complex identities within the limited scope of multicultural policies. By drawing out these complex interrelationships that surround ‘the nation’ it is hoped that we can come to an appreciation of the need to better consider complex identities in multicultural discourse in order to locate future directions for policy.

The areas of identification and belonging that we will discuss in this chapter can be separated into four themes. Firstly, we will look at the influence of different scales on national belonging. The dominance of the nation as a discrete geopolitical scale has come under increasing scrutiny since the onset of ‘globalisation’ in the late 1980s. Rather than presage a post-national reality, globalisation has resulted in the reappraisal of the place of the nation in global relations. What this means for the nation is the increasing realisation of the interrelationships that cut across scale, drawing the nation into dynamic interaction with the geopolitical realities that extend from the local and individual through to the global scale. This section will focus on several themes that interrupt both Iran and ABC as discrete and bounded entities from

the role of the family and the home, through to local Baha'i communities, the second generation peer group, language in the home and the community, the Baha'i predisposition towards individual rights within a global unity, and the transnational relationships harboured by both the Muslim and the Baha'i cohort that tie them into global diasporic relations. The second area we will investigate is that of the subcultures that exist within and beyond the community of the second generation from an Iranian background including the place of music and 'clubbing' in the lives of certain respondents, the meaning of youth amongst the Baha'is and how it ties them into communal relations with global youth, and the place of soccer, or football, in the Iranian diaspora which links the mostly male fans into global networks of support and contestation amongst fans of the 'world game'. The third area of focus will look at class relations and how the desires to reproduce the class separations from pre-revolutionary Iran in the diaspora have constructed cleavages and communal affiliations based on social mobility and aspiration. In this discussion we will look particularly at the relationships between the established families from Iran and newer migrants, and the centrality of notions of threat and lower-class status in the construction by the respondents of 'FOBs', 'fresh off the boat' Iranians. The difference between these newer arrivals and the established 'higher class' Iranians is mediated through such fields of endeavour as education and profession, and through the conspicuous consumption of upper class goods, from cars and houses, down to shoes and trousers. These class relations connect these 'migrants' into wider social class relations that subvert national differences. Finally, we will look at the relationship of gender focusing on the construction of essentialised masculine and feminine roles that classify the place of individuals in the reproduction of Iranian-ness in the diaspora. From the kitchen as the women's place, and the woman/mother as the guardian of cultural maintenance, the construction of particularised gender roles structure negotiations of identity and form the context against which the individuals contest gender roles in the diasporic Iranian communities.

8.1 Geographies of Scale

As discussed in Chapter 3, the use of visual ethnographic methods has allowed the elucidation of complex communal interactions. In looking at the alternative scalar relations that interrupt the nation, the home, and the representations of home

constructed by the respondents particularly through the photographs they took, is a useful starting point.

8.1.1 Homely multiculturalism

Many of the photographs of places of everyday importance understandably centred on the family home (see Figures 8.1 and 8.2). The home is identified by Ghassan Hage as a place of 'home-building', where the affective acts which create and recreate a sense of belonging are centred. He defines home-building as "*the building of the feeling of being 'at home'*" (Hage, 1997: 102), considering the home as an affective construct built from affective building blocks which he calls the blocks of homely feeling. This stress on the importance of home and the acts of homeliness that are associated with being and feeling at home is built on the feelings of security, familiarity, community and a sense of the possible. By concentrating on the affective importance of the home and home-building Hage has been able to view the home as a productive place of renewal set in an active present, rather than as a product of a negative nostalgia. The things that make the home a place of celebration of the past are also actively embedded in the present as the process of being in the new nation is mediated through the home. He contrasts a sense of home-building in the present with the academic preoccupation with nostalgia as a sense of homesickness, claiming that this is an extreme case of nostalgia. For the migrant, just as for the non-migrant, nostalgia is tied to the process of home-building as we seek to produce in the present what we feel we had in the past: the feelings of security, familiarity, community, and possibility. Hage states,

Nostalgia is nothing more than a memory of a past experience imagined from the standpoint of the present to be homely. Clearly, nostalgic feelings do not only abound in migrant life but in everybody's life. They guide home-building in the present because people seek to foster the kind of homely feeling they know (Hage, 1997: 105).

Thus, when we view the images produced by respondents of their homes and their families in their homes, these images often include those 'things' that embody affective ties to the homeland (see Figure 8.3 and 8.4). Whilst these embody nostalgic intimations this does not mean they necessitate a sense of cleavage with the present or with a sense of engagement with their Australian, Canadian or British reality. The

feelings of security, familiarity, community and possibility conveyed for the first generation by these homely articles do not separate them from wider society, but rather give them a way to be *in* the new society. For the second generation, these things from the homeland; the carpets, the samovars, pictures from ‘home’, calligraphy, art and poetry, even food and music, also create a sense of ambivalent association with the ‘homeland’. For many the reality of return had not yet manifested itself (see Chapter 7), and these affective items of nostalgic being inform diasporic desires, like a sense of loss for something not yet experienced. Yet, as Hage argues, it would be a mistake to over-emphasise the disentanglement of these feelings from the act of living in the present. For most respondents the nostalgia for ‘homeland’ was intimately tied with being and becoming more complete in the present. They spoke of *visiting* Iran in order to ‘see it for themselves’ rather than ‘returning’ (see Chapter 7).



Figure 8.1: Many of the home interiors focused on the ubiquitous Persian rugs. Here we can also see the coffee table set with small treats and sweets that are commonly laid out for visitors (photograph by respondent).

Images of food and discussions of the centrality of ‘life in the kitchen’ were common themes in the photographs of respondents (see Figures 8.5-8.8). Again, these images can be read as representing disengagement with society, embodying moves to form ‘ethnic ghettos’ and shrink from wider contact with non-migrants. Yet again, through a more nuanced understanding we can see these as images of productive places where the life of the second generation intersect with the first producing both an



Figure 8.2: This image, taken during a young child's birthday party, shows the Persian rugs, food and the stereo, common themes in photographs and discussions (photograph by respondent).

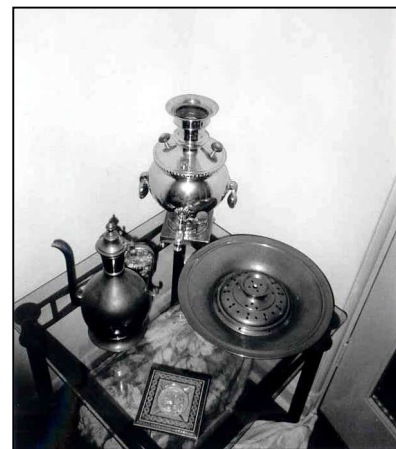


Figure 8.3: The samovars seen here are often brought out when people come over for *mehmani* and other visits (photographs by respondents).

Figure 8.4: Photographs of archaeological sites, such as Persepolis, etchings, and needlework depicting ancient Persia were common features in the houses of many respondents (photograph by respondent).



intergenerational and an intercultural interaction. The second generation represent in the home not merely themselves as Iranian, but also themselves as the frontier of wider societal influences. Whilst some respondents indicated that they behaved more

'Iranian' when they were at home, or with their parents elsewhere, some did say that they were 'the same' no matter what situation they were in. The simplicity of this statement fails to indicate the degree of active negotiation that imbues these homely spaces of nostalgic feeling. In the kitchens and living rooms of these 'Iranian' respondents, intercultural (and hence intergenerational) negotiations take place, dominated by, but not limited to, the difference between being Iranian (or being 'in Iran') and being Australian/Canadian/British. The intercultural frontier does not merely manifest itself between the first and second generation but also acts within the individual through their in-between-ness in their contact with both family and friends (as 'Iranians') and with the wider society (as Australians/Britons/Canadians) as they negotiate an acceptable present reality from moment to moment.

In discussion of intergenerational reproduction the question is most often of the form 'How much of the first generation is reproduced in the second?' But the second generation are also harbingers of change in the home bringing the outside (ABC) into the home, teaching their parents about the wider society in which they, as interstitial actors, may feel more able to interact. The language barriers and the insular nature of networks of friends and family in the first generation work to separate them from the ABC society whereby the second generation in the home partially reproduce the outside world for consumption by the first generation at the same time as they are seeking to instil Iranian-ness in their children.

It is sometimes easy to dismiss the importance of food in discussions of multiculturalism as there have been many critiques of early forms of multiculturalism as failing to engage beyond 'ethnic food and dance' (Fleras and Elliot, 2002; Hage, 1997; Hage, 1998). Yet food holds an evocative place in discussions of identity from the maintenance of 'ethnic' identity through to expressions of cosmopolitanism through the consumption of exotic cuisine, and onto the centrality accorded to national dishes in the construction of national heritage and identity. Many respondents spoke of their interactions with their sense of Iranian identity through food and food preparation in the family kitchen (see Figures 8.7 and 8.8).

These 'Persian' interactions were not limited to the home. Many spoke of the importance of attending restaurants with family and friends as an active part of maintaining a connection to the Iranian self.

C: Do you go with your family to Iranian restaurants?

Yeah, every so often, yeah.

C: Where would you go?

... Persepolis ... North Vancouver.

Respondent 39, male Baha'i, Vancouver.



Figure 8.5: The kitchen has a central place in the family home as the scene of the production of Iranian food and a place of family interaction (photograph by respondent).



Figure 8.6: The kitchen also plays a role in constructing a gendered place where women are in charge, but also a place where women congregate (see below on gender) (photograph by respondent).



Figure 8.7: Persian food is seen as an integral part of *mehmuni* and other occasions when people visit (photograph by respondent).



Figure 8.8: Cooking dinner for one (photograph by respondent).

It is of little surprise that in communities that have little to no institutional presence, in addition to the local importance of informal connections through *mehmuni*, the restaurants and grocery stores were often spoken of as central to communal spatiality in the city (see Chapter 6).

8.1.2 'Glocal' Baha'i Communities

As we have seen in earlier chapters, the Baha'i Faith has a geopolitical congruency with the administrative boundaries of the nation-state through the formation of LSAs through to the NSAs and finally on to the Universal House of Justice in Haifa. The local manifestation of the Baha'i communal structure (re)produces Baha'is as local actors set in a local Baha'i community.

C: Do you think there is a group, or groups, to which you belong that could be called a community?

I think of CABS (Campus Association of Baha'i Studies) as a community. I also think that, with the Baha'i community here, I consider that a community as well.

Respondent 4, female Baha'i, Vancouver.

Similarly, the adherence to regional forms particularly for the London Baha'is, such as the European Union (EU) draws Baha'is into extra-national relations that also serve to construct a community at a different scale.

I serve on a body called the European Baha'i Youth Council. ... It's the only continental youth body the Baha'i faith has got. And it coordinates youth activities ... We advise national institutions, in the spirit of service and humanity and everything else ... The other thing we do is we represent the Baha'i youth in Europe in European organisations. Say if there was an EU conference on young people, so the European Baha'i Youth Council would be there, with chaps and girls who would represent those views.

Respondent 26, male Baha'i, London.

Finally, the Baha'is were also keyed into a global community of Baha'is focused through the Universal House of Justice, which is seen through the lens of religious faith as the precursor to an active global community (see Chapter 7).

In terms of my immediate contacts I would say the Australian Baha'i community. But I feel very much that I am part of the Baha'i international community.

Respondent 13, female Baha'i, Sydney.

The strength of relationships between cosmopolitan Baha'is and the United Nations served to reinforce this global view.

These concurrent communal forms built into the Baha'i Faith construct a multi-scaled community that is not merely global, but 'glocal' involving simultaneous recognition of the wider global community whilst being rooted in the local through the LSA and its associated local Baha'i community. The nation exists within these scalar communal relations as an active communal form. However, as has been noted previously, for the Baha'is the nation's place is also contingent, as progressive revelation has called for its supersession in the name of ultimate global unity.

A further manifestation of the glocal relationship of the Baha'is can be seen through their endorsement of certain universal principles of recognition, such as the inalienable right to gender equality and universal human rights (see Figure 8.9). These relationships are centred on the individual, asserting the pre-eminence of individual rights over the rights of states to control their citizenry. The institution of human rights law at the level of the region, such as for the EU, and its local manifestations through national Human Rights Acts, such as has been passed in the UK in 1998, has been officially welcomed by Baha'is. Baha'i clubs and societies in all three cities were involved in celebrating certain global events such as International Women's Day, and many clubs organised discussions and presentations on the necessity of human rights and gender equality.¹³⁸



Figure 8.9: “This is another one of my shirts. This is black, white, I think, brown, native Indian, Chinese” *Respondent 39, male Baha'i, Vancouver* (photograph by respondent).

¹³⁸ Gender is discussed later in the chapter.

Other scalar forms of community exist that have not been discussed here including the *mehmuni* circuits and transnational communal relations that have been discussed in previous chapters, as well as the political affiliations that remained mostly unspoken in the discussions I had with the second generation.

8.1.3 Linguistic Communities

The use of Farsi, whilst recognised as the national mother tongue by most of the respondents and their families, a fact supported by the use of Farsi at major events and in Iranian publications, fell into tension with religious requirements for both the Muslims and Baha'is in different situations. For practicing Muslims, the language of the religion is Arabic whilst the language of the public community is Farsi creating a degree of tension over religious practice. In a Sydney example, the Islamic lessons for Iranians at the Imam Husain Islamic Centre were conducted in a combination of the original Arabic, English, and in Farsi for those who spoke the language and for the benefit of young people wishing to gain more knowledge of the language of Iran. The decision to perform religious observance in Farsi, Arabic and English was made by the Imam of the Centre in consultation with the desires of the members of the congregation. In London, the march to commemorate *Ashura* (the tenth day of *Moharram*) highlighted the separation of the Iraqi Arabic speaking community and the Iranian Farsi speaking community (see Chapter 7). As noted in the discussions concerning Figure 7.2, the religious observances surrounding *Moharram* took place in both the Maida Vale mosque where Arabic is spoken and the Holland Park mosque, where Farsi is spoken.¹³⁹ As such it is more correct to separate the two, not only along national lines, but along linguistic lines, yet even these distinctions are not comprehensive.

For Baha'is from Iran, the religious expectations of the propagation of the faith caused tensions with the practice of religious observance in Farsi. In each city it was noted that there was an emphasis on conducting the prayers and administrative activities,

¹³⁹ It was not clear to what extent Arabic is used in sermons at the Holland Park mosque as opposed to Farsi.

both at the regular nineteen day Feasts and on other occasions, in the national language of English.¹⁴⁰

Even if everyone at the meeting is Persian, and it would be much more convenient to speak Persian, it (is) policy of the Baha'i community of Australia, and I think pretty much internationally, that at a ... regular meeting, which is not for Persians in particular, the language of the country that you live in should be used. That's the policy, and that's how it has to be.
Respondent 14, male Baha'i, Sydney.

When discussing identity in migrant communities the role of language is often underestimated or misunderstood (Chalmers, 1998). For the Iranian communities in Australia, Canada and Britain, the 'national' Iranian language, Farsi, plays a differential role as point of conflation and point of differentiation amongst the various groups in the Iranian diaspora.

National languages, such as Farsi, are almost always semi-artificial constructs (Hobsbawm, 1992: 54). Farsi as the *national* language of contemporary Iran is a dominant language within the large number of languages and dialects spoken throughout Iran from the larger groups of Turkish and Turkic speakers through to smaller groups, such as the Armenians. Farsi is the language of the state and thus is constructed as the language of the nation, and by extension it is the language of the Iranian diaspora. In the two religious groups of Muslims and Baha'is, Farsi is by far the dominant language of community used in conversation, in the media, in community and religious events (Naficy, 1993: 26-7).

For several respondents, the language spoken at home was different to the language of community. Several spoke a Turkic regional language such as Azeri at home but spoke with other 'Iranians' in Farsi. For some the immediate family members, particularly older relatives, may not speak Farsi well and so dialect or another language was spoken with them. As a result, the use of regional languages and dialects, and the languages and dialects of ethno-religious minorities, may extend beyond the immediate family environment to events such as *mehmuni*.

¹⁴⁰ In British Columbia, English is the dominant of the two official Canadian languages.

The form in which language is reproduced amongst the second generation indicates these tensions over community, national and religious identities that intersect through the medium of the spoken and written language. For all respondents, English was their first language, with Farsi spoken with differing levels of proficiency. As Naficy notes for Los Angeles, “members of the second generation are interstitial in their positionality to language and commonly use a high proportion of English words and syntax in their communication with other Iranians, especially with other young people, creating an in-between language jokingly called ‘Penglish’” (Naficy, 1993: 26). This incorporation of English words into the Farsi spoken in the home highlights the ambivalence over language as a strict definer of national cultural identity, where bleeding from one idiom into the other occurs.

The difference in the importance of language maintenance that was observed between the Muslim and the Baha’i cohorts can in some manner be explained by the internalisation of the conflation of Farsi with Iranian identity amongst the majority Muslim background respondents. As Shahidian notes, “Muslim Iranians may be more secular than non-Muslim minorities and define their ethnicity by language and nationality instead of religion” (1999: 219) reinforcing the importance of Farsi as an homogeneously Iranian cultural artefact when in reality the linguistic landscape is far from simplistic. This linguistic nationalism, like the association of Islam with Iran in Chapter 7, constructs opportunities to both reinforce and challenge national discourses of belonging based on whether or not (and to what degree) Farsi was the language spoken in the home.

8.1.4 Peer Groups

Ties of friendship amongst families from Iran sometimes cross-cut the divisions of religion. On occasion these peer connections were described as important in the decisions of Baha’is who joined the Persian clubs, or went to ‘Persian’ cultural events, or were more generally involved across the religious divide.

C: Do you have any other friends who are Baha’i?

Oh, yeah, heaps.

C: In the Persian Society did you have Baha'is?

Yeah ... We didn't pick and chose, and they came freely, and we made them feel welcome.

C: Did anyone else feel concerned about it?

Not about that issue. But personal things sometimes, and they'd bring that up. They'd bring that up as a thing, like something against someone.

Respondent 34, male Muslim, Sydney.

Whilst there was interchange the potential to invoke difference through recourse to religious affiliation remained. In one case, a Muslim respondent who was in a relationship with an Iranian Baha'i was 'investigating' the Baha'i Faith with a view to conversion, claiming that the Baha'i community was her primary communal identifier.

C: Do you think there is a group, or groups, to which you belong that could be called a community?

Yeah, the Baha'i community. I guess, I relate to it better than ... I don't know what other community, Pers ... It's a bit of both. You can't say one or the other, but I suppose I'm a bit closer to the Baha'i community.

Respondent 41, female Muslim, Vancouver.

This religious interchange, the conversion of a Muslim to the Baha'i Faith, whilst punishable by execution in Iran,¹⁴¹ appears far more acceptable amongst the second generation cultural and secular Muslims in the diaspora.

The 'generation gap' separates the second generation from their parents and posits that peer relations, with both 'Iranians' and 'non-Iranians', may be more influential than filial relations (Parekh et al., 2000: 28-9; Farley, 1996). Some saw their friends as a more cohesive 'generation' with mixing of 'groups' occurring with little to no inhibition.

I got one close friend ... and he's Persian ... I've got another group of friends.

C: Are they Persian friends?

¹⁴¹ In the diaspora, Baha'i evangelising does not incur the same level of possible retribution as it has for many Baha'is through the 1980s and 1990s in Iran where apostasy has been punished through the religious courts, leading on many occasions to execution (see Chapter 5).

No. I have Persian in there, but ... everyone's mixed now...
Respondent 34, male Muslim, Sydney.

This placed them within the field of diverse and differential 'multicultural' Australian/British/Canadian experience highlighting an acceptance that reflects the complex ways of being in contemporary ABC and SVL and how they were, at least partially, involved in this complex reality.

However, whilst this cross-cutting of national boundaries by peer associations may be important, there remain significant cleavages between the second generation and the respondent's 'white' friends. Many spoke of their peer groups being separated, placing the individual as the cultural nexus between groups of (an assumed) partially irreconcilable difference, embodying the interstitiality of the second generation through their position between their Iranian friends and their English/Australia/Canadian (white) friends.

I don't generally mix my Iranian friends with my non-Iranian friends. ... Just because my non-Iranian friends are ... from college or from work who like to go out and really go for it and, ah, you know, it's very different.

C: ... Is it about Iranian or is it about Baha'i?

I think it might be about Baha'i. Yeah, because one of my friends whose Iranian but not Baha'i he'll go out and he'll go ... you know ... But I don't go to pubs, I just don't go with Iranians to pubs.
Respondent 33, female Baha'i, London.

As we saw in Chapter 7, the issue of alcohol consumption and religious practice works to separate the peer groups of respondent 33. She initially conflated the religious and national identity of her friends before clarifying the separation as religiously motivated.

For others the 'national' cultural separations from the white communities were more apparent. This white/non-white divide was typified by both Muslim and Baha'i background through their sense of commonality or camaraderie with other 'migrant' or interstitial cultural identities. The second generation tended to make friends with other second generation individuals, whether from an Iranian background or not.

C: So your groups of friends. You've got an English group of friends?

Well they were all born here, but sort of second generation people. They're all Chinese and Asian and stuff like that.

C: OK. So do you have any white Anglo...?

A few, very few.

C: Do they fit into that group?

No (laughs) ... No, no, no. I can't relate to them that way, no.

C: So your group of friends is a multicultural group?

Yeah, very.

C: All second generation?

Yes (laughs).

Respondent 19, female Muslim, London.



Figure 8.10: “These are college friends. ... These are the people I hang around with most ... She’s Lebanese, and she’s from Pakistan. And (she) is from Somalia, and (she) is English” Respondent 19, female Muslim, London (photograph from respondent).

The similarities of experience appear to draw the second generation together, as a category of marginal actors who, in some way, combine their social capital (Bourdieu, 1986) to legitimate their belonging (see Figures 8.10 and 8.11).

I can understand why Iranian kids would associate more with people from Indian or Pakistani background ... although I don't consider myself anything like an Indian or a Pakistani ... it's perhaps for them a lot easier to associate themselves with that group of friends that they have.

C: Do you have any who are Indian or Pakistani?

I do, many, yep.

Respondent 32, male Baha'i, London.



Figure 8.11: “(He) is from Brunei. (He’s) Afghan, and (he) is Pakistani. Yeah, so all random, yeah.” Respondent 23, male Muslim, London (photograph from respondent).

The separation of peers into second generation and white was somewhat more apparent in the London case. This fits with the earlier discussion of problematic ‘race relations’ in Britain (see Chapter 4) which can limit multicultural interaction and deny the possibility of hybrid identification.

I can't even say English, because I don't have a close English friend ... I'm not saying I don't have English friends. I do have English friends. I'm talking about close friends. Asians, I find very close similarities, especially in family related. When I say Asian, they are Indian, Indian roots. ...

Respondent 22, male Muslim, London.

In contrast to some of the restricted peer groups of some of the Muslim cohort, for Baha'is, their overt cosmopolitanism often meant that friends consisted of a wide field of other ‘migrant’ or interstitial/peripheral identities (as well as Baha'is from wider ABC core ‘communities’), where their difference was imbued with social capital.

When I see myself, I see myself (hanging around with) more Persians. I don't see that as good. I don't want to be friends with just Iranian, Persians, Baha'i Persians, you know. I believe in ... unity and diversity and stuff like that, the principles, so the more I'm friends with non-Baha'is, with non-Iranian Baha'is, the better it will be. The more easier it will be in the future.
Respondent 16, male Baha'i, Sydney.

The relative ambivalence over peer group formations became more circumspect once the question of marriage was breached, with some respondents, from both cohorts, saying that they would prefer to 'marry an Iranian'. This indicates that there are strong traditional pressures to reproduce the national culture and to maintain the diasporic avenues for return 'in the future'.

I'll be honest with you, I ... would probably definitely only marry someone who's Iranian. But that's just my personal opinion. Lots and lots of Iranians really don't feel that way. I personally would want to marry someone who's Iranian.
Respondent 24, female Muslim, London.

However, again a complexity exists where some respondents, particularly Baha'is expressed the desire to marry exogenously, with some citing the perceived weakness of an introverted national view that sets national limitations.

I would probably not marry a non-Baha'i. Persian or not Persian doesn't make a difference. Actually, maybe it would be better if it was not.
Respondent 7, male Baha'i, Vancouver.

I think I'd probably try to steer clear of Iranians.
Respondent 28, female Baha'i, London.

In some cases, the parent's desires, or even the wider relative's desires, for Iranian marriage partners are played out against the children's rights to make their own decision.

I think my mum would initially want me to marry someone who's Persian ... My dad is more flexible ...
Respondent 12, male Baha'i, Vancouver.

Funny story, I'll tell you ... We were just there (Iran) on holiday after 13 years. There was no mention of anything like that. Second day we arrived there ... my mum goes, family meeting, your brother is marrying her, and you're marry..., your getting engaged to ... We go, ah, shock horror. So, you know, my brother went off on a ... he went mental, and I said, fine, one condition, we're here for another 29 days. I want to spend every single minute with that girl. Never mentioned it again. There are ways of dealing with this, you know.

Respondent 20, male Muslim, London.

The pressure to marry an 'Iranian' was not only present for the Muslim cohort, but was also the case for the Baha'is. Indeed, some Baha'is mentioned one of the many regular 'Baha'i Studies' conferences for its association with the desires to find Iranian marriage partners. The Phoenix conference, when mentioned, was often treated with mirth as several respondents related attempts by concerned relatives to find them a 'suitable' partner.

Everybody knows about Phoenix (laughs). It's the place that everybody ... It used to be more before when everybody, the old school Persians would go there, and everybody would be there to like find a wife (laughs).

Respondent 7, male Baha'i, Vancouver.

(laughs) This poor girl that I live with ... She's got family in San Diego, and she sort of innocently went to visit them one year and they kind of drove her off to the Phoenix conference. She was mortified ... It has all the worst aspects of ... Iranian culture ... We laughed about it afterwards but I don't think she found it very amusing at the time.

Respondent 30, female Baha'i, London.

Most individuals expressed a desire for agency over the selection of peers and marriage partners that sometimes met parental expectations and sometimes did not. Many feel only minor obligations (if at all) to 'hang around' other Iranian background individuals. Whilst the parents may like them to marry an 'Iranian' the choice remained theirs.

Some parents even went so far as to ask their children not to marry another Iranian reflecting in part their desire to 'assimilate', but also their concern about the bad elements of Iranian masculinity, expressed predominantly by 'low class', newer arrivals, thus constructing a class relationship that will be discussed later.

The negotiation over issues concerning return (see Chapter 7), the suitability of peers, and preferences for endogamy, reflect changes towards an inclusion of Western models of individual agency into the traditional Iranian models of the superiority of familial ties over individual choice. Traditional Iranian societal forms emphasise the importance of the family, placing issues of individual concern in a subordinate position to family/society concerns (Shahidian, 1999; Ahmadi, 2000: 700). Western models of individualism have influenced the relationships amongst the second generation and are a source of tension between the generations with many parents expressing the desire for cultural endogamy, whilst the respondents had differential expectations of marriage partnership.

8.2 *Subcultural Geographies*

The identification and analysis of subcultures, which came to prominence in the 1980s, has been criticised for its overemphasis on a reified subcultural reality to the exclusion of other social and cultural affiliations. Here, to account for this critique, we identify subcultural forms as relational ‘communities’ tied to wider identity relations. As one respondent noted,

Well, I guess it starts off; the first one is the family. And then the next one out would be ... the Baha'i community ... And then ... I guess there's the Persian community, after that ... And then there's ones that cross all three layers, I guess, that's friendships, cultural activities, sporting activities that might go through that ... So it's all about mixes.
Respondent 3, male Baha'i, Vancouver.

Music, football and youth communities help us identify some of the polyvalent associations that exist ‘beneath’ traditional ideologies of nation, religion, class and gender dealt with in this chapter.

8.2.1 Music and Clubbing Culture

Musical performance and the consumption of musical forms play an important role in the production and reproduction of Iranian positionality amongst the second generation. Persian music performance has a strong history in the diaspora with many of the popular performers, musicians, writers and artists of the pre-revolutionary

period congregating in Los Angeles, creating an artistic focal point for the diaspora. Music is often integral in the acting out of Iranian cultural life in the diaspora. Concerts were described as central ‘Iranian’ events, and dancing to music is a ‘natural’ part of many gatherings from attendance at restaurants through to *mehmuni* and engagements (see Figures 8.12).



Figure 8.12: Dancing during a *Norooz* celebration in the home (photograph by respondent).

For many respondents in all three cities Persian ‘concerts’ were a more or less regular part of their family social routine during their childhood. These concerts can be broken down into two categories: the popular ‘dancing’ events and the classical events that involve traditional music played on traditional ‘Persian’ musical instruments.¹⁴² These events are imbued with cultural significance that selectively dips into the origin myths of Persian/Iranian society and culture, whilst at the same time tying into wider cultures of performance and entertainment in the three cities.

C: What about concerts?

No, don’t really go to concerts. I go to classical concerts. I like ... most of the time with the family. Mum and dad both love the classic, traditional cultural stuff, music.

C: So you go as a family?

¹⁴² Sometimes the music and/or the instruments are not strictly Persian, but Kurdish or Armenian, or some other ethnicity. However, when they are discussed by the respondents they place these under the umbrella of ‘Persian classical music’.

Yeah. To the Royal Festival Hall. The other thing was with Sufis ... the spinning dervishes ... My mum absolutely loved it. She loves Rumi and they had someone reading from Rumi and people carrying out the acts. So those kinds of things.

Respondent 23, male Muslim, London.

Classical music recitals (see Figure 8.13) along with poetry recitals were viewed by many of the second generation as events for the older people, or their parents, that they no longer needed to attend, again reflecting a generational differentiation with 'national' cultural events (see Chapter 6). The popularity of poetry readings, guest lectures and Persian classical music recitals amongst the first generation was confirmed through my own observations at several events. Some of these Persian 'cultural' events organised through the university clubs and societies, were also popular with the second generation (see Figure 8.14) (see Chapters 6 and 7).

Concerning the more 'popular' events, individual artists and groups of musicians from the diaspora, many from Los Angeles, were booked to perform in established venues befitting the style and 'class' (see below) of the performers. Top end hotel ballrooms and town halls were regularly mentioned by respondents as venues for these concerts.

C: Yeah, so who puts (concerts) on?

I don't know ... (They're) in the Hilton. The last time I went was in the Chatswood Civic Centre. Yeah, there, and the Town Hall.

Respondent 34, male Muslim, Sydney.

These concerts catered to both families and youth, with a different emphasis depending on the type of performers. A recent high profile concert performer was Googoosh who was popular before the revolution as a relatively risqué female soloist. Her story is ubiquitous in the diaspora as she reformed her image and stopped singing once the revolution took place, returning to live in Iran. Her comeback world tour to the major diaspora centres was extremely popular amongst older first generation Iranians (many of whom sought to introduce her to the second generation).

The people that are performing, what kind of audience do they draw? ... If there is actually a good singer that comes from, you know, like Googoosh came and, oh, we went to her concert ... When it draws an audience that is such a wide variety of individuals, young, old, then we go to it.

Respondent 41, female Muslim, Vancouver.



Figure 8.13: Persian classical concert in an Anglican church in London (photograph by author).

Figure 8.14: Advertisement for a classical music concert organised by a London student club.



Many respondents discussed their involvement as a family in attending these concert events. In contrast, more contemporary fusion acts, such as Moyooin, aimed at the youth market have attracted a younger audience.

C: What about Googoosh?

Well, she's ok. She's alright. I mean everyone else. All the second generation ... we're more into like Omid, Moyooin. These people who have been here, in LA.

Respondent 25, female Muslim, London.

Many Persian restaurants bring together the signifying aspect of Iranian food with music and dance to construct a spectacle of Iranian cultural consumption (see Figure

5.15). Persian restaurants, many of which have dance floors and present nightly floor shows and live musicians playing traditional and more modern Persian music, are important both for those who professed strong affective ties to their Iranian identity and also those, predominantly but not exclusively amongst the Baha'is, who sought to distance themselves from Iranian identity.

I personally don't like clubs that much. But, I mean, my friends and I we love to dance. Usually ... we go to Persian restaurants; they have dancing and that sort of stuff...

C: Whereabouts are they?

... Orchida is in Chatswood. Cremorne is Persepolis, and Lane Cove is Anahita.

C: How often?

Normally it's at least once a month ... Normally with family.
Respondent 37, female Muslim, Sydney.

We're at a Persian restaurant slash nightclub having dinner.

C: What's the name of the restaurant?

Shiraz. The one on Denman, downtown. That's the better one. I don't go to the North Van ones or the West Van ones. It's really ghetto there ...

C: So it's been popular with what type of crowd?

The younger crowd, ... the Persian community as a whole. The people who like to dance and party and have a meal. *That* crowd.

C: So it's a get up after the meal and dance...

Yeah definitely. Bar, meal, and dance.

C: It's a DJ type of thing?

DJ and usually live music. Persian music. Sometimes Arabic. Sometimes Latin/Spanish. On the majority nights its live Persian music."
Respondent 11, female Muslim, Vancouver.

We went to a restaurant called Dish Dash, a new Iranian restaurant that's opened ... We thought we'd give it a try and then go down stairs ... They had a downstairs kind of club where they play music.
Respondent 23, male Muslim, London.

Here music is constructed as fundamental to Iranian ‘culture’ to be consumed with Iranian food in an Iranian restaurant. The placement of this cultural performance inscribes a congruency between Iranian music and dance and the Iranian nation. Yet, as respondent 11 notes, it is only ‘*that crowd*’ taking part in this particular consumption of Iranian identity.

The centrality of music to this production of an Iranian imagining is found outside the restaurant through the personal consumption of Iranian music. Some individuals photographed their connections to Iran and the Iranian community through their music collections (see Figure 8.15), whilst others expressed an indifference to Iranian music through their attachment to other music genres tying them into wider economies of music consumption (see Figure 8.16). Several spoke of their preferences for listening to Iranian music when they could, such as in the car.

C: What are these tapes?

These are all Iranian tapes, in the car.

C: All Iranian music in the car?

I’ve got one or two, maybe Bee Gees is English. Yeah, I don’t really listen to a lot of English music, but I do listen to the radio.

C: Do you listen to Arabic music as well?

Sometimes, Persian as well. Yeah I like that kind of thing. Usually that would be in a disco. We’d go to an Iranian disco and ... listen to it. I wouldn’t go out of my way to buy something, unless I really like it. Yeah so those tapes are mainly Iranian.

Respondent 25, female Muslim, London.

One respondent who sought a traditional wedding engagement (*hosarghadi*), despite her relative disengagement with Iranian cultural forms, was surprised by the inclusion of contemporary Iranian music produced in the diaspora in the ceremony (see Figure 8.17).

And then they put music on, and that's not meant to happen. That was it, when I had to bring the tea out. But then the mothers put music on and they were all dancing in the kitchen and making noise.

C: What type of music was playing?

It was Iranian music. And actually it was really nice. That morning dad went to a shop in Blacktown that we go to and bought some tapes, you know, dance music.

C: Contemporary?

Yeah, contemporary dance ... and they were beautiful. And one song was about a man going to ask for the hand in marriage of a woman. It was so appropriate this song. And it's like, where is the bride from Ahfaz?, and I'm from Ahfaz. And where is the groom from? Is he from Mashhad? Is he from this place, or that place? And so mum continuously played this song ... And she had to put the song on while we were putting the rings on ... It was ad-libbed, but it worked out well.

Respondent 48, female Muslim, Sydney.

In seeking to construct authenticity this respondent was faced with the ambivalence of cultural transformation in the diaspora through music. This ceremonial dynamism was easily accommodated by the first generation, but less easily by her as she reconciled the essentialised expectations of her long-distance imagining with the reality of syncretic cultural formations in the present. The 'new' music, a product of the diaspora, here was a threat to her essentialised imagining of this Iranian cultural tradition.

Persian clubs and societies discussed in Chapters 6 and 7 were also a focal point for subcultural music consumption through the promotion of a Persian dance and club culture. Here we find a differentiation between the three cities. In Vancouver and Sydney, dancing to Persian music is often associated with going to Persian restaurants. In London, whilst the restaurants catered to music, performance and dancing, the enterprising activities of certain individuals had moved Persian music beyond the restaurants and created a 'scene' centred around club nights promoted along a Persian (or Middle Eastern) theme.



Figure 8.15: “Really the only music I listen to is Persian music. I’m not into English music. I’ll never go and buy an English CD.” *Respondent 22, male Muslim, London* (photograph from respondent).

Figure 8.16: “My CDs ... Two of Ben Harper. Celine Dion, Bob Marley, Eminem, David Gray and Lauren Hill. Pretty diversified.” *Respondent 42, female Baha’i, Vancouver* (photograph by respondent).



These club nights took the form of one-off and regular events at established night clubs throughout the city, although generally concentrated as close to the ‘Iranian’ areas around Kensington and Knightsbridge as possible. Whilst some were organised and promoted exclusively through the university clubs (see Figure 8.14 and 8.18), others were organised by private individuals and promoted through Iranian newspapers such as *Kayhan*, and through direct advertising in Iranian grocery stores and small businesses.

The music played at these club nights, mostly by popular local DJs from an Iranian background, reflected a change from the formats usually played in the restaurants. ‘Persian pop’ music, produced mainly by Iranians in Los Angeles for the diaspora market, is combined with other music from Arabic through to R’n’B, and sometimes including popular Western dance artists, such as Kylie Minogue (see Figure 8.18)



Figure 8.17: Playing the saucepan during *hosarghadi* (photograph by respondent).

Interestingly, the inclusion of Arabic music along with Persian pop presented little problem for the London respondents who frequented these night clubs. The Arab identity, often presented as in conflict with Persian identity, particularly in the mythologies of 20th Century nationalism rooted in an Aryan origin myth (see Chapters 5 and 6) generally went unremarked by respondents. Instead Arabic music reflected a similarity of music styles with the Persian, which was understood and consumed as a wider regional music style, a ‘Middle Eastern’ tradition, shared by both Persians/Iranians and other national/cultural groups from the region. This conflation possibly reflects the shared experience of peripheralisation of both Iranian and other ‘Middle Eastern’ groups that add ‘flavour’ to the multicultural fabric of the city. Just as was found for the peer groups, there was some sense of safety in association with these ‘similar cultures’ that overrides possible schisms of difference between ‘the migrant’ and the white national core. This relationship is by no means exclusive, and whilst the difference of Iranian club nights from wider popular dance music forms in the London club scene was seen as a cultural strength, the extent of Arabic music remained contested by some. Too much Arabic music in the Persian ‘mix’ adulterates the cultural capital of the Persian nightclub:

C: What type of music?

Music, again we generally go for Iranian, Persian music. A bit of Arabic ... although people have probably been brought up over here so they like their R’n’B, they like their hip hop. So we usually slip a bit of that in as well. But the majority of the music is Persian.

C: You mentioned that to me before about it being Persian slash Arabic mix for the music....

Actually, it doesn't go down well with some people, 'cause they say, why have you got so much Arabic music, blah, blah, blah. But at the end of the day there's a large community of Arabs in London as well ... and a lot of our friends are Arabs. So we try and integrate it if we can. And the music is actually very similar ... when it comes down to the beats.

Respondent 20, male Muslim, London.

Similar events, if on a much smaller scale, were noted in Vancouver, striking a tension between the established Iranian communities and the 'fresh-off-the-boat' Iranians, which shall be discussed below. Whilst there was little evidence of this club scene in Sydney during the fieldwork, a live Persian music 'event' taking place in a central Sydney bar was advertised in late 2004 (see Figure 8.19). This reflects not only the possible influence of transnational networks of information (about club nights in other cities like London) but also the ebb and flow of these 'scenes' and the importance of individual 'cultural entrepreneurs' in the diaspora.

Some club nights and restaurants augmented the music with performance, often centred on belly dancers. This form of performance was seen by some as a suitable syncretic addition to Iranian cultural events, taken as it is from Turkish and Arabic cultural traditions (see Figures 8.20 and 8.21). However, for others the presence of Turkish/Arabic traditions within an explicitly structured 'Persian event' raised questions as to the suitability of the performance.

C: What do you think of the whole Arabic music thing?

Integrated into Persian restaurants? It's entertainment. It's OK. Not too much of it ... Most of them have Arabic dancers so ... one of them is fine. It's entertainment. 'Cause I know Persians wouldn't dance like that in public.

C: Like that. What do you mean by that?

Half naked, shaking everything they've got. Yeah, belly dancing. From all the Persian restaurants that I've been to, not one of the belly dancers were Persian. I know a lot of Persian girls who know how to belly dance, but they would never do it in public.

Respondent 11, female Muslim, Vancouver.

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Figure 8.18: Promotional fliers for London Persian club nights.

The implicit racial overtones here of a 'high' Persian cultural position (see below on class), deride the Arabic form even as it is incorporated in the Persian event. This placement of Arabic as a base form of culture in turn positions Persian high culture for the respondent. This positional duality allows Persian/Arabic syncretic forms in music and dance to perpetuate, as 'Iranians' negotiate their simultaneous positions as Persians, as Middle Eastern, and as 'migrants'. Musical expression, in both its 'pure' forms and in these more generalised syncretic marginalised expressions, constructs difference to other cultural expressions and other musical subcultures, even as it selectively incorporates them.

For others the presence of belly dancers was interpreted as a challenge to conservative religious values, in much the same way that alcohol forms a barrier to involvement.

C: Which people from Iran living in Sydney wouldn't attend the events that you attend?

Probably more of the very religious people. They would probably go to the restaurants and so forth. But even (in) the Persian restaurants there's ... belly dancers; sometimes they come on, I think on Sunday nights, or something. And they might be offended by that. And I can understand that.
Respondent 38, male Muslim, Sydney.

As has been discussed previously, the separation between second generation Baha'is and Muslims from an Iranian background in some cases manifests itself through a disengagement from Iranian identity amongst Baha'is. This separation is also mirrored in attendance at 'Iranian' events such as concerts and night clubs.

Once, I went to a concert, that a friend took me to. It was an Andi concert ... It was a real shock (laughs) because ... I think, like I said, apart from the Baha'i community, I don't really mix with Iranians, and it was amazing to see how many there were. I mean this place was heaving. So it was interesting.

C: How many people were there?

Thousands.

C: And how'd that make you feel?

I was amused ... You know, it was a real insight. I kind of felt like this is, this is kind of all going on and I'm oblivious of it, but I'm sure it's more common than I think. And even though I know, you know, I hear Iranians in the street

... it was the sort of one and only time in a non-Baha'i setting where I've been kind of face to face with so many people. It's quite alien. But kind of fun because you feel as though, you know, you are somehow part of it. Even though I don't feel massively Iranian.

Respondent 30, female Baha'i, London.

C: Do you go to events where lots of communities get together?

Yeah ... Such as like for the concert, the Iranian concert, but like a Baha'i Iranian concert, not an Iranian concert ... Most of the events I go to where there's other Iranians are Baha'i events. Like I wouldn't go to an Iranian concert.

Respondent 28, female Baha'i, London.



Figure 8.19: 'Gher in the City' with Pulse on stage in Sydney.



Figure 8.20: Belly dancer at a London night club (photograph by author).

Figure 8.21: “This was an Iranian party I went to ... This was Opium Bar ... Iranian do, about 300 people ... That’s the one (belly dancer) that (the promoter) always brings.” Respondent 23, male Muslim, London (photograph by respondent).



Thus, in constructing the symbolic boundaries of Persian club nights the expectations of who comes to events: old and/or young; students or ‘everyone’ (see below on class); Persians or Arabs, or other ‘friends’; even the relations of religious groupings to these ‘community’ events, challenges the idea that these cultural music forms are congruent with ‘the Iranian community’. For cultural Muslims, nightclubs with alcohol or the larger popular culture concerts may be a more suitable venue to enjoy Persian music, whilst for the Baha’is and the practicing Muslims this may not be the case. In contrast, most respondents had more or less regular contact with the Persian music tradition through restaurants, although this too was not comprehensive. The homogenised (and sometimes racialised) national music cultures are not limited by national background, and in turn, not all ‘Iranians’ are interested in taking part in the affective act of Iranian music consumption.

8.2.2 The World Game – Soccer/Football¹⁴³

Another subcultural association that both reifies and cuts across national and religious group boundaries is the football community made up of both players and ‘fans’. The ‘World Game’ unites those who follow the national Iranian team as a community of ‘Iranian supporters’ in a discourse of global national football support whose pinnacle is the quadrennial World Cup. Other communal football relations exist at a more local level through the local football teams in which people play, in both formal competitions and informal games. As both players and supporters, many of the second generation from Iran, are enmeshed in a subcultural field of relations that, whilst appearing to represent the whole Iranian national cohort, can also be seen as differentially including and excluding individuals and groups, as well as tying them into ‘football communities’ that extend beyond the nation.

During the fieldwork, World Cup qualifier matches and the matches of the 2002 World Cup itself were played. Iran fought out the qualifying rounds but failed to qualify for the final 32 places for the World Cup Finals. The qualifying matches formed a focal point in the ‘Iranian’ community when they were played, even when the matches were played during the early hours of the morning. In Vancouver, the September 2001 screening of a preliminary round match of Iran versus Iraq in the

¹⁴³ I shall use the more synonymous term football, rather than soccer.

East Vancouver Cinema took place from 4.30am with around 150 male supporters watching the live satellite feed from Iran. Both Baha'i and Muslim supporters were joined together in support of the national team. The *Shirokhorshid* flag was being waved by some members of the enthusiastic audience as Iran overcame this step in their bid for the World Cup. These scenes were not unusual, according to some respondents, with restaurants being another venue set aside for the viewing of important football matches.¹⁴⁴

Several respondents spoke of the significance of Iran beating the USA, the contemporary geopolitical foe, in the 1998 World Cup finals as the pinnacle of modern Iranian football, and a key defining moment in the diaspora.

Last time I managed to convince most of my dorm to support Iran and we were all kind of piled in to the Hall bar. And I mean certainly for the ... USA match, there were 103 Iranian supporters in the bar, and only one actual Iranian. It kind of gives an odd impression. That's more to do with football and a misplaced sense of patriotism than it is to do with anything else.
Respondent 26, male Baha'i, London.

I guess another thing that sparked some, I suppose, nationalism was the game between Iran and the United States in the World Cup, a few years ago. That was a real moment. ... 2-1 to Iran. And seeing the look on the Iranian player's face when he scored, I think the second goal, and he was running back to his team ... I was in tears, I was really in tears
Respondent 10, male Muslim, Vancouver.

When Iran played America in the last World Cup we all went to an Iranian restaurant.
Respondent 33, female Baha'i, London.

For the London respondents who followed the Iranian football team, several opportunities to see the Iranian team play have occurred in the last six years. In the 1998 France World Cup, one respondent spoke of the large and coordinated group of supporters from Britain who went to France to see Iran play.

¹⁴⁴ At the time of writing Iran competed in a 'do-or-die' 2006 World Cup qualifier against Qatar (October 14th, 2004). In Sydney, some respondents attended a live satellite viewing at \$15 entry (including Persian food) that was organised in a Granville (near Parramatta) Persian restaurant. Approximately 150 people attended this 2.30am match televised live via satellite by Iranian national television.

France, of course, World Cup '98 ... I mean that was a big, big Iranian community from all over the world.
Respondent 20, male Muslim, London.

In the 2002 World Cup lead-up, Iran's final hurdle before qualifying for the Finals were matches with Ireland in Tehran and then in Dublin. This was a great opportunity for the 'fans' to mobilise.

C: Did you go to Ireland just recently?

... Yeah ... We took 500 people over, my friends and people from London. Overall there was 5000 people over there, from all over the world. There's people who came over from the States, Canada, Sweden ... So yeah that experience was amazing again ... I think the capacity of the ground was 25 000 ... One end of the pitch was us and we made so much noise ... you know, half an hour before kick-off, kick-off, during the game. The Irish are lovely people as well. We had a fantastic time with them.
Respondent 20, male Muslim, London.

I was mad about going over [to Dublin]. As soon as the tickets came out I was looking all over the place. My friend actually had a very influential part in getting tickets for everybody in the end, and I don't know if he ever told you about it.

C: He told me about it, and he said that 500 went over with him.

500 with him. But, you know there were 3000 or so over there. And I'm very very passionate when it comes to that. ... Even when, in the World Cup, I made sure we got a group of people together. And we went down the pub. And there were 40 of us Iranians in the pub. I was the one shouting out the cheers.
Respondent 22, male Muslim, London.

In Australia, the lead-up to the 1998 World Cup finals brought Australia together with Iran in a qualifying match in Melbourne. Similarly to the London case, many Iranian supporters from Sydney went to Melbourne for the match.

A lot of things came out, a lot of national pride came out, amongst Baha'is and people who aren't Baha'is, Persians, when the Australian soccer team ... for the World Cup. Wooah. Incredible. You should get some footage and look at the crowds in Melbourne and stuff. People went from Sydney to Melbourne for the match. ... Everyone, heaps of people. Everyone, like just huge national (feeling) ... I'm talking second generation, so I mean there is, very strong, national sentiments.
Respondent 14, male Baha'i, Sydney.

In Vancouver, the games televised in the East Vancouver cinema, which was owned by Iranians, were well patronised despite being promoted informally.

It was more underground I think than anything. My cousin heard it from someone else ... So, you know, we were lucky to hear it and we went. But I don't think too many people knew about it.

Respondent 8, male Baha'i, Vancouver.

Whilst there were Baha'is and Muslims present in the East Vancouver case, the Baha'is I went with were part of a very small group of Baha'is present, and this presence was due to peer and kin connections across the religious divide. The gender divide in some cases was quite stark, with no women present for these very early kick-off live games. The atmosphere was alternately serious and jubilant during the course of the match depending on Iran's status. However, when the UBC Persian society showed a pre-recorded match that was advertised amongst its members, both men and women turned up to watch. The atmosphere was less focused on the game with conversations going on during the match. Whilst this was partly due to the fact that it was a replay, it may also have reflected the lower importance the game held for some of the participants who don't profess to following football. At the same time, more nationally important games, such as the USA versus Iran match, brought the genders together in united support for the national team, reflecting perhaps the interest as a national event rather than a football event, although it is in some ways impossible to separate the two.

Sanadjian (2000: 147-50) writes of the acceptability of deviant behaviour related to his experience of the Iran versus USA match as it unfolded outside an Iranian grocery store in Kensington. Two respondents also commented on the momentary suspension of cultural/religious/social norms amongst the Iranians in the diaspora, the wider urban communities, and even the experiences in Iran.

It was amazing. One of the most amazing nights of my life, because having finished our pub session ... I think around a thousand people, you know, Iranians, came together, this is what happened when we beat the USA, in Kensington, and it was such a celebration. It was quite an amazing night for me, and for anyone who was there.

Respondent 22, male Muslim, London.

But my dad was in Iran that day. He was in Tehran, and he told me that people just went crazy, they went crazy. They went into the streets honking horns and ... and these things are illegal. Women were dancing in the street with their *hijab* off, and the police wouldn't do anything about it. Because they were so happy, and it was the one moment that ... it was like pre-revolutionary Iran.
Respondent 10, male Muslim, Vancouver.

Football support was not ubiquitous amongst the respondents with some expressing the conflicting tensions of interstitiality through a variation on the infamous Tebbit 'cricket test'. This was particularly relevant in the case for the matches in Ireland¹⁴⁵ and Australia where the questions of allegiance and the suitability of supporting the homeland against their adopted country, construct the potential for negative responses from the more conservative elements of the wider community.

Because I've grown up in England all my life I probably feel more of a stronger association to my British culture than I do to my Iranian culture. For example, if Iran was playing against England in football I would probably support England rather than Iran ... If it was Iran against another country then I might support Iran.
Respondent 28, female Baha'i, London.

Beyond the World Cup and the nationalism expressed by supporters, football has a central part to play in many of the respondent's lives through participation in local competitions and informal games. Formally, many male respondents were involved in football competitions in all three cities, in both the traditional eleven man outdoor format and in smaller indoor teams. Some of these teams were made up of groups of 'Iranians', from both the first and second generation (see Figures 8.22 to 8.25). One respondent played for an established team of Iranians in an 'English' league that had a long history in the diaspora.

C: Now you're a team that's been together for a long time.

14 years. I've played for 5 of those ... These pictures (see Figures 8.24 and 8.25) ... we actually had ... a cup final that day ... so we managed to get quite a large crowd to support us. All Iranians, and we're playing an English team; we're playing in an English league. But all of our team is Iranian. Training, a couple of people come, but they don't ... we had a couple of Moroccans playing for us, and so on, English ... But, they come and go, but at the moment all of our players are Iranian.
Respondent 22, male Muslim, London.

¹⁴⁵ In the Irish case, whilst not actually a part of Britain, there are (problematic) emotional attachments between Britain and Ireland that may render the allegiances of 'Iranians' subject to questioning.



Figure 8.22: Indoor soccer team made up of players from an Iranian background in a UBC weekly competition (photograph by the author).

Figure 8.23: Supporters at the UBC indoor soccer competition (photograph by the author).



Some respondents played in teams that were not restricted to ‘Iranians’ such as respondent 23 who played for an ‘Iranian’ team on Sundays and his university team on Saturdays.

C: Which do you prefer playing, [the university] team or [the Iranian] team?

This team [university] (see Figure 8.26) because I’ve played with them for about five years. This year it will be six years. I know them; I’ve gone to uni with them. I mean, [the Iranian] team, I only played for them this year, and it’s a brand new team.

C: Will you play for the university team next year?

If I have time. Maybe for half the year, if I qualify, because after January I (will be finished). Yeah I like to join in and have a laugh. Obviously I know these guys. ... They're all students. Some of them are doctors now. They're mostly from the years below me. ... To be honest, half the people there are from the medical faculty. They've played for us for years ... Some of my best mates are medics.

Respondent 23, male Muslim, London.



Figure 8.24: Local football final near Ealing, London between an 'Iranian' team and an 'English' team (photograph by respondent).

Figure 8.25: "This is the crowd. There was about 80 to 100 of us there ... So they were all cheering for us. It was really good, 'Eeran, Eeran', that kind of thing". Respondent 22, male Muslim, London (photograph by respondent).



Here the necessity of playing for an Iranian team is mediated by the individual's decision to play with friends. The decision to play for the 'Iranian' team was "just the way it turned out" rather than a conscious decision. The playing is the important thing rather than the cultural significance of playing with Iranians. Thus, as much as 'the game' is tied to Iran, it is also a subcultural form in its own right. Football connects the respondent with other footballers, a fact that both coincides with having an Iranian background for some and extends beyond to the wider community of football players for others. The fact that football is seen as the world game means that nobody is

excluded from playing based on national belonging. National specificity has the potential, therefore, to separate groups within the footballing community, but these national boundaries also fade in the face of global affiliations to the game itself.



Figure 8.26: “This is the UCL football team ... Yeah, they’re a lovely bunch ... it’s a real mix. That guy’s my best friend from University ... he’s an Afghan ... It’s just a random bunch of guys.” *Respondent 23, male Muslim, London (photograph from respondent).*

Informal football games organised by individuals and groups amongst the respondents and beyond, were also apparent and often appeared to take on a limited Iranian focus.

C: You said soccer. Do you play with a bunch of Persians?

Yeah. ... Not professional, just for fun ... ever since school I stopped playing club and that. But just casual I play on Sundays ... in Asquith Park
Respondent 34, male Muslim, Sydney.

My dad has a group of Iranians he gets together with to play football on Wednesdays and Sundays and at the football club they get together. Recently they went to America ... to play over there in a tournament.
Respondent 19, female Muslim, London.

However, these games, whilst organised initially by Iranians often opened up to others from different national or ethnic groups.

What happens is there’s Afghans, there’s Persians. There’s Kurds and that. And we just play for fun.
Respondent 34, male Muslim, Sydney.

Additionally, one respondent spoke of a Baha’i group organising football matches and an indoor soccer team. Again, here, the initial focus on religious specificity was only

superficial as the team in reality included players who were non-Baha'i and non-Persian.

Every week Persian Baha'is, non-Baha'i Persians and other people who aren't Persians, they play soccer down near Epping ... I think it started as a group of Baha'is playing soccer, but then people joined and stuff. ... It was never for Baha'is ... There was this ad, do you want to play and join this Baha'i indoor soccer team ... which isn't just Baha'is. Like Baha'is and their friends. Like I know there are people who aren't Baha'is who are in that team as well.
Respondent 14, male Baha'i, Sydney.

The local game also has the potential to foster transnational linkages to the world of football. As respondent 19 above states, some respondents were involved directly and indirectly, with travel to play football against other 'Iranian' football teams in the US, fostering national cultural exchange, but at the same time feeding into international subcultural exchange as footballers. The World Cup matches played by the Iranian team were significant unifying national cultural events in the diaspora. Even for those who professed ambivalence about their Iranian identity, these sporadic celebrations based around the Iranian national team emphasise the affective ties to 'the nation' that flow beneath and within other complex identities. This alludes to the enduring ethnicity of A. D. Smith (1993) that expresses itself in some ways despite the agency and structure influencing individual negotiations of identity. At the same time, football communities are a subculture, as players and fans are involved in the 'glocal' act of playing and watching football. These affiliations are sometimes expressed through national discourses and at others are merely about the joy of being involved.

8.3 Class Relations

We now move onto class relations in order to investigate how aspiration and class separation has been differentially transposed from Iran into the specific contexts of Sydney, Vancouver and London to produce cleavages and communal affiliations that tie the 'Iranians' into wider social class relations and subvert national differences.

8.3.1 'High' and 'Low' Class

Chalmers, writing of Bengali communities in Britain, notes earlier work by Fazlul Alam that states that, “segregation is not the effect of the British class structure, rather it is the accommodation of the Bangladeshi class structure within the existing British system” (Alam, in Chalmers, 1998: 125). Chalmers goes on to claim that “the nexus of low socio-economic status and low linguistic status is far from insignificant” (Chalmers, 1998: 125). The decision here to not implicate the pre-existing British class system in the internal schisms in the Bangladeshi communities, particularly between the majority Sylheti speakers and the speakers of the ‘national’ Bengali language highlights the difficulty in accounting for the intersections of class identities with other identities. In contrast to Chalmers, this analysis found that the context against which ‘migrant’ class relations were played out did play a part in the form of class separations.

In the case of Iranians in all three cities, rather than differentiating along linguistic lines, the notion of class separation was generally related to the success of social mobilisation within the new societies and how this emulated the class separations that dominated Iranian society, particularly the urban Tehran experience, prior to the Iranian revolution.

Amongst many of the first generation, according to their children, there was an explicit concern to maintain class separations between the established community, on its journey towards a degree of social mobility, and newer migrants who represented a challenge to existing orders and class relations.

It is what I've been living through my whole life, even in Iran. Very selective of the people you associate with. It's simple as that. And you just have to maintain that while you're here. Make sure you don't mix and mingle with the wrong people. Because eventually other people are going to see you with them. You know, you're supposed to rise up the social ladder, not go down. And if you have a good status, you should try to maintain it.

Respondent 11, female Baha'i, Vancouver.

In London the extant class separations were seen by some as bearing a degree of congruence to the class separations of Iran and thus affording some level of class

protection for the wealthy elites who chose to live in the wealthier areas of London. The socio-economic disparities between classes, as expressed through the high costs of real estate in areas like Kensington and Knightsbridge, and even the high costs of socialising in certain arenas, kept the undesirable 'lower class' to some degree physically apart.

C: How do you feel yours and other events respond to new members, particularly new arrivals?

Not good ... It depends, because, unfortunately there's this class thing that's the problem ... You get some ... again its some of the people who come over from Iran ... It's this stereotype that comes up. And they come and they may drink excessively, again 'cause they've got this freedom to drink. So then they come and they come across as very sleazy. And they would come and chat up or whatever. But of course everyone's got their own little groups and it's very difficult for them to break into these groups ... in terms of making friends.
Respondent 20, male Muslim, London.

However, in Vancouver and Sydney, the same 'egalitarian society' that has facilitated the aspirational mobility of Iranians who arrived after the earlier migration flows from Iran, has had a perceived 'unfortunate consequence' in the mobility afforded to new arrivals who aspire to move from lower to higher socio-economic areas. Unlike Iran, and to some extent the wider socio-economic disparities of London, there were less class barriers to separate them in their higher class position from mixing with 'lower classes'.

My parents, they don't go to the concerts and cultural events, but for a different reason. They don't go because they think that it's like a low class thing to do. The people there are not the classiest people there, sometimes. Because by far the majority of the Iranians here, they are not all that wealthy, and they're coming, and they're sort of middle class. And my parents see it as ... I'm not saying that I agree with this at all. Although they go to parties, private parties, house parties that are ... Persian. That's where all the wealthy people, the wealthy Iranian people of this city get together. And they'll know each other. They know where each other lives. They know each others cars.
Respondent 10, male Muslim, Vancouver.

A lot of these people participate in these events and, particularly getting into clubs, because they gain entry to things they would have never, ever, ever had ... In Iran they would have never been able to go to the parties ... that I went to. ... But they come here and were all equal, in quotations ... You know,

everyone goes to the same club. And I don't appreciate that because I wouldn't sit at the same restaurant as you would. I wouldn't go to the parties you would back home. I really see no reason why we should here. You know, I respect you as a person and a human being. I am not going to discriminate against you in any way, but it doesn't mean ... we're the same. ... I believe that everyone deserves to have equality. But equality in human rights. Equality to respect. Equality of that. Just because I don't appreciate a person of the lower class socialising with me ... doesn't mean I'm discriminating against, or being unequal, or not respecting them even. I will give you respect, but you have to maintain what you are. And I have to maintain what I am.
Respondent 11, female Muslim, Vancouver.

The class separations that are apparent amongst the first generation are not unproblematically transferred to the second generation. Despite the above respondent's recognition and reproduction of class relations from the first to the second generation, there was a more general resistance to class barriers, particularly from Baha'is.

With the new arrivals, it's very difficult to ... bring them in ... And we have Persian guys here who might tend to look down on new Persian arrivals, the like fresh-off-the-boat types ... who (have) feelings towards new Persians ... The second generation is very different, 'cause they've moved away from there ... And there's also ... a bit of a cloud about Iran. So it's not such a wonderful place. There's been a lot of segregation. It's not a cool place ... Its not exactly nice ... in terms of where we stand, it's not exactly the most developed, dignified.
Respondent 14, male Baha'i, Sydney.

It appears to some degree that the contextual class relations limit the desire to reproduce Iranian class separations in the diaspora. Yet in all three cities class separations are readily expressed and manifest themselves through such acts as the branding of the 'lower' classes, conspicuous consumption, spatial settlement practices and educational decisions.

8.3.2 Fresh off the Boat

Newer migrants were frequently called a derivative of the term, 'fresh off the boat'. This blanket term, not used exclusively by Iranians, but across migrant groups in all three cities, had a particular resonance with the Iranian case. For many of the second generation, from both religious groups, but particularly for the Muslim groups, the new Iranians, the 'F.O.B.'s or 'fobes', were simultaneously accorded difference

along religious, economic and linguistic lines described as less wealthy, more religious and 'speaking in a funny accent' that was not in line with the 'national' language used amongst the diaspora communities.

They don't use it as a derogatory term; it's not a horrible thing.

C: Descriptive?

Yeah ... more of a joke. You know, you make a joke, 'he's such a fobe'.

C: Do you call them that to their face?

No (laughs). But it's not meant to be in a horrible way; it's just, I don't know, someone might get offended because I think the term comes from like fresh off the banana boat. You know that's where it comes from. But I don't know. Though maybe I'm using it in a really bad way.

Respondent 24, female Muslim, London.

And that's the problem here. It's not a private society. It's a club, and you pay \$10 and they get in. And the people who usually do that are the people who are fresh off the boat, per se.

Respondent 11, female Muslim, Vancouver.

And they talk about these new arrivals as, oh they all work for pizza shops (laughs) or they're all working for, you know, black market kind of jobs ... or they're minicab drivers or ... Certain kind of funny names are put on them, or other than that, they are off the boat. Off the boat, that's a common thing ... We laugh about it, like me and my friends ... And it means generally that you've just come off the boat (laughs). Basically, because you know people who've got here ... they're refugees, they are asylum seekers and they've run away, they come by boat obviously haven't they, by ships or whatever, to the ports. And we call them off the boat. So that's not very nice, but it's something that is said.

Respondent 25, female Muslim, London.

Frequently, this separation was made through the explicit direction of their parents, the first generation, who warned their children to stay away from the newer migrants as they were troublemakers and 'out of control'. The allusions were made to a cooling off period during which the new migrants would behave in socially unacceptable ways as they adapted to their new found freedoms. Fighting at Iranian events was often attributed to new migrants who 'didn't know how to behave' in their new society.

In the summertime ... there's Ambleside, which is a beach a lot of Persians go to ... Kids, young kids, they come there. A lot of them have recently come from Iran ... Basically ... they stand around, wearing their baggy clothes. And, you know, if it so happens they get into a fight or something...
Respondent 3, male Baha'i, Vancouver.

Some respondents spoke of the warnings of parents against fraternising with new migrants who were seen as 'low class' and were presented as a danger through drinking or fighting. These attitudes were sometimes reproduced in the second generation.

We call them FOBs, like fobes (laughs).

C: Do you know, where does that come from?

I have no idea ... I mean, you call someone a fobe everyone knows what it is ... I don't want to be too general ... but when they come over, some of them tend to go a little wild. They just go nuts. Really let their hair down ... You find some of the girls that come over they've got so much attitude, you just think, why do you constantly want to fight, you know ... Like personally, all the girls that I know who are, ah, fresh (laughs), they've got so much attitude, and I don't understand it, I can't understand it. They just ... fight all the time.
Respondent 24, female Muslim, London.

This class separation draws dividing lines within the 'Iranian community' in each city, along temporal and, by implication, cultural and behavioural lines, branding 'them' as not like 'us'.

8.3.3 Conspicuous Consumption

Standards of propriety were seen to extend beyond specific anti-social behaviours to acceptable forms of dress. The newer migrants from Iran were often linked to those that wore 'track pants' and newer youth dress typically associated with North American hip hop culture and the implicit threat these subcultural forms represent.

Say when we go to a concert. You can tell who's a new arrival by just the way they, I don't know. You could say the way they dress, the way they act, the way they drink ... They may get pointed out. If we are there they'd say, oh look, so and so, off the boat.
Respondent 20, male Muslim, London.

Well the FOB, there's differences ... (Some) dress like they did in Iran. They wear like maybe tight pants or ... not so trendy, or stylish dress. We have FOBs who have been here a short amount of time, but to the outsider they look like they've been here all their lives. You know, dressing like everybody here, adapting very quickly. But we kind of know, they haven't been here that long, and they're trying to fool people, but they're really not. You know, they're not that good at it. You can tell.

Respondent 3, male Baha'i, Vancouver.

For some this dress indicated that they did not have the economic means to dress in an acceptable 'Iranian' manner of neat and professional attire. Newer migrants were not accorded the agency to select their own clothing styles, but were rather placed within a class hierarchy by the more established Iranian community members where their (lack of) economic mobility was reflected emblematically through the apparent limitations to cheaper 'low class' clothing.

The standards applied to expectations of dress reflect a particular preoccupation with conspicuous consumption of particular consumer items. One respondent epitomised this through his shoe collection, which he neatly arranged for a photograph in order to impress upon me the importance that these shoes held (see Figure 8.27). Some of his collection of shoes were bought through E-bay, whilst other shopping was in the "more exclusive" shopping areas downtown rather than the more local Park Royal Plaza.

I've accumulated ... I'm not a pure collector, in that I collect for the sake of collecting. I buy things that I like, and they're all my size so, you know, if I ever want to I can always wear them. But I only have so many feet and I can't, you know, wear them all the time. You know, so I just keep them, and whenever I like I can, just wear them. A few of them are actually classics. These ones on the left side, they are from a few years ago. And if you wanted to check on the internet you can actually sell them for 50% more than you paid for them.

Respondent 3, male Baha'i, Vancouver.

The conspicuous consumption extended from the purchase of quality groceries through boutique grocery stores through to the preoccupation with luxury cars. One respondent mentioned the desires of her mother and her Iranian female friends to shop at the more exclusive Waitrose grocery store in London (see Figure 8.28).

A few Iranian ladies, the older ladies, they have this thing with Waitrose, because of the good quality and the name and that. Some Iranians have got this thing about names. Just like younger people have this thing about brand name designers. Waitrose is known for its good quality. Iranians like their quality as well.

Respondent 25, female Muslim, London.



Figure 8.27: The shoe collection (photograph from respondent).



Figure 8.28: Waitrose (the building in the background) as an exclusive grocery shopping experience (photograph by respondent).

This respondent also took a photograph of a Mercedes Benz outlet in Swiss Cottage in London to highlight the importance of luxury cars to members of the Iranian community, particularly to the men of the first generation, as she perceived it (see Figure 5.19).

And this one is Mercedes Benz, another thing associated with Iranians. Especially in Iran as well. ... The richer men, the older generation as well, they're very into Mercedes Benz and BMWs.

Respondent 25, female Muslim, London.

Another respondent reflected on the success of his parents in Vancouver through their conspicuous consumption.

Now they're driving great cars, and have a great house.
Respondent 10, male Muslim, Vancouver.



Figure 8.29: “I recently got my car. I like it a lot. It’s a part of my life.”
Respondent 22, male Muslim, London (photograph from respondent).



Figure 8.30: “I got it just before I turned 18 ... My dad had put it on order. So a total surprise.” *Respondent 40, female Baha'i, Vancouver (photograph by respondent).*

The aspiration to own a quality luxury car was not limited to the first generation with several second generation individuals pointing to their cars as important to their physical mobility and representing them through their photographs as an extension of the self and an expression of social mobility (see Figures 8.29-8.31).

For those who did not have a luxury car there were still aspirations to have one in the future.

Most of those (pictures) are actually cars, which is probably my biggest interest on the internet ... I don't have a car, but I look at cars I wish I could have.

Respondent 3, male Baha'i, Vancouver.

We used to have a Ford Sierra, but my mum loves Mercedes Benz. Never owned one, never. I own a little Renault.

Respondent 25, female Muslim, London.



Figure 8.31: “Yeah, that’s my car ... my first car.” Respondent 34, male Muslim, Sydney (photograph by respondent).

Whilst at one level class and consumption is conflated with Iranian-ness, it is a particular version of Iran. The aspirations to reproduce middle/upper class consumption habits from pre-revolutionary urban Tehran both reinforces the diasporic desire to maintain a prior ‘Iranian life’, whilst at the same time this diasporic

imagining separates these class actors from other 'Iranians' who either problematise this imagining, or were never involved in these pre-revolutionary urban elite circles.

For the second generation, the obsession with status amongst the first generation is differentially reproduced, with some conforming to class separations and others rebelling against them. There was no particular relationship that seemed to guide these (re)productions of class position, although there appeared to be a greater degree of problematising of class separations amongst the Baha'is through the influence of their cosmopolitan egalitarian theology.

8.3.4 Spatialisation of Class Relations

The succession of migrant groups from Iran and their complex aspirations and class separations have specific spatial ramifications in each of the cities. The established migrants have been accorded particular status as spatial nodes of 'Iranian community', usually centred in higher socio-economic locations as a direct emulation of lifestyles of comfort and consumption maintained in the Shah's Iran. In contrast, other groups of Iranian migrants live spread around in other spatial concentrations that are partially a result of their lack of success in achieving social mobility and their peripheral religious, linguistic, political and temporal position in the constructed hierarchies of the Iranian diaspora.

The geographical manifestation of class relations were apparent in all three cities with the most popular settlement locations being in higher socio-economic areas: in London, around Kensington and Knightsbridge; in Vancouver around West and North Vancouver; and in Sydney around the North Shore suburbs of Chatswood and Hornsby. If we first look at the Sydney case

C: Why did they move to the North Shore?
Because there were more Persians. Family ties.
Respondent 34, male Muslim, Sydney.

C: Where do most families from Iran live in Sydney?

I think that the way that it goes a lot of the time is that a lot of people move in ... I mean different areas, but a lot move into Parramatta, Holroyd. There's a lot of Iranian Baha'is in those areas. But ... there are many in St Ives now, and our community has over 180. It's incredible. ... It's a huge community, and it's grown over the last couple of years.

Respondent 13, female Baha'i, Sydney.

C: Where do you live?

In St Ives, in Sydney.

C: Have you always lived there?

No. I think we were in Bankstown or Blacktown for a while ... And then we went to Harris Park ... Then we went to Baulkham Hills ... and then we moved to Artarmon ... And then we moved to St Ives.

C: Why did your family choose to live in these places?

I guess back then it was cheaper, compared to the North at least ... One of my mum's best friends has always lived in the North, but I think, when I was younger going from there to the Northern suburbs it seemed like going to a different world ... I guess as they developed here they would have just moved up.

Respondent 36, male Muslim, Sydney.

When seen from the perspective of Iranians in Sydney who left soon after the revolution and now live in higher socio-economic suburbs such as around Chatswood, St Ives or Hornsby, the spatial relations may express themselves in a different way, with the successful achievement of the reproduction of class desires expressed through residential location. This is even clearer in the cases of Vancouver and London.

C: Where do most families from Iran live in London?

Everywhere (laughs) ... people from Iran arrived here and are very successful, and have got good career and are ... financially very comfortable ... Those people who came here from a long time ago, I know, and its sounding a bit obvious, they live in certain areas here ... Being around High Street Kensington, Knightsbridge, and there's a lot of them ... Hampstead, St John's Wood ... There's some, a lot in Richmond. These are certain areas.

Respondent 25, female Muslim, London.

I think there is a lot of showboating in Iranian culture. I think regardless of whether you lived in Kensington or not, you all want to look like you lived in Kensington. I mean that in the nicest way.
Respondent 26, male Baha'i, London.

C: Why did your family choose to live in North Vancouver?

Well, I'm not really sure why they decided that. But part of the reason was that it's got beautiful natural scenery and my parents really, really like that. So if they had decided to move to like Richmond, or Surry or Coquitlam. They didn't prefer those neighbourhoods as much because of the different ethnic cultures that were there. So they didn't want to mix with those very much, but ... the natural scenery they liked a lot. And a nice quiet neighbourhood. The whole aspect of Persians being there did not attract them that much ... There isn't the violence. There isn't a lot of things going on here. It's not too loud, it's not too quiet. You know, there are things available to people.

C: Was it an expensive area you first moved to?

No, it wasn't expensive. It cost more than Richmond or Surrey or Coquitlam, 'cause North Van costs more than that. The next most expensive thing probably would have been West Van. But, no, it was pretty normal.
Respondent 11, female Muslim, Vancouver.

C: Do many people do that? Move from Coquitlam and Burnaby to North Van and West Van?

Yeah.

C: What about going from North Van and West Van to Coquitlam, Burnaby?

No.

Respondent 7, male Baha'i, Vancouver.

The upward mobility that class aspiration engenders tends towards one way movements within the urban space with families moving 'up' to the North Shore in Sydney and Vancouver, or to Kensington/Knightsbridge in London. When asked about people deciding to move *from* these places, the only references made were those associated with home front pioneering amongst the Baha'is.

C: Why did your parents decide to move out to Horseshoe Bay (from North Vancouver)?

Horseshoe Bay was because they needed Baha'is. They needed to make a local spiritual assembly. So they went there to do that.
Respondent 8, male Baha'i, Vancouver.

Thus, in a limited capacity in the Baha'i cohort, religious ascription works to interrupt the class aspirations. Beyond this, these spatial hierarchies are of relative importance to different groups. For Armenians and Assyrians of Iranian background in Sydney, the desire to live closer to the wider religious community of Armenians in the middle-class suburb of Ryde, or the Assyrians in the lower socio-economic area of Fairfield, may not reflect a sense of lack of achievement of social mobility. Other issues impinge upon the decision to settle such as the location of other family members and access to employment. Additionally, as has been noted above, the Baha'is tend to a degree of voluntary dispersion throughout the urban space in order to form LSAs. Whilst this leads to some degree of movement, the exact impact of home front pioneering (see Chapter 7) is unclear, and many Iranian background Baha'is still aggregate in particular areas in the urban space. These class aspirations and their resultant spatial manifestations are somewhat in tension with the notions of home front pioneering, and even pioneering in general. Some movement appears to be guided by these religious motivations, whilst other movement is tied to class aspiration, and yet a third is tied to traditional notions of chain migration leading to concentration in initial settlement patterns. All of these processes vary across time as reflected in the complexities of intraurban movement.

8.3.5 Educational Aspiration

Education, and by implication, subsequent employment, are important signifiers of class position both in the diaspora and in Iran. Many spoke of the expectations of parents and the extended family of becoming a doctor, lawyer, or an engineer in order to convey social capital on both the immediate and extended family.

There's quite a theme towards studying, you know, health sciences fields, such as dentistry, medicine, maybe pharmacy and those sorts of things. I think a lot of it has to do with, not only the amount of money that you make, but also the status that is endowed upon people who work in such areas, definitely.
Respondent 3, male Baha'i, Vancouver.

In all three cities, across both religious cohorts, obtaining a 'suitable' tertiary qualification was an important implicit and explicit expectation for the second generation.

C: You're studying integrated science now with a view to going onto dentistry?

That's right.

C: Your brother is doing what?

My brother is studying science as well. He's in his third year. And he wants to study Medicine.

C: Did your parents have much to do with these decisions?

They do, very much. I mean a lot of people deny it, but they do ... Partly because it's a good field of study, it's what my parents want. The other reason is that they want their children to be successful.

Respondent 3, male Baha'i, Vancouver.

My mother, concerning studying, in the beginning she always wanted me to do something in a profession and that there would be a stable career at the end of it, such as ... studying medicine, something like that, engineering, whatever.

Respondent 25, female Muslim, London.

When I look at our growing up, you know, even though they weren't ... sort of pushy, you know, you sort of have to be engineers, sort of, doctors. But I know that they, especially my mum, had quite high expectations in terms of ... schooling.

Respondent 30, female Baha'i, London.

I'm doing a postgraduate teaching degree ... I'm doing the MTeach ... I did a Bachelor of Arts, double major in Art History and Theory and Performance Studies, and then various other subjects, which is interesting because there was only one other Iranian, who was Baha'i, who was in my course. All the others were over in Engineering or Medicine or something.

Respondent 48, female Muslim, Sydney.

The only pressure I did feel joining something, was for university. I had, it was like immense pressure. If I didn't go to university then I'd be a failure. I mean, a lot of Iranian families are just like that. Everyone has to go to

university. I know all my cousins, all my second cousins, that are my age, they have to go to university. There's no doubt. There's no question.

C: Do you see it as a really major emphasis that parents have?

Oh, I sense it as the most important thing that parents are like ... They don't push, but it ... would be so frowned upon if you don't go. You know, no one likes that.

Respondent 24, female Muslim, London.

Many felt there was a high degree of pressure to attend university that came from one or both of their parents. This extended to the expectations to pursue higher qualifications.

And my father wants me to go ahead and get a Masters, a PhD and all this kind of stuff. Get a doctorate in computer engineering, but I'm not so keen on that, because ... Like I'm more keen to work and get some solid experience.

Respondent 38, male Muslim, Sydney.

C: How do you feel about the fact that your brothers did so well?

It's a nightmare. Oh, its like, I think deep down, although they never mention it, they have never forgiven me ... for that.

C: Has it made it more difficult in your relationship with your father and mother?

Not with my mother. My mother's like as long as you go to university ... But my father was like, he really wanted me to be a dentist. I'm not, I'm an arts, you know. I am not a scientific knowledge. I just can't cope with all that kind of stuff.

Respondent 24, female Muslim, London.

For respondent 24, the fact that both of her older brothers had attained their medical degrees and their PhDs in medicine put a great deal of pressure on her. For some others, the expectations were not limited to the immediate family, but came from relatives and even family friends.

C: And what did (your sister) do?

Sociology. She didn't want to go ... My aunts made her go ... They were very aggressive that my sister should go to college. But she didn't really want to

and she never had enough specific interest in anything and sociology would take her, basically.

Respondent 33, female Baha'i, London.

Some pursued a negotiation with their parent's desires for them to become a doctor by choosing to study medical sciences, or biological sciences. Regardless of the negotiations that had gone on, the desire to undertake tertiary education was generally internalised as a personal choice that the parents had little to do with, even when it meant that the individual chose to become a doctor, engineer or lawyer.

C: Have your parents influenced any of the choices you have made regarding work and education?

No actually. It's funny because you'd think Persian family, you've got to be a doctor, you've got to be an engineer. But they're not the stereotypical in that way ... My other family members, yes, but not my parents.

C: What other family members?

Like aunts, uncles, grandparents ... They were calling me a doctor when I was in first year undergraduate. They kept calling me that. But it's not like they influenced me to go into it because I knew it was what I wanted to do since I was in grade 10 or 11. But there was pressure. Like these people are calling me doctor from like the first year of university. I gotta like actually get to the next step.

C: Does this happen to other people, you think?

Yeah. Persian Iranians? Yeah, oh yeah. Not just Baha'is, I think it's an Iranian thing.

Respondent 7, male Baha'i, Vancouver.

C: Have your parents influenced any of the choices you have made regarding work and education?

Not too much I don't think. I think, I've gone down the path that most Persians don't really expect for their children. I think my mum has always thought it would be cool if I was a doctor, just like all Persians are ... and my dad has always been open and stressed that I should always be open and make sure there is a job at the end of the line.

Respondent 5, male Baha'i, Vancouver.

Others chose alternate disciplines due to differing interests or their levels of achievement.

At the moment I'm doing an MSc, Masters of Science, in interactive multimedia ... My degree was, is in ... media arts theory and the minor was in video production. So it's not something common amongst Iranians ... I'd always wanted to do something in medicine. I particularly wanted to do dentistry (but my marks were too low).
Respondent 25, female Muslim, London.

The concern with getting a good education that in some way guaranteed social mobility, fulfilled through the attainment of certain 'professional' qualifications, allowed the conscious and unconscious reproduction of class separations from the first to the second generation in the diaspora. Becoming a doctor, a lawyer, or an engineer, whilst guaranteeing mobility in the diaspora, also represents a reproduction of specific urban Iranian class relations directly from Iran, where training to be a doctor or engineer has become tied to prestige.

In Iran you're either an engineer or you are a doctor. That's the two prestigious things ... You know Iran has ... I think the largest number of qualified doctors who haven't got jobs.

C: Really?

Engineers, that are educated, people that are very, very educated (are unemployed).
Respondent 20, male Muslim, London.

The problem of the chronically unemployed doctor in Iran alludes to the disengagement of the profession from the availability of positions, or the desire to practise, in lieu of the social capital that can be gained through the completion of studies in medicine. Hence, to become a doctor, a lawyer, or an engineer remains as important for many people in the diaspora (both first and second generation) as it is in Iran, as a measure of social advancement and the opportunity to claim social status. Whilst there is little doubt from the above discussions concerning FOBs, conspicuous consumption, spatial settlement and education, that the class relations of an urban elite from Iran have been imported into the diaspora, unlike the claims of Chalmers presented above, these relations do intersect with their present context to produce distinctive networks of aspiration and mobility that reflect the extant structures of socio-economic separation and class distinction.

8.4 Geographies of Gender

The 'traditional' roles of gender separation in Iran as constructed (and reproduced for the second generation) in the diaspora place particular expectations on both men and women to behave in certain ways and follow certain cultural forms of acceptability in order to both (re)produce 'Iran' in the diaspora and reify the ties to homeland. Women as both carriers of cultural tradition *and* agents of change both challenge and reinforce stratified understandings of 'being Iranian' as they interact with 'Western' conceptions of individual equality.¹⁴⁶ Similarly, for men the attempts to reproduce their dominant patriarchal role in Iranian relationships can be undermined by loss of position through the lack of recognition of tertiary qualifications, the challenges of language acquisition, and the loss of financial mobility and class superiority. This can result in drastic consequences amongst the first generation, and subsequently challenge the second generation to rethink these 'traditional' roles.

8.4.1 *Dohre*

One informal cultural mechanism noted by other researchers that aids in the ability of Iranian first generation women to adapt to the new society better than men is the support of women's groups or *dohre*. In the work of Toolo & Shakibae (2000) on Iranian migrant women in Perth, Australia, they note that *dohre* groups could be made up of a combination of Baha'is and Muslims, or only Muslims and only Baha'is (Toolo & Shakibae, 2000: 106) with discussions concerning religion generally avoided as a 'personal matter' subordinate to their role as 'Iranians'.¹⁴⁷ Interestingly, *dohre* was only mentioned by one respondent, in Vancouver, as the 'group of families' who undertake *mehmuni*. It was given no gendered appellation nor described as restricted to only women.

This is a family that we ... there's a group of families, and we've grown up together since we came here. So, since I was 5.

¹⁴⁶ Ahmadi (2003: 700) has noted a rise in Western individualism that has challenged traditional Iranian notions of the pre-eminence of family over the individual.

¹⁴⁷ For Baha'i women of the first and successive generations, the recognition of universal equality in gender roles (see Glocal Baha'i Communities) helps to mediate against the dominance of patriarchal Iranian norms, possibly aiding the adaptation process of both men and women. This is borne out by anecdotal evidence that the Muslim cohort experienced higher levels of family separation and divorce. See also Ahmadi Lewin (2001), Ahmadi (2003) and Darvishpour (1999).

C: So this is like the *mehmuni* group?

Exactly. In Farsi it's called *dohre*. It just means group of people that you associate with.

Respondent 7, male Baha'i, Vancouver.

None of the female respondents mentioned *dohre*, whilst *mehmuni*, as an informal cultural form, was commonly mentioned, and even more widely recognised (see Chapter 7). Following from this, the *dohre* may be a social form less apparent than *mehmuni*, or the misunderstanding of *dohre* as defined by Toolo and Shakibaei may simply be a reflection of the incomplete reproduction of cultural forms from the first to the second generation. It is also possible that the Iranian communities in Perth have developed in a differential manner to those in SVL.

8.4.2 Women as guardians of cultural maintenance

The role of immigrant women as the guardians of tradition has been noted by other researchers (e.g. see Levy, 2000: 53; also Jalali, 1982, concerning Iranian women in Los Angeles). Shahidian (1999) refers to Iranian women in his Canadian study as both the agents of tradition *and* the agents of change. He sees women existing in a paradoxical space of tension due to the conflict between the roles of mother as nurturer in a new society and the mother as arbiter of tradition (1999:213). For some women, the absence of the father figure either due to his movements between the new country and Iran, or possibly due to the breakdown of traditional family structures in the new environment (Ahmadi Lewin, 2001), means that these conflicting roles are brought into stark contrast.

For the children in this study, many identified the mother as the primary lifeline to the homeland. It is the mother who is seen as the parent who is more interested in them maintaining contact with their Iranian self.

I think my mum would initially want me to marry someone who's Persian ...
My dad is more flexible...

Respondent 12, male Baha'i, Vancouver.

At home it's usually English with my brothers and sister, but Farsi to my mum. She really gets annoyed when you speak to her in English. She doesn't want us to forget.

Respondent 19, female Muslim, London.

They want me marry a Persian. Well, my dad's more against that and my mum is more for it ... I would prefer not to marry a Persian.

Respondent 40, female Baha'i, Vancouver.

C: With whom do you speak Farsi?

With my mum, and my grandparents.

C: Not with your father?

Less with my father. I start Farsi with him but he answers in English.

Respondent 7, male Baha'i, Vancouver.

In contrast to this, Darvishpour notes the work of Hannerz (1983) and Nasehi (1994) that suggest that it is the male Iranian migrant who is stuck in the past, "the men tend to live in yesterday, the women in today, and the children in the future" (Darvishpour, 1999: 22). This reflects a worsened position for men as the existing patriarchal power relations are challenged in the new society, where they reminisce of the cultural traditions of the country of origin as an argument for their cause (Darvishpour, 1999: 22).

The position of men in the past fits with some second generation perceptions of their father's preoccupation with politics, and often the possibilities of the reinstatement of the monarchy.

Within Iran, I don't know exactly what's going on and I don't understand the behind the scenes blah blah. Whereas my dad would follow a lot of the policies.

Respondent 20, male Muslim, London.

Whilst it was the fathers who were presented as 'interested in politics', other research has shown that both men and women in the Iranian diaspora have roles to play as

‘political activists’ (Shahidian, 2001: 72-5). However, these political roles remain ‘underground’ as has been alluded to previously.¹⁴⁸

In addition, whilst men from the first generation were generally not seen by their children as promoting ties to Iran as much as women, some were concerned to ensure their male offspring learnt the importance of Persian classical poetry and philosophy in order to reach the intellectual expectations of Iranian manhood. This aspiration to a masculine sensitivity separated the sense of Iranian manhood from wider (white) ABC masculinity, which was sometimes seen by the second generation as more aggressive and less nuanced.

The social mobility of women is not merely marked out in the non-traditional recognition of educational opportunities and social mobility. There are also traditional class separations that are reproduced that enforce the mobility of women. In a similar manner to the discussion of conspicuous consumption above, the wearing of ostentatious gold jewellery by first generation females is seen as a marker of ‘class’, whether it occurs on the Kings Road in London, or in Tehran.

There’s always this thing where ... this is very general, Iranian women love gold jewellery and, I guess in that sort of culture for that generation it’s a sign of class. Sometimes I feel that with Iranian culture that extravagance is a sign of class. So it’s literally the more gold you can fit on your fingers and around your neck.

Respondent 26, male Baha’i, London.

Here the expression of class separation is transposed and reconfigured, as socio-economic mobility accorded by ‘education and hard work’ in the diaspora can be expressed through the adornment of signifying gold jewellery. The jewellery attests to mobility that may, or may not, have been available in Iran.

A less traditional form of gendered expression, and one possibly more relevant for the second generation, is through the expectations of feminine grooming. ‘Looking good’ has a part to play for some Iranian background females from the second generation. In

¹⁴⁸ Shahidian (2001) discusses the difficulty of researching political activity amongst the Iranian diaspora communities due to a well founded fear and distrust, which ensures most political action remains out of sight (see also Chapter 6 on the discussion of the flag).

contrast to conservative pressures to erase such outward signs of ‘femininity’ in Iran after the revolution, the tendency in the diaspora appears to be to flaunt the freedom to express feminine ‘beauty’.

The desire to dress and groom in an overtly feminine manner (see Figure 8.32) can be read on one level as a response to the repressions in Iran. In support of this, some of the first generation play a significant role in fostering a sense of femininity through gifts of makeup and expectations of certain styles of grooming and dress amongst the second generation.

It’s quite weird. I have received a lot of makeup since I was a very young age, about twelve or thirteenth birthday, and gifts and that. But I never used it until I was older.

C: Who gives it to you?

Friends, mothers, my mum’s friends. You know, people as gifts for birthdays or whatever. It’s interesting yeah, but I never really used it until I was about 18 or 19. And also, if you go to Iran, its like this contradiction thing, like girls are not usually supposed to wear a lot of makeup, or whatever. But I mean now its becoming the fashion and everyone is ... So if you go now, you say, wow.

Respondent 25, female Muslim, London.

Finally, the breakdown in traditional family structure has also led for some to the recognition of a concomitant loss of tradition amongst the remaining family members.

C: What about *Norooz*?

I think ... because I myself, like, I know Iranians sort of celebrate New Year, but like ... As time got on. As this family itself kind of disintegrated in its structure so did its traditions ... And like I didn’t really hold it as a sacred tradition. Not as sacred as some Iranians hold it because like it doesn’t really have a religious affiliation. It’s just like here and New Year.

Respondent 35, male Muslim, Sydney

As Ahmadi Lewin notes in Sweden, the ‘causes’ of gender tensions and differential social adaptation, such as success in work and education, are skewed towards the secular women.¹⁴⁹ As would be expected, secular women are less likely to reproduce

¹⁴⁹ Whether these women have become *increasingly* secular or have always been secular is unclear.

traditions imbued with religious significance. Thus, in some ways, increasing opportunity for social mobility, whilst leading to the increased occurrence of family breakdown, may in fact lead to increasing secularism at the expense of ‘religious’ traditions. However, the loss of religious tradition does not necessarily imply the loss of ‘Iranian’ tradition, with many secular mothers exhibiting strong desires for their children to stay ‘in touch’ with their ‘cultural’ background (see also discussion on cultural Muslims in Chapter 7).



Figure 8.32: “Ok, makeup and girls, and Iranian girls is very important. They spend a lot of time doing it. They spend a lot of money on it.” Respondent 25, female Muslim, London (photograph from respondent).

Whilst Ahmadi Lewin’s (2001) work makes no mention of religion, its Muslim focus fails to account for the experience of Baha’is. In contrast to the Muslim cohort, social mobility amongst Baha’i women does not necessarily relate to higher levels of secularisation and the loss of religious traditions as the right for a woman to access education and mobility are entrenched in the religion. Baha’i Iranian women of the first generation remain the guardians of cultural maintenance even with increased mobility. However, their interpretation of ‘Iranian culture’ also tends to deny traditional Muslim religious elements.

8.4.3 The Kitchen – a woman’s place

At the same time as traditional and non-traditional signifiers mark women as mobile and more efficient social negotiators than their male counterparts, particularly amongst the first generation, there are traditional gender roles that tend to fix women in space. Here we return to the kitchen that began this chapter to tie off the discussion about complex identities. The kitchen as a place of ‘homely multiculturalism’ (Hage, 1997) accords a gendered positionality to the ‘Iranian’ female. Referring to Figure 8.6, the respondent noted,

Here we have a few people in the kitchen, just chatting. They’re eating ... the sour green fruits. It’s just tea. Things that Iranians do ... It’s an Iranian thing to sit around and have tea, and talk all the time, especially women. Another thing, it’s in the kitchen. Iranian women love to be in the kitchen. Why I don’t know. But they just love to sit in there.

Respondent 25, female Muslim, London.

But having positioned the Iranian female form as fixed in the kitchen, respondent 25 goes on to challenge this fixity.

C: What about yourself? How do you feel about that?

I don’t actually like that ... I mean, if everyone’s in there, then I’ll obviously sit in there. But I’d rather go and sit in the living room. It’s a bit more comfortable. But my mum loves it, so, we all have to do that, you know. And you can see we’ve got a few various Iranian ... There’s a samovar there, but it’s more modernised and you put the teapot on top ... and the tablecloth from Isfahan.

Respondent 25, female Muslim, London.

The kitchen becomes the transmission point for things Iranian. The tablecloth, the samovar, Iranian food with its distinctive tastes and smells, all emanate from the kitchen as a feminine place of cultural reproduction. However, just as allegiance to Iranian identity amongst women of the second generation is ambivalent, so too does the feminine place of the kitchen sit uneasily with many respondents. Whilst, it is unproblematically a place dominated by their mother, they do not necessarily belong there. Similarly to other aspects of generational reproduction, the kitchen as a woman’s place has not passed simplistically from mother to daughter.

8.5 Conclusion

One of the purposes of this chapter has been to expand the discourses of belonging and the politics of identity beyond the bounds of dominant national forms discussed in Chapter 6 and to add to the complexity hinted at through the discussion of religion in Chapter 7. However, the intentions of this chapter fall beyond a descriptive analysis of the possible 'polyvalent' identity positions that the children of Iranian migrants inhabit. Recalling the discussions of Chapter 2, this chapter is more than a description of the *forms* of identity. Implied within the ambivalences over community set through scale, class, gender and subculture is the presence of *process*; as David Harvey (1997) notes, process drives form and is in turn driven by it. By bringing together these several discourses of belonging into one chapter it was hoped that some of the possible intersections and interactions could be highlighted, but more importantly, that the structured and unstructured *possibilities* for intersection/interaction that imply the (ever)presence of processes of change could be felt.

It is impossible to attempt to know and discuss *all* possible communities/identities that flow through the individual, and indeed to attempt to do so would be pointless, for whilst identity may not be pure form, neither is it pure process. Some of these preceding categorisations of identity are important points of fixity, that structure identities into forms that ebb and flow within (and without) the individual. Just as national symbolism helps to fix identity 'in place', so too does music or food, class, gender, the house, the kitchen, my car, my local team (all of which may or may not have allusions to an 'Iranian' way of life in the diaspora). It is here that polyvalency becomes constructive, for these different structural identities do have a form and valency that structure interactions between forms sanctioning how they 'fit' together. However, this valency is constantly prone to shifting. The 'multiple' in the concept of multiple identities is more than just multiple types of communal identity, it is about the multiple ways these identities intersect with one another to create patterns across time that are both knowable in their partial and structured manifestations, and unknowable in their totality and in their potential for change.

In terms of the geographies of these differences it is significant that between the three cities there appears to be a diasporic transnational convergence of experiences (as

Baha'is, as cultural Muslims, as Iranians, as a part of second generation 'youth cultures') alluding to a post-national world where geography is no longer important. However, it is important to note that the similarity of experiences in the diaspora for the established first generation is structured by the dominance of a geographically concentrated pre-revolutionary urban Tehran elite who now live dispersed throughout the diaspora. In addition, context does matter as the micropolitics (Sandercock, 2003; Amin, 2002) impinge in specific ways on the reproduction of the first generation experience in the second generation. Class relations are differentially reproduced and contested, music is consumed variously through restaurants and nightclubs, and football is watched and played against local, national and global backdrops. These microgeographies of the everyday show that despite the apparent lack of differentiation between the experiences of the second generation in the three cities, geography still matters.

Whilst decentring national discourses of identity, understanding how someone can be a BMW-driving, upper class, Farsi-speaking, footballer who believes in gender equality and wearing gold jewellery, runs the risk of reifying these signifying features. Through emphasising the particular the last three chapters it has not been the intention to wipe out the importance of the universal. On the contrary, by focusing on these more complex and 'local' forms it has allowed us to bring them into interaction with the dominant universalising forms, allowing us to see all of these as processual. In this chapter in particular moving beyond the intertwined religio-national discourse discussed in Chapters 6 and 7 to more complex and detailed interactions that exist in conjunction with national and religious belonging stresses the contingent nature of identity and the difficulty faced in trying to accommodate complex identities within national multiculturalisms. By drawing out these complex interrelationships that surround 'the nation' it is hoped that we can come to an appreciation of the need to better consider complex identities in multicultural discourse. The attempts through this ethnographic analysis to bring the particular into the frame of discussions of identity and to recast the universal as dynamic, whilst not leading to a 'solution', helps us to understand the possibilities for multicultural futures that evolve out of the multicultural question. It is towards this 'resolution' that the final chapter now turns.

9 CONCLUSIONS: DECENTRING THE NATION

That the 'false' are too visible will never guarantee that the 'true' are visible enough

(Etienne Balibar, in Bhabha, 1998: 31).

Multicultural policies in their various contemporary national contexts are, in general, poorly conceptualised. The contextual dominance of national discourses of belonging serve to limit multicultural discourses to discussions of the national 'us' set in opposition to the nationally configured migrant 'them'. This thesis has sought to interrogate the relationship between the nation and multiculturalism. As outlined at the beginning of Chapter 1, this thesis aims to decentre hegemonic discourses of national identity that serve to limit the potential of multiculturalism; to bring theories of multiculturalism into engagement with empirical reality in order to show how the nation limits multiculturalism; to bring national discourses of identity into engagement with other forms of identity, such as religious identity, class, gender and subcultural identities, in order to 'see the nation' as an integral part of complex discourses of identity; and finally, to produce new ways of thinking about multiculturalism to embody new directions for multicultural theory and praxis that might also play a role in arresting the political decline of multicultural policies in countries like Australia and Britain. This thesis has confirmed the importance of placing analyses of 'national cultures' at the forefront of human geographical analysis. A cultural geographical analysis grounded in an empirical study of the experiences of the second generation from an Iranian background in three field sites has underwritten discussions of the place of diversity in society, drawing theory into engagement with praxis through the interaction of the nation with its alternates. This conclusion will give an overview of the arguments developed in the thesis, highlighting how these aims have been attended to and the value of a geographical perspective, including, in some cases, the absence of geographical differentiation, in the investigation of the potentials and limitations inherent in multiculturalism.

9.1 The Multicultural Question

Multiculturalism as an idea and a policy framework is not merely a program of recognition. Despite what many detractors have said, it is also a program of inclusion and unification. The popular critiques of multiculturalism, such as that of Bissoondath (1994) and Blainey (1984), see in multiculturalism the loss of national unity. For these critics multiculturalism causes fear associated with the loss of (national) identity. However, multiculturalism should not be seen as necessarily in conflict with the nation. Rather, multiculturalism offers the opportunity to both embrace difference and to reproduce the nation. Policies of multiculturalism are implicitly tied to their national contexts through the axiomatic principle of 'unity in diversity', whereby concerns of difference are negotiated within the context of the national whole. Yet difference cannot be fully reconciled with the unitary nation. This is the focus of what Hall (2000) calls 'the multicultural question' which sets unity in diversity as the dialectical relationship between universals and particulars.

Unlike the form of the traditional Hegelian dialectic, the universal and particular dialectic is an intractable relation that can also be thought of as the relationship between modernist rationalist metanarratives and the deconstructed particularity of the postmodernist/poststructuralist critique. The universalising rules set down in a modernist framework attempt to understand the world through the generalisation of structured thought. Thus, they simplify the world as knowable and controllable and therefore (at least partially) static, immutable across time. In this discussion 'multicultural policies' can be thought of as modernist narratives of simplification. In contrast, the postmodern critique demands that we cannot know our world in its entirety as it is 'fuzzy' and subjective, dynamic and mutable, and any attempt to understand is a simplification of the reality. The dynamism and complexity of individual difference, unable to be known in its entirety, defines the postmodern multicultural individual that policy seeks to include. The multicultural question then becomes, 'how can we include the multicultural complex individual in a multicultural policy that is universally applicable across society?'. However, a policy that can be applied across society can never wholly include and account for the complexities of even one individual. Put another way, a static policy can never account for the dynamic individual. Hence in agreement with Hall it can be seen that the multicultural

question as a relation is unsolvable. Despite the intractable nature of the multicultural question it remains an important relation that merits further investigation. It is in a discussion of this 'question' that the power of a postmodern critique becomes evident through challenging the unquestioned power relations of modernist structures. Modernism breeds 'solutions', and hence policies such as multiculturalism must solve problems in order to be counted successful. However, postmodernism requires that all 'solutions' are contingent and partial. It is better to think of the multicultural question as setting up a dialectical tension that we can approach but not reconcile. This relational tension is the ongoing 'solution' of multiculturalism, more a management practice that is inherently reflexive, never fully closed, than a discrete bounded and solvable task. Hence, thinking about the relationship between policy and the individual gives us a direction to move towards, rather than a goal to achieve.

Another way of thinking of this relationship is through structure and agency. The universalising forces within society work to structure our existence whilst the individual seeks the freedom, or agency, to express the complexity of existence. Whilst much research on multiculturalism is mired in theoretical musings, the geographic emphasis of this analysis investigates theory against a multi-site empirical analysis of the experiences of two groups of second generation 'Iranians', the Baha'is and Muslims: an analysis which has allowed an in-depth investigation of how the tensions between the universal and the particular, between structure and agency, actually play themselves out in reality.

The individuals involved in this research were set in a complex network of interrelationships between structure and agency which brought their imagined Iranian identity into engagement with its alternates. The geographic and ethnographic analysis has produced a more nuanced understanding of the power relations within which the negotiations of identity and belonging have been set. Rather than expecting second generation individuals to be autonomous actors with absolute agency over the way they respond to the challenges of belonging, there is interplay between the expectations of society and the expectations of the individual which set questions of identity in a more complex matrix of interrelations.

The framing of the dialectical relationship between unity and diversity has also set the structure of this thesis. Chapter 2 dealt with the discussion of universals and particulars and the grounding of the analysis in the nation (discussed below). The methodology chapter followed, after which Chapter 4 dealt with the ‘top-down’ modernist discourses that seek to structure the form of the community to which these individuals belong. The actions of national multicultural policies and the national mainstream media limit understandings of community to discourses of national belonging, constraining the respondents to national communal forms. The next chapter, Chapter 5, presented the contextual data that positions the respondents as historically set within the migrant ‘Iranian community’, after which Chapters 6 to 8 analysed the ‘bottom-up’ ethnographic analysis. These chapters investigated the results of attempts to resist and negotiate the structuring of their positionality (as ‘Iranian’, as ‘migrants’, as ‘the second generation’). The tensions between agency and structure are played out within national discourses (Chapter 6) and beyond them (Chapter 7 and 8). It is to the dominance of national discourses that we now turn.

9.2 Multiculturalism and the Nation

The initial stance taken in this research, that individuals did not need the nation, but instead used it in an instrumental manner, whilst at the same time cherishing other more complex notions of identity (religious, ethnic, linguistic, sub-cultural, professional, etc.) as an expression of their ‘true self’, was too dismissive of the strength of prevailing discourses of national belonging. The individual is faced with an evolving set of questions about belonging that centre on the recognition of minority community status, normally constructed as a national minority set in contest with the reterritorialised national majority. As Hall states,

(We) ... have to begin with the lived complexity emerging in these diaspora communities, where so-called ‘traditional’ ways of life derived from the cultures of origin remain important to community self-definitions, but consistently operate alongside extensive daily interaction at every level, with ... mainstream social life (2000: 220).

The ‘traditional’ cultures of origin in society in late 20th Century modernity are centred on constructed national communal forms. The nation, as a political entity in

the form of the territorially bound nation-state, and as a cultural entity in the form of national identity, is continually reproduced as the dominant discourse in communal relations. As an idea, the nation is not effaced in the consideration of more complex political and cultural relations, but as Hall notes, exists concurrently with the complexity that marks everyday daily interactions. Following this, rather than take a post-national stance, positioning national identities as something to overcome in order to find some more complex 'true' self, it is more appropriate to recognise the nation as a social/cultural/political entity necessarily embedded in discussions of identity. The results of this research confirm that even after we have opened up the possibility of multiple and complex identities, the statically conceived nation continues to play a significant role within identity relations.

It is the continued hegemonic status of national discourses of identity, as structured through political and popular discourse, that constructs the context for multiculturalism, producing *national multiculturalisms* that revolve around tensions between the national 'us' and the national migrant 'them'. These national multiculturalisms are often confused with settlement and immigration policies, often appearing in the same government department, helping to attach multicultural status (i.e. diversity) to 'migrants'. Constructing a more inclusive multiculturalism that moves beyond migrancy will help to better understand difference. As Gould (2001) notes, grounding abstract universals can produce a more efficacious engagement with everyday reality. As discussed in Chapter 2, constructing a concrete universal particularises an abstract universal concept helping to ground the universal relation in a particular context. Grounding universal abstract multiculturalism as concrete universalisms in the form of national multiculturalisms aids in the contextualisation of policy by particularising the abstract universal concept of the recognition of difference to construct the recognition of difference to the nation, in the form of the constructed national majority culture. Constructing nationally grounded policy does help to bring policy closer to the experiences of the multicultural individual. However, limiting multicultural discourse to national forms of identity at the expense of other possible identifications serves to reify the boundaries of community as 'national' boundaries limiting the efficacy of multiculturalism by excluding other forms of difference from the discourse.

The recognition of national multiculturalisms makes explicit the context that dominates discussions of inclusion and tolerance. The idea of national multiculturalisms is more than a mere recognition of the different types of nationally inscribed political multiculturalisms that exist. It is recognition of the contexts of power that underlie attempts to recognise difference in society. National multiculturalisms identify difference to the nation in the form of national migrant communities that preclude other modes of difference. Hence, national multiculturalisms produce a myopic view of difference, eliding other possible categorisations, whether along class lines, or gender, or, significantly for this research, through religion. At the same time national multiculturalisms render the dominance of national discourses invisible as the nation becomes simply the only mode of being in discussions of difference. The identification of the notion of national multiculturalisms in this thesis attempts to engage with the invisible ubiquity of national discourses of belonging, drawing the nation out into the open. National multiculturalisms reflect on the situated nature of national context, explicating an important way through which we can *see* the nation within concrete discussions of the recognition and negotiation of identity and belonging. In this way, national multiculturalisms allow national communal identities to be seen as a starting point rather than an ending point in discussions of identity.

The empirical analysis confirmed the duality at the core of national multiculturalisms as concrete universalisms by highlighting both the possibilities inherent in the national context of multicultural action and the limitations inherent in a restriction of discussions to national identities. Whilst multicultural discourses have been successful in Australia and Canada (less so in Britain) in producing hyphenated spaces to express more complex national forms amongst the second generation from Iran, there has been less recognition of complex affiliations that problematise national discourses of belonging. Many second generation individuals from an Iranian background failed to recognise the possibility, at the outset, of responding to questions of societal belonging and community outside the acceptable or primary national framework. When asked what community they belonged to most relied on either belonging to the Iranian community, or else belonging to the Australian, British or Canadian community. Even when faced with the problematic status of 'Iran' in contemporary geopolitics, constructed as it is in the media and public discourse as a member of the

‘Axis of Evil’, as the home of terror, as a nuclear threat, and as a homogenous fundamentalist Muslim nation ruled by ‘evil’ clerics whose main role is the suppression of women and the press, these individuals remained within national discourses of belonging, invoking a national alternative, Persian, as a coping strategy. Persian identity with its evocative historical imaginings allowed these second generation individuals to remain embedded within national discourses whilst avoiding the negative social capital associated with Iranian-ness amongst the ‘mainstream’ in ABC.

Overcoming the extant set of power relations to unsettle or decentre the nation in questions of multiculturalism benefits from an engagement with the ‘underclass epistemic status’ of migrant groups, that is, their unquestioned collusion with repressive minority/majority relations in discourses of national belonging. By relying on Persian as a coping strategy, the ‘Iranians’ avoid the immediate tensions associated with ‘Iran’. Yet they fail to affect wider change in the power relations that render them subject to the essential nature of national stereotyping by the white national core. It is not only about Iranians being Persian, remaining within discourses of national belonging, but of those communal relations that challenge national discourses of identity. Further, true movements towards a positive acceptance of difference cannot only involve dynamism amongst the migrant ‘them’, but must involve the possibility of change in the national ‘us’ to remove the hegemonic status of acceptability built around a pure and distilled (static) national cultural essence. As Sandercock notes, any program of change in the power relations to create spaces of unity and diversity must be a collective effort on both sides of this national communitarian divide (2003: 75). Hence, there is a need to draw the nation out of this constructed static position and into dynamic engagement with its various Others (i.e. religious identity, class relations, linguistic communities, gender difference, peer groups and subcultural affiliations).

Despite the imposition of different scales under the terms of globalisation, from the personal (i.e. human rights), to the regional (e.g. the European Union), the nation as a ‘container’ remains fundamental (Lazarus, 1997: 46). It is the national community that links the community constructed ‘from above’ and the community constructed ‘from below’. Whether it is the national project of an elite or the ‘nationalitarian’

struggle from below (Deleuze and Guattari, 1988: 469-71), the nation conflates the political and emotional community into a tangible object which remains the centre of communal discourses. Through a grounded empirical analysis of the alternative communal forms to national affiliation to which the 'Iranian' second generation subscribe on an everyday basis and the way these alternate identifications both intersect and interrupt national identities it is possible to decentre the nation from this position of domination.

9.3 Complex Religious Landscapes

Through the lens of complex alternatives to national identity and their manifestations across space it is possible to see the decentring of hegemonic national discourses. Drawing dominant national discourses into engagement with other modes of belonging within a context of multiculturalism reflects the importance of taking an approach that is less post-national than extra-nationally engaged. Chapters 7 and 8 investigated the ways that non-national affiliations do not efface national belonging but instead problematise a unitary (or even a hyphenated) national identity. Under the present conditions of globalisation the socio-political hegemony of national identities has been challenged. Yet, as Leonard (2003) states in concordance with Deleuze and Guattari, globalisation does not behave in a uniform manner across time and space (see also Thrift, 2002; Hall, 1991). As a set of economic, cultural and political phenomena it transcends the national in specific ways along paths of least resistance. The transnational flows of goods, people and ideas, the presence of migrants, indigenous peoples, and nomads pass through specific 'lines of flight'. They transcend borders not in a uniform way, but instead produce isomorphisms between states and scales along which these transcendent forms travel.

Religious identity is one such isomorphism that challenges hegemonic national discourses. Both Baha'is and Muslims in the Iranian diaspora interrupt national Iranian stereotypes in specific ways. Yet these national stereotypes continue to be reproduced in public discourses, a fact that is made apparent in this research through the popular conflation of Iran and Shi'i Islam. In this context, those of Iranian background have been influenced greatly by the contemporary threats posed by the global 'War on Terror'. War can act as a "mobiliser of ethnic sentiments and national

consciousness, a centralising force in the life of the community and a provider of myths and memories for future generations” (A. D. Smith, 1993: 27). For the respondents in the Muslim cohort in this research, their Muslim identities were always described against the context of wider contemporary geopolitical inferences of the deviancy and danger of ‘fundamentalist’ Islam that is intimately intertwined with stereotypes of Iran. Their discussions of Muslim identity were reflective of the dominant discourses of representations in the ‘War on Terror’.

What is of particular interest about the so-called ‘War on Terror’ is that it is not framed as a territorially bound conflict. It is a war with no specific territorial front. When the war is being fought everywhere and anywhere all at once, there is no place for the ‘enemy’ to hide. In London, Sydney and Vancouver, the absence of a territorially bound conflict means ‘Muslims’ are drawn into the ‘territory’ of conflict as potential terrorists. For Iranians alienated from the current regime of the Iranian state, as non-practicing Muslims or as Baha’is, being from Iran is in this sense equated to being *in* Iran. Without a territory to place the ‘enemy’ within, the ‘enemy’ can be everywhere, and is embodied in, amongst others, the Iranian (Muslim) Other.

These neo-Orientalist discourses of construction and representation (see Chapter 4), particularly associated with the War on Terror, not only essentialise Islam as immutably different to the West, but also construct Iran as homogenously Islamic. At the same time these discourses construct Iran as emblematic of Islam, as a coherent ‘piece’ of neo-Orientalist discourse; a national site for Islam that feeds into discursive national difference between ‘us’ (Australians/British/Canadians) and ‘them’ (Iranians as Muslims).

As outlined in Chapter 7, cleavages exist along religious lines that problematise this unitary image of Muslim Iran and give an image of, at the very least, different ‘Irans’ and different Iranian ‘communities’. For Baha’is, their religiosity and global outlook both act to decentre the nation, in the first place by undermining essential discourses of an homogenously Muslim Iran. As a religious minority, the very existence of Baha’is from Iran challenges the popular construction of the uncomplicated Islamic Iranian landscape. Secondly, the Baha’i Faith problematises the national scale as an exclusive geopolitical container of identity. The writings of the Baha’i Faith call for

the transcendence of national belonging in favour of a global cosmopolitanism, which when embraced by all of humanity will mark an epochal change and humanity's salvation. Whilst this global interpretation is also present in Islam, of the two groups it was the Baha'is who were actively engaged with this theological position. The eschatological globalism of the Baha'is sets itself in contest with dominant national discourses, overtly decentring the nation. For several Baha'is this problematising of national belonging interrupted their imaginings of the Iranian homeland and challenged their national identity as Australians, British, or Canadians. For Baha'is, the nation has functionality as a container of everyday interactions. Yet emotional attachments to the nation are mediated by the desires for eschatological globalism setting the nation simultaneously as a barrier to global reality.

Many of the Muslim respondents saw themselves as secular, or held a 'cultural' relationship to Islam. Yet the conflation of Iran with Islam meant they still identified as Muslims in order to maintain their affective ties to their Iranian selves. Wholly alienating themselves from Islam would imply a lack of commitment to Iranian identity (in their eyes and to other 'Iranians'). For 'Muslims', their predominantly secular attitude to Islam at first may appear to preclude the relevance of discussing their 'religious' identity as a means to decentre the nation. However, their lack of religiosity is pertinent as it was sometimes overtly contrasted in discussions to stereotypes of Iran as a conservative fundamentalist Islamic country. The expression of no religion or a passive relationship to religion serves in this case to decentre the conservative Muslim homogeneity of Iranian representations.

Beyond the global problematising of Islam through the War on Terror, the status of Iranians as Muslims varied across the three cities. In Sydney, public discourses of Muslim identity have been implicated in the threat of waves of Muslim asylum seekers threatening the integrity of our national borders. In London, the British-Muslim identity as a collectivity for 'South Asians' predominantly from Bangladesh and Pakistan, and the recognition of Islamophobia and the problems of 'institutional racism', were brought into focus by the 2001 'riots' in northern England. In Vancouver, popular discourses of deviancy related to Iranian identity were less apparent. However, the proximity to the United States and its oppositional politics to Iran as a member of the 'Axis of Evil' particularly in the post '9/11' environment was

recognised as a source of tension. Whilst the three cities had contextually different relationships to Iranians as Muslims, there was a consistency in the construction of the essential Iranian Muslim stereotype that could be tied to the popularisation of a pan-Islamic threat in the West. This constructed religious congruency structured perceptions of Iranian-ness from the outside, thus challenging the second generation to explain their positionality relative to the stereotype. How the religious identities of the respondents problematised a homogenously Islamic Iran was remarkably similar across the three cities, despite being driven by specific contextualised discussions in each city site.

Yet there was a degree of differentiation within and across the religious groups reflected in the responses to racism against 'Muslims' in all three cities. Those who saw themselves as 'cultural Muslims', with a relatively uninvolved and somewhat non-religious relationship to Islam, expressed a degree of agency in the face of racism in order to interrupt the preferred meaning of racist acts. For them, attacks on Muslims were 'not about them' as they were not 'those kinds of Muslims'. Similarly, the Baha'is extricated themselves from the implications of racism through the conflation of race with religion whereby racism directed towards Iranians is interpreted as against Muslim Iranians. Finally, practising Muslims felt the impacts of racism more directly as the intended focus of these racist acts. These responses were not clearly differentiated and there was a degree of ambivalence and fragmentation surrounding the impact of racism, which all the respondents recognised as having increased since '9/11'. Yet the value in the focus on racism is that it highlights that not only was there differentiation between the Baha'is and the 'Muslims' but also within these groups, all of which unsettles the religious stereotype of Iranians as Muslims, which in turn decentres the monolithic national stereotype of Islamic Iran.

9.4 Alternative Identities

Beyond the tensions between religious and national identities, other experiences and affiliations can, and do, impact on the way individuals think and feel about themselves. Additionally, the different socio-political contexts against which these musings over identity are set contribute significantly to producing distinct, yet also similar, experiences in the three different cities.

The aspirational ideals amongst many first generation Iranian migrants produce distinctive spatial and social intersections that are partially reproduced in, and partially contested by, the second generation, that centre on class separations. Most ethnographic analyses in geography (and beyond) focus on the relatively poor and powerless leaving “in the shade huge parts of the processes that human geographers aim to understand” (Cloke *et al.*, 2001: 193). A distinctive feature of this research is the dominant ‘upper class’ aspirations of Iranian migrants (and their children). Migrants from Iran come from both the highly educated mobile middle to upper classes and from the unskilled lower socio-economic sector, as both landed immigrants and refugees. The majority of the respondents in this analysis came from an urban middle to upper class background with their parents living in Tehran prior to emigration.¹⁵⁰ The parents of many had taken advantage of their social and financial mobility as educated professionals to leave Iran in the period immediately following the revolution with others leaving during the Iran-Iraq war due to the threat of conscription or their increasing persecution. In all three cities attempts to emulate prior class positions fed an aspirational intraurban mobility that saw many moving into (or aspiring to move into) higher socio-economic areas over time. The preponderance of Iranian families in the northern suburbs of Sydney and Vancouver, and in and around Kensington and Knightsbridge in London, reflected the importance of class distinction. Class relations transcend national difference with the parents of respondents portrayed directly and indirectly by their children as sometimes closer to their (white) ABC class cohort than to newer arrivals of ‘lower class’ Iranians who were often embodied as a threat. For the second generation, some described their desires to live in these upper class areas and maintain or achieve a lifestyle similar to their parents. A key to this class reproduction was the emphasis on tertiary education in particular fields, such as medicine, dentistry, law or engineering, which held a high degree of social capital amongst other, mainly first generation Iranians. However, others of the second generation from both a Muslim and Baha’i background viewed their parents’ ‘obsession’ with status in a negative light, professing in themselves a more egalitarian view.

¹⁵⁰ See Appendix 3.

Class distinctions resulted in both socio-economic separation (spatially figured through living in more expensive suburbs) and separation through temporal rights based loosely on the length of time since immigration. New arrivals were often constructed by many respondents as 'Fresh off the Boat' ('FOBs'), implying that these newer arrivals were more likely to be less wealthy and less capable of behaving in a 'suitable manner'. FOBs were seen as a threat, with some respondents talking of their parents' warnings against 'hanging around' with them. These attitudes to class separation were found across both religious cohorts, although the Baha'is, with their particular patterns of urban settlement driven by pioneering, were less likely to manifest this separation spatially. Yet even here, when Baha'is moved to areas to help spread the Baha'i institutional form, they often returned to areas with large concentrations of Iranian Baha'is such as St Ives in Sydney, or North Vancouver in Vancouver. In London, the pre-existing class separations, and the fact that the 'Iranian community' pre-dated the revolution, saw a clearer realisation of spatial class differences, with the aspiration to live in Kensington/Knightsbridge sometimes seen as economically unrealistic. These class relations can then be seen to cross national boundaries of separation between the ABC 'us' and the Iranian 'them'. However, it would be inadequate to claim that these class relations are 'ethnically neutral'. Whilst wealth, profession and social status afforded a degree of social mobility, this always needed to be seen within a context of wider relations of race and inequality normalised along national lines and differentially contextualised in each of the three cities.

Music events and club nights were other examples of communal forms that transcended the national form with the appeal to a 'Middle Eastern' regional musical 'tradition' centred on Persian and Arab music becoming the focus of Persian club nights, particularly in London. These events and the dancing and music associated with them represent both a subcultural communal form serving to partially challenge national delineation through ties to wider 'clubbing culture', and a celebration of national cultural identity that often centres on special days of celebration in the Iranian calendar, such as *Norooz*.

As both the Iranian national game and the 'world game', football has become an important locus for many of the second generation, particularly young males. These

'football communities', as spectators and as players, also have fragmented relationships with the nation. As supporters, many spoke of the reverence with which they held the Iranian national football team, going to great lengths to watch matches live via satellite, particularly the qualifying matches for the World Cup. The depth of support for the 'national team' often belied all other expressions of the lack of affective ties to 'Iranian-ness', helping to emphasise the fluidity around identity; a product of the dynamic interrelations of agency, structure and enduring ethnic belonging (as a combination of the two). As players, several were involved in teams made up of 'Iranians', playing both informally and in organised competitions. Yet, as supporters and as players, these individuals were also implicated in wider fraternities of football sharing common ideals and desires with other footballers, from their local competitions to around the world. Playing football, whilst being seen as important for 'Iranians', was not exclusively Iranian, and those who played with teams of non-Iranians recognised that the important thing was to be playing football, rather than taking part in an Iranian cultural pastime.

The gender bias towards men in football spectating and playing was one aspect of gender specification that also cross-cut other communal affiliations. Women, particularly from the first generation, were often presented as the custodians of Iranian cultural maintenance. This was more apparent in Muslim households than in Baha'i households, with second generation Baha'is (both male and female) more likely to be involved in the promotion of equality through religion that was at odds with specific gender roles. However, both cohorts, in all three cities described the desires of their mothers that they maintain ties to language. In a similar manner, whilst men from the first generation were generally not seen by their children as promoting ties to Iran as much as women, some sought to instil the intellectual sensitivities of 'Iranian manhood', centred on Persian classical poetry and philosophy. In the eyes of some of the second generation this separated Iranian men from Australians/Britons/Canadians. This national specificity was interrupted by other gender expectations, such as the explicit gendering of domestic space, with women 'in the kitchen' and through (male and female) expectations of feminine beauty. These gender roles transcend national boundaries, working to place Iranian women and men within wider discourses of gender relations.

These alternate identities, from religion to class, gender and communities of music and football do not exist exclusive of national identity. Rather than thinking of these as diametrically opposed it is best to think of them as in dynamic interaction, all acting as isomorphisms, rising to prominence in particular instances as convergences of context demand. By drawing on these alternates through an empirical analysis we can catch a glimpse of the complexity that underscores identity relations, helping to draw the nation into dynamic engagement with its alternates.

9.5 Placing the Second Generation

As was discussed in Chapter 2, many researchers have focused on the processes of cross-generational assimilation and integration, through changes in educational attainment, the continuity of endogamy, the retention of ‘migrant’ languages, the economic success of subsequent generations as markers of change and ultimate inclusion in the wider national community into which the ‘migrant community’ is supposed to assimilate. These studies ultimately focus on the loss of cultural markers as individuals merge with a wider ‘national’ cultural community. Most fail to question the validity of the (white/male) ‘centre’, failing to explicate beyond the most essentialised features (e.g. the uptake of English language), just what it is that defines the ‘national community’ into which ‘migrants’ are meant to integrate/assimilate. This general failure by many studies to emphasise the dynamic relationships surrounding the central national identity, the whiteness at the centre, leaves the second, and successive, generations on a progressive path to assimilation into the ossified ‘national culture/identity/ethnicity’. This developmentalist reductionist paradigm does not leave room for a fuller understanding of the ebb and flow of relationships that surround the affiliation to national identity/ies, demanding as it does that the second generation are *exclusively* on the path to integration, to becoming ‘Australian’, ‘Canadian’, or ‘British’, no matter how we define these identities.

The positionality of the second generation between the nation of residence and the ‘homeland’ renders them interstitial actors in discourses of national belonging. One aim of this research has been to unsettle this interstitiality and to locate a ‘place’ for the second generation. Producing a place for the second generation works to normalise their positionality as tangible and knowable, a second generation ‘culture’

that is no longer 'in-between'. This runs the risk that, instead of destabilising the nation, the recognition of second generation interstitiality may be essentialised as just another 'culture', an addendum to national discourses of belonging. This is one way of thinking about hyphenated identities, the Iranian-Australian/British/Canadian identity that have become differentially manifest through multicultural policy. Hyphenated identities are an extension of the recognition of unitary national identities, recognising as they do the syncretism of two national cultures to form a hybrid 'third'. However, this discourse of inclusion is only partial as hyphenation remains embedded within national discourses of belonging and hence subject to subordination in extant relations of power; a bastard subaltern whose hybridity is its ontological weakness.

Rather than think of this analysis as purely seeking a place for the second generation, a space for the children of migrants to express their unique identities which is safe from the ravages of national discourses of belonging, this analysis of second generation positionality needs to be seen as an engagement with the interstitiality of the individual. It is not a case of transcending hybridity in order to fix the second generation in place, but of investigating the possibilities inherent in their apparent 'in-between-ness', and through this to reflect on the 'in-between-ness' of everyone in society regardless of their 'national' identity. The second generation are not a discrete entity marginalised by their position in-between nations. Rather, they are involved in complex negotiations with and beyond national identities that echo the negotiations of other individuals in society. Their position 'outside' national discourses merely makes their interstitiality more visible, both to themselves and to others. Whilst it has not been explicitly shown in this thesis, it is fair to say that ultimately we are all interstitial, involved in an ongoing negotiation of our dynamic place in society.

This analysis allowed the second generation some investigation of their own positionality through the visual ethnographic exercise. By taking photographs, and reflecting on the decisions behind these expressions of everyday identity, the second generation took part in the productive examination of their legitimate place in society, that may be contingent, but should not be thought of as 'between' other legitimacies, and hence of subordinate value.

Constructing a place for the second generation challenges the boundaries of contemporary multicultural praxis. In a rationalist developmentalist paradigm the second generation are generally excluded from the policies of multiculturalism by virtue of their positionality beyond 'the migrant'. By setting the second generation on the 'path to inclusion' contemporary national multicultural policies insist that the second generation need no support in these processes, because the progression is 'natural'. As mentioned above, multicultural policies are often equated in popular and political understanding with policies of settlement. For example, the funding of 'settlement services' such as language training and employment and housing referral services forms the core of multicultural service delivery in all three national sites officially limiting questions of the recognition of difference to the first few years of migrant settlement and therefore precluding the second, and subsequent, generations. Constructing an active place for the second generation challenges the extent of multicultural services and questions what is 'the migrant' and when does somebody stop being 'the migrant'. Even in the Vancouver case, where Canadian/British Columbian multiculturalism is explicitly linked to visible minorities and issues of race, taking it beyond the first generation, the structure of policy serves to reify difference between 'the visible' migrants and, by implication, the invisible (white) Canadians, replacing their in-between-ness with the essential character of the migrant national.

Further research with other second generation groups, and groups of disadvantage, such as along lines of gender, ability or sexuality, normalised as outside the white/male/able bodied 'core', will highlight their positionality with respect to the principles of multiculturalism, further challenging the limits of multicultural praxis to the question of inclusion of nationally constituted migrant groups.

9.6 Geographies of the Iranian Diaspora

Diasporas are dynamic, a fact supported by the example of the 'Iranian diaspora' which has undergone significant change since the late 1990s. The 'exile' of Iranians from Iran (Naficy, 1993) and the long-distance nationalism (Anderson, 1983; Skrbis, 1999) that resulted up until the mid-1990s constructed a shared transnational relationship between the diaspora centres, based on the lack of access to the

homeland. Iranians were all exiles and exile was a shared relationship that crossed the boundaries of ethnic and religious groups. However, since the ascension to power of the more moderate Khatami in 1997, there has been a partial rapprochement with the Iranian diaspora, particularly for those of Muslim background. Whilst barriers are still present, such as the threat of conscription for young men, many of the second generation Muslims in this study had recently undertaken, or intended to in the near future, the return journey to visit the Iran that was the subject of their long-distance imaginings. Yet for others the barriers to return remain. Baha'is continue to be persecuted as apostates in Iran and their exile remains indefinitely. Many I spoke with would not even consider the possibility of return under the theocracy. The act of return, where it is available, interrupts Naficy's exile emphasising the segmentation of the 'Iranian diaspora' (Werbner, 2000), particularly along religious lines. It is not enough to talk of a unifying Iranian exile under the present conditions, with some able to transcend the barriers of revolutionary Iran for the first time in their lives whilst others remain excluded.

In each city, the paucity of distinctive formal institutions for the Iranian communities appeared initially to reflect a lack of communal interaction. However, this lack of formal relationships and visible places of interaction belies the reality of a dense network of informal relations (Bousetta, 2000) centred on the circuit of families involved in *mehmuni*. These relatively regular group gatherings imbued with the requirements of reciprocity are key sites of intergenerational interaction and these occasions allow the reproduction of specific 'Iranian' cultural traits in the second generation. Several spoke of their need to maintain language skills in order to talk to older generations at these events. Even though these events became less important for many of the respondents, both Baha'i and Muslim alike, as they got older and more independent, they were still recognised as places where Iranian food and music were consumed with women and men taking traditional gender roles. The more cosmopolitan Baha'is were less likely to take part in exclusively Iranian activities such as *mehmuni*, although this was not exclusively the case.

One discrete challenge to this geographic analysis was the lack of differentiation on many levels between the experiences of Baha'is and Muslims in SVL. This similarity of experience can in part be understood through their place as the second generation.

Living at a physical and temporal distance from Iran has led to a diasporic convergence as the grounded specificity of first generation nostalgia based on their local experiences in the homeland are lost to the dominance of a more generic national imagining amongst the second generation. In addition, as discussed, the majority of the respondents in this research were from families who emigrated from the elites living in pre-revolutionary Tehran, producing a similarity of experience which cannot be distanced from their upbringing in the diaspora and their family history in Iran.

There was some interaction between the two religious groups in all three cities as individuals nurtured complex interrelationships. However, for many of the respondents the Iranian Other, whether they were Muslim or Baha'i, living in their own city were farther away in terms of social relations than many of their co-religionists in other cities in the Iranian diaspora. Through email and transnational mobility many respondents had developed transnational links with other Iranians in the global diaspora(s). For both groups, ties with extended family often led to visits within the diaspora. However, for the Baha'is, local, national and transnational institutions facilitated a high degree of mobility which often led to the cultivating of relationships with other Baha'i Iranians in other countries, or on other continents. The 'year of service' and the emphasis on pursuing religious capital through 'pioneering', also ensured the Baha'is were focused 'outwards' even when operating at the very local.

Across different scales and within and across the different cities of the Iranian diaspora(s), the second generation are enmeshed within complex interrelationships that once again challenge simplistic national communal forms. The value of this multi-site, multi-scale geographic analysis has been in the opportunity to uncover some of these complex interactions that variously support and challenge national imaginings destabilising their interstitial place as one of 'becoming' a productive national, and thereby dispelling some of the simplistic notions about community, identity and assimilation. On the surface, what this analysis shows is that geography sometimes matters. The differential experiences across SVL tell us place is important in deriving context. However, it is the similarities across the three cities that advocates of globalisation may claim points to the loss of geographic specificity. Yet,

even the transnational relationships in this analysis, the harbingers of post-national discussions of the irrelevance of place, are enmeshed in local transactions, such as the power of 'the return' amongst the second generation to (re)invigorate transnational connections. Discourses that claim geography no longer matters in an era of globalisation overly rely on the overcoming of the dominance of national discourses of belonging rather than seeing in transnational relations the inherent complicity of relations at multiple scales.

9.7 *Multiculturalism and the Geography of Fear*

As has been discussed, a potent popular critique of multiculturalism is that it engenders a fear of loss. In 'All for Australia' (1984), Blainey sought to rally 'Australian society' in the face of the divisive threat of multiculturalism. Birrell (2003) warns of the threat inherent in the spatial concentration of ethnic minorities, of 'ghetto' formation, that is a partial product of the recognition of migrant rights. Bissoondath's assimilationist appeal (1994) claims that multiculturalism causes an unnecessary destabilisation of national identity and that it fosters fear and division. Lord Tebbit, the originator of the 'cricket test' for national loyalty, calls for the monitoring of the (ever)presence of multiculturalism highlighting the fears that the unsettling powers of multiculturalism hold for racists and nationalists alike. This is because whilst multiculturalism is many things, it is primarily an 'interruptive rhetoric' (Werbner, 2003: 54) that destabilises the false hegemony of 'the nation' pointing to the complex cultural and ethnic formations that exist within the political community (see also Bhabha, 1994a).

The arguments of all of these critics, despite their very different politics and positionalities, derive from one assumption: that multiculturalism *causes* fear, and hence to remove multiculturalism would remove the fear of loss of national integrity. However, multiculturalism is a program for the recognition of difference. Removing the recognition of difference equates to returning to the already unsuccessful assimilationist policies where everyone had to be 'the same', and no difference from the national character was recognised or acceptable. Hence to remove fear, these critics claim, we must return to a static and secure national identity that is impermeable to change. It is the fear of change that difference implies that becomes

the root, and to alleviate fear we need to return to a static and stationary national essence. However, there is no static essence that precludes change, and hence the fear of change. As history attests, in the absence of the recognition of migrant difference, some other difference makes itself apparent. As Balibar implies in the quote at the beginning of this conclusion, no matter how we 'guarantee' the visibility of the 'true' national by erasing the Other, the very 'truth' of identity demands an Other against which it is measured. Constructing an imaginary essential identity that is suddenly brought into dynamic threat by multiculturalism does not alter the fact that change is implicit, and therefore fear of change always has the potential to exist. What these critics of multiculturalism actually reflect is that fear is everywhere in potentiality and some are able to deploy fear (i.e. the fear of multiculturalism, the fear of migrant Others) in order to preserve power.

In response to the critics, multiculturalism does produce the recognition of change and hence engages with uncertainty. Decentering the nation through an engagement with national identity as a mutable subject, one actor amongst many in identity relations, not only produces an insecurity over national identity, it produces the possibility that national identity is not hegemonic, that it is not the only way to describe ourselves in our everyday interactions. That is, it not only produces the potential for a destructive fear (change brings loss), but also for a productive fear (change brings possibility) (Hage, 2003). Multiculturalism as a policy for the recognition of difference highlights the change inherent in the deterritorialisation that occurs due to the presence of the Other. The reterritorialisation that results from this recognition presents the opportunity to engage with fear as productive rather than purely destructive. One way multiculturalism can help to alleviate the destructive nature of fear is to draw upon the commonalities that exist across the multiple boundaries of difference. According to Sandercock (2003), this can be achieved through the empowered political action of micro-publics. However valuable Sandercock's geographical engagement with fear through multiculturalism is, it suffers from the call to elide the 'ethnic' component of identity to produce an ethnically-neutral political belonging. Her position of ethnic neutrality, whilst conveniently attending to both the divisive nature of 'ethnic tensions' and the ethnic focus of popular critiques of multiculturalism, is unrealistic. As Kymlicka (1995) notes, there is no ethnically neutral civic reality.

It is through drawing on just those things that Sandercock seeks to deny – the power relations and political economies tied to the ‘ethnicity’ of religion, race, language, class, gender, the music we listen to, the food we eat, the football teams we support, our professional affiliations, and other sub-cultural ascriptions – differences that map unevenly onto society and cross many boundaries of the essentialised nation, that we can bring the nation as ethnic and political actor into a dynamic relationship with ideas of difference. Seeing the nation, through an active national multiculturalism, is the true ‘agonistic’ politics (Amin, 2002), where the perpetual engagement with difference is mapped through the problematic ideas of an ethnic national belonging. Again, like Sandercock, I recognise that this does not give us any simple answers, but I feel that we need to engage with the nation as both an ethnic and political identity within discussions of difference in order to gain some foothold on the fear associated with the ‘loss of national identity’.

9.8 Conclusion: Multicultural Futures

Beyond a scattering of research on the successes and failures of policies of multiculturalism, there has been a lack of involvement in the discussions of multiculturalism by geographers (though exceptions include Amin, 2002; K. Anderson, 2000; Bonnett, 1993, 1997; Dunn, 1998; Kobayashi, 1993, 1999; Mahtani, 2002). There has been no attempt to date in geography to undertake an empirically grounded ethnographic analysis in order to interrogate the theoretical. This thesis attempts to fill this shortfall, tying the complex communal affiliations of the children of Iranian migrants in Sydney, Vancouver and London into theoretical discussions of the future for the discourse of multiculturalism. The mix of theory and empirical analysis has allowed the comparative geographic investigation of how national discourses of belonging create a context for multiculturalism and also structure barriers to greater recognition of difference.

A purely empirical thesis runs the risk of showing complexity for its own sake, whilst a purely theoretical thesis points to ‘complexity’ without revealing the particular relations that render something complex. An engagement with both theory and empirics, guided by the dialectic of unity and diversity as laid out in Hall’s multicultural question, has detailed a possible approach to a multicultural future that

is not limited by the dominance of national discourses of identity. Hall's position that the strength and weakness of multiculturalism is in the irreconcilable dialectic relationship between the universal and the particular is more than evident in this context. Moreover, what this thesis demonstrates is an empirical engagement that is missing from Hall's analysis that supports the contention that the multicultural question can aid in finding a way to negotiate our complex realities whilst at the same time engender a more inclusive society for all.

The complex communal forms in which the children of Iranian migrants are involved across time and space are understood primarily by others through the lens of discourses of nationhood. Yet in a world embodied by difference and temporal dynamism to claim nations have an essential static character is disingenuous. The empirical analysis has illustrated how discourses of national identity limit the potential of multiculturalism(s). For the particular case of the second generation from Iran, their religion (or lack of it) was shown to be a suitable point of departure for the empirical decentring of the Iranian national stereotype. This, in turn, supported the engagement with other isomorphisms, or 'lines of flight', such as class, gender and subcultural identities, that cross and unsettle unitary notions of Iranian national belonging. The strength of the empirical analysis has been its power to demonstrate how empirical complexity interacts with the hegemony of the nation. It is an engagement with complexity, rather than a discussion of postmodern identities that uses complexity as a 'safety net' (Laurier and Philo, 2003: 1055, in Cloke *et al.*, 2001: 190).

Throughout this research I have focused on the mutability of constructed national migrant identities. However, drawing 'migrant' national identities into engagement with alternate categorisations not only serves to decentre the dominance of national discourses of migrant belonging, the national 'them', but it also in turn points to the decentring of the national 'us'. Whilst this thesis has not directly dealt with the mutability of core white identities, the analysis suggests this. Since the outset of this research I have constantly experienced the question, 'Why Iranians?'. Of the myriad reasons I have put forward in response to this question it bears mentioning one in particular at this stage: that this research holds as much relevance for 'Australian' (and 'Canadian', and 'British') identity as it does for 'Iranian'. The concentration in

the empirical analysis on the challenges to the Iranian stereotype not only highlights the mutability of conceptions of 'Iran' and the 'Iranian migrant community' but alludes to the mutability of the national whiteness at the centre of a static Australian (/Canadian/British) stereotype. The second generation, constructed as interstitial actors through dominant discourses of national belonging, suggest the decentring of both Iranian and Australian (Canadian and British/English) dominant constructions of identity. It is not only about 'their' difference, but also about 'our' difference. Whilst the ultimate mutability of the core whiteness of the migrant receiving nations of Australia, Canada, and Britain can only be implied by these results, an empirical confirmation of this would be a natural extension of this research.

Ash Amin (2002) discusses the necessity of investigating the 'micropolitics of everyday social contact and encounter' in order to understand the empirical reality of these 'micropublics' as "fragile and temporary settlements springing from the vibrant clash of an empowered and democratic public, rather than as the product of policy fixes and community cohesion or consensus" (2002: 960). His warning calls for a move away from the prescriptive policy realm into the reality of the banal and everyday experience. The present ethnographic analysis, both through interviewing and the visual ethnographic analysis based around the photographs of respondents, has attempted to gain some insight into the mundane interactions of the everyday communities of the second generation. Whilst this task itself is difficult, and in this thesis certainly incomplete, I agree with Amin on the need to engage with the everyday. Entering into the micro geographies of everyday existence has been as important in this analysis as the cross-comparative geographic analysis at the macro (inter-national) level. Yet attention to micro geographies as advocated by Amin is not enough on its own. There continues to be a need to somehow link this empirical research to policy, to investigate both the question of unity as a universal as well as diversity as a particular in order to fully understand not just the everyday, but also the limitations implicit and explicit in the policies and processes that seek to structure reality. By attending to the multicultural question and attempting to decentre the nation in discourses of multiculturalism this thesis lays the groundwork for future thinking about policy development that engages with these geographies at different scales,

This has not been a call to rally around communitarian notions in order to re-invigorate a 'new Multiculturalism' for the 21st century. Rather, it has been an attempt to become more aware of the assumptions inherent in the multicultural polity as expressed through the political visions of Western liberal democracies of the late 20th century, and therefore to understand better how models built upon the shoulders of nationalism are ultimately inadequate to deal with the recognition of diversity (in toto) within the national border. As long as multiculturalism continues to rely on ethnic absolutism, or culturalism, with its central reliance on the recognition of difference from the pre-existing national identity, we will be stuck in Foucault's (1979) 'incitement to discourse' where the reliance upon the idea of the nation-state as the context for multiculturalism forms its basic weakness, as ultimately the nation, 'yours' and 'ours', cannot be shifted from its dominant position in the ideas of inclusion. In this thesis, the strength of a geographical empirical analysis has been combined with the explanatory power of 'national multiculturalisms' as concrete universals to better understand the link between theory and the empirical, to set down an ideological direction for multiculturalism, rather than a 'solution-based' mentality, that may promote a productive sense of change embodied through everyday complex interrelations. Understanding the national contexts and limitations of multiculturalism has implications for policy. Yet this analysis has avoided taking a prescriptive stance. The differential realities uncovered in the three cities highlight the open-ended nature which precludes a purely prescriptive response. What this research does do is provide a direction for a more comprehensive multicultural implementation that we can 'work towards'. A multicultural future is one where the pragmatic closure of the multicultural question is not the goal, rather recognition of the *ongoing process* of seeking an ideological closure, the management of the multicultural question, as the dynamic reality in which we exist. It is a future where we need to interrogate the 'whiteness' that is the hidden context of attempts to understand difference.

The empirical analysis of the Iranian case shows the importance of national context at the same time as the limitations of the reliance on national discourses. Whilst the nation is important, it is not exclusively so. However, this research is not post-national and the continued calls to 'move beyond' the nation reflect a desire to bring the differential national contexts into engagement with the complexity of dynamic reality. The empirical analysis brings the nation into a greater degree of contingent relational

contact with the other communal forms, to highlight that whilst everything is dynamic and interstitial, there remains a degree of fixity; that there is unity in diversity.

Through the case study of the second generation Muslim and Baha'is from an Iranian background in Sydney, London and Vancouver we have been able to see with more clarity how we can move towards a reform and reinvigoration of multicultural policy that better takes into account its grounding in national contexts in order to guide policy towards a multicultural future framed both *through* the nation and *beyond* the nation, less post-national as extra-nationally engaged.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Phase 1 Questionnaire

Semi-Structured Interview Questions - draft 5

Thank you for participating in this study. The following interview is loosely structured around a list of questions, and I would just like to remind you that you do not have to answer any questions you don't wish to. In addition, you can discontinue the interview at any time as set out in the consent and information forms.

This work is set in three countries and relates to what I have called several ethno-religious groups so a lot of the questions are quite general. Please forgive any ambiguities that may arise and please don't hesitate to ask for clarification if you need it.

There are several terms used in this interview that I should define at the outset.

Refugee - someone who is accepted into Britain /Australia/Canada under the UN 1951 Convention for Refugees.

Asylum seeker/refugee claimant - someone who is in the process of applying for refugee status. First you are an asylum seeker and then you become a refugee under the law.

New arrival - a migrant who has arrived in Britain /Australia/ Canada. They can be from any category or stream of immigration - humanitarian (asylum seeker, refugee), family reunion, business, temporary or visitor.

Second generation - the children of migrants who were either born here or were born overseas and came here before their tenth birthday and have spent at least half their life in Britain/Canada/Australia.

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

1. What is your name?
2. How old are you?
3. Where were you born?
 - 3.1. If you were born outside Britain/Australia/Canada, when did you arrive in Britain/Australia/Canada?
4. Where do you live?
5. Have you always lived there?
 - 5.1. Where did you live before?
6. Who lives in the family home?

7. Why did your family choose to live in this/these place(s)?
8. Where do most families from Iran live in London/Sydney/Vancouver?
9. Did your family know anyone in London/Sydney/Vancouver before they arrived here?
 - 9.1.1. Where do they know these people from?
10. Where did you go to school?
11. How much education have you received?
 - 11.1. Do you wish to complete more education in the future?
12. What type of work do you do?
13. Why did you choose this type of employment?
14. Where were your parents born?
15. Do they have British/Australian/Canadian Citizenship?
16. When did your parents arrive in Britain/Australia/Canada?
17. Are you single or married?
18. Do you have any brothers or sisters?
 - 18.1. How old are they?
 - 18.2. Where do they live?
 - 18.3. What do they do?
 - 18.4. How much schooling did they receive?

THE STRUCTURE OF THE COMMUNITY

19. Do you attend any events, like dances, or go to clubs/pubs, or religious events or festivals, where there are other people from Iran or their children?
20. Do you use, attend, or are you a member of, any organisations where there are other people from Iran or their children, such as religious organisations (church/mosque/temple), sporting clubs, university or school organisations, government or non-government agencies?
21. How many people go to these events/organisations?
 - 21.1. Are they all or mostly people from Iran or their children?
22. Why do you go to/attend these events/organisations?
23. Are these events/organisations good sources of information about your history (non-specific) ?

* discussion

24. How important do you think these events/organisations are as places of information about Iran (specific) * ?
25. What events/organisations do the other members of your family attend, or are members of?
26. Do you feel any pressure to join any organisations?
26.1 Is this the same for other second generation individuals?
27. Which people from Iran living in London/Sydney/Vancouver wouldn't attend the events/organisations that you attend?
28. Are there any new arrivals, such as new migrants or refugees, involved in these events/organisations?
29. How do you feel the events/organisations and their established members respond to new members, particularly new arrivals?
30. Do you think there is a group, or groups, to which you belong that could be called a community?
31. Do you prefer to use the term Iranian or Persian to describe the community here and the country your parents came from?
31.1 Do you prefer to use the term British or English to describe your sense of belonging to the wider community.
32. Which of the following is the most appropriate way you think of yourself:
 Iranian Iranian-British/English British/English-Iranian British/English
 Iranian Iranian-Australian Australian-Iranian Australian
 Iranian Iranian-Canadian Canadian-Iranian Canadian
- 32.1 Does this change depending on your situation and who you are with, e.g. at work, school, family?
34. Who are part of these groups or communities and who are not part of these groups?
35. Do you feel that you are part of different groups at different times and with different people? Explain.

MIGRATION AND REFUGEE ISSUES

36. Do you know what led your family to migrate?
37. What made your family select Britain/Canada/Australia?
37.1 Was Britain/Canada/Australia your family's first choice?

* discussion

38. Do you know what migration stream your parents arrived under? Was it as a skilled migrant (under the points system), through family reunion or as an asylum seeker/refugee claimant or refugee?
39. Did they receive any help from the government?
40. Did individuals or organisations, such as friends/family or religious organisations, give your family any help?
41. Are there any difficulties or obstructions facing new migrants as they try to enter Britain/Canada/Australia?
42. Is it more difficult to migrate to Britain/Canada/Australia now than in the past? Why would his be so?
43. Is the situation facing new migrants once they enter Britain/Canada/Australia different to the way it was in the past?
- 43.1 Is the situation facing Iranian migrants the same as for other migrant groups entering Britain/Canada/Australia?
44. Did you or anyone you know enter Britain/Canada/Australia as an asylum seeker/refugee claimant or as a refugee? When?
- 44.1 Did your/their experience differ from other migrant experiences?
45. How do your parents and other first generation migrants feel about new migrants and refugees?
- 45.1 Is this different to how you and your friends feel about new migrants and refugees?
46. Are there differences in the way the different organisations within the communities think about and respond to new migrants?

LINKS WITH THE HOMELAND

47. Have you ever been to Iran?
48. Would you like to go to Iran in the future?
- 48.1 Is there anything stopping you going to Iran now or in the future?
49. How important is it that you maintain links with Iran?
50. Is the homeland something that other children of migrants you know think about?
51. Have you communicated by email or via chat rooms with people in Iran?
52. Have you communicated by email or via chat rooms with people from Iran in other cities or countries? Where?
53. How important is the internet for you as a way to learn about Iran?
- 53.1 Does it bring you closer to the culture and ideas?

54. Can you speak and/or read and write Farsi/Persian/Armenian?
 54.1 Would you like to learn to speak and/or read and write Farsi/Persian/Armenian?
55. On a scale from 1 to 10, how would you rate your speaking and reading/writing of Farsi/Persian/Armenian?
57. With whom do you speak Farsi/Persian/Armenian?
58. Have you spoken with any recent new arrivals from Iran about Iran?
 58.1 What did they have to say?
 58.2 Was this what you expected?
59. Have you traveled to any other countries besides Iran and did you make contact with any Iranian people there?

PEERS AND MARRIAGE PARTNERS

60. Do you discuss Iran with your friends?
61. Describe your group(s) of friends?
62. What do your friends think about Iran?
63. Do your parents think there are people who are unsuitable as friends? Why?
 63.1 Do you agree?
 63.2 Is there any type of person you would not be friends with?
64. Do any of your friends talk about new arrivals?
 64.1 What do they say?
 64.2 Do they talk about the 'refugee problem'?
 64.3 What do you think about what they say?
65. (If single) Do you want to get married in the future?
 65.1 Is there any particular person that your parents would like you to marry?
 65.2 Is there any particular person or persons you would not think you would marry in the future?
 65.3 Would you travel to find a marriage partner?
 65.4 Where would you go?
 65.5 Would your parents be pleased if you chose to do this?

THE FAMILY AND EXPECTATIONS

66. Beyond marriage, are there any cultural or religious expectations that your parents would like you to consider?
 66.1 How important are these ideas to you and your parents?
67. Have your parents influenced any of the choices you have made regarding work and education?

68. Do you feel any obligation to be involved with people from Iran due to the wishes of your parents?
69. Do you and your family take part in *mehmuni* (reciprocal family visits)?
70. Do you feel the same way about Iran as your parents do?
- 70.1 Do you think this is a similar situation for other second generation people you know?
- 70.2 How do your ideas about Iran differ from your parents?

MEDIA CONSUMPTION AND REFUGEE ISSUES

71. Do you read the English language newspapers?
- 71.1 Which ones?
- 71.2 How regularly?
72. Do you read the Farsi/Persian/Armenian newspapers?
- 72.1 Which ones?
- 72.2 How regularly?
73. Do you watch the news on television?
- 73.1 Which channels?
- 73.2 How regularly?
74. Do you listen to the news on the radio or internet?
- 74.1 Which channels/sites?
- 74.2 How regularly?
75. What is your opinion of stories about refugees and migrants as reported in the various media?
- 75.1 Do you think these stories reflect the truth?
- 75.2 Are these stories positive or negative?
- 75.3 Are stories about migrants different in the different media?
- 75.4 Are refugees treated differently than other migrants in the media?
- 75a Has the media's attitude changed towards Iran and the people from Iran since the terrorist attacks on Sept. 11th 2001?
- 75a.1 Has the wider public's attitude towards Iran and the people from Iran changed since the terrorist attacks on Sept. 11th 2001?
- 75a.2 Have you experienced racism due to these attitudes?
76. How many refugees do you think Britain/Canada/Australia processed last year?
- 76.1 Do you think this number has increased or decreased over the last few years?
- 76.2 Has this change been large or small?
77. Do you think that there are too many refugees being allowed into Britain/Canada/Australia?

78. Which countries are the source of the most asylum seekers/refugee claimants/refugees?
79. As a percentage how many of last years refugee intake do you think came from Iran?
80. What groups of people come from Iran as asylum seekers/refugee claimants/refugees?
81. Is Britain's/Canada's/Australia's treatment of asylum seekers/refugee claimants/refugees fair?
82. Does Britain's/Canada's/Australia's treatment of asylum seekers/refugee claimants/refugees differ from other countries?
83. Do you know anyone who has entered Britain/Canada/Australia as a refugee?
83.1 Were they detained for any period?
84. Are the stories you may have heard from family and friends who arrived as asylum seekers/refugee claimants/refugees consistent with the representations in the media?
85. Do you think the situation faced by new arrivals is different now than in the past?
86. Do you think the situation is different for different types of migrants now?
87. How do your parents feel about the situation for asylum seekers/refugee claimants/refugees in the present?
88. Is there any difference between the treatment of new arrivals, including refugees, by the different groups with Iranian background?
89. What do you think will happen in the future to people who arrive as asylum seekers/refugee claimants in Britain/Canada/Australia?

Thank you for your cooperation and your time in aiding my research. I would just like to reiterate that your contribution will remain anonymous and I will be the only person who has access to the data.

Discuss Second phase and the numbers in 78.

Introduce Phase II: Photodocumentary Exercise

Appendix 2: Sample Consent and Information Forms

Sample 1: Consent Form Phase I, London Participant

Sample 2: Consent Form Phase II, Sydney Participant

Sample 3: Subject Information Sheet, Phase I, Sydney Participant.

Sample 4: Subject Information Sheet, Phase II, Vancouver Participant.

Appendix 3: Respondent Demographic Data

Respondent #	Suburb	City	Religious group	Age	Current Occupation	Vocation/ Degree Course	Highest Education Level	Recruited Through	Born	Age Left Iran
1	West Vancouver	Vancouver	Muslim	20	Student	Biology	Tertiary (Bachelor)	UBC Persian Club	New Dehli	n/a
2	Clontarf	Sydney	Baha'i	24	IT consultant	Electrical Engineering	Tertiary (Bachelor)	Baha'i Temple, Sydney	Tehran, Iran	1
3	West Vancouver	Vancouver	Baha'i	22	Student	Dentistry	Tertiary (Bachelor)	UBC Campus Association of Baha'i Studies	London, UK	n/a
4	Abbotsford	Vancouver	Baha'i	21	Student	English major	Tertiary (Bachelor)	UBC Campus Association of Baha'i Studies	Philippines	2
5	North Vancouver	Vancouver	Baha'i	22	Social Development	Political Science/ Law/ History	Tertiary (PhD)	Personal referral	Tehran, Iran	4
6	North Vancouver	Vancouver	Baha'i	23	Unemployed	Finance	Tertiary (Bachelor)	UBC Campus Association of Baha'i Studies	Tehran, Iran	1
7	Vancouver	Vancouver	Baha'i	24	Student	Medicine	Tertiary (Bachelor)	UBC Campus Association of Baha'i Studies	Exeter, UK	4
8	West Vancouver	Vancouver	Baha'i	20	Student	Commerce	Tertiary (Bachelor)	UBC Campus Association of Baha'i Studies	London	n/a
9	Vancouver	Vancouver	Muslim	20	Student	Computer Science	Tertiary (Bachelor)	UBC Persian Club	Tehran, Iran	8
10	West Vancouver	Vancouver	Muslim	21	Student	Political Science	Tertiary (Bachelor)	UBC Persian Club	Montreal	n/a
11	North Vancouver	Vancouver	Muslim	20	Student	Sociology/Law	Tertiary (Bachelor)	UBC Persian Club	Tehran, Iran	8
12	Vancouver	Vancouver	Baha'i	23	Student	Medicine	Tertiary (Bachelor)	UBC Campus Association of Baha'i Studies	San Antonio, Texas, USA	n/a
13	St Ives	Sydney	Baha'i	23	Student	International Relations	Tertiary (PhD)	University of Sydney Baha'i Society	Isfahan, Iran	3

Respondent #	Suburb	City	Religious group	Age	Current Occupation	Vocation/ Degree Course	Highest Education Level	Recruited Through	Born	Age Left Iran
14	St Ives	Sydney	Baha'i	17	Student	International Relations	Tertiary (Bachelor)	Baha'i Temple, Sydney	New Brunswick, Canada	n/a
15	Kogarah	Sydney	Baha'i	20	Student	Commerce	Tertiary (Bachelor)	University of Sydney Baha'i Society	UK	n/a
16	Killarney Heights	Sydney	Baha'i	19	Student	Optometry	Tertiary (Bachelor)	UNSW Baha'i Society	Babolsar, Iran	2
17	Kensington	Sydney	Muslim	24	Student	Genetics/ Biotechnology	Tertiary (Bachelor)	Personal referral	Tehran, Iran	9
18	Westmead	Sydney	Muslim	27	Student/Tutor	Engineer	Tertiary (Masters)	Personal referral	Afghanistan	2
19	Golders Green	London	Muslim	17	Student	n/a	Secondary	Rustam Language School, London	Mashad, Iran	9
20	Harrow, Middlesex	London	Muslim	24	Student	Pharmacy	Tertiary (PhD)	Kings College Iranian Society	Tehran, Iran	9
21	Brentford, Middlesex.	London	Muslim	18	Student	Medicine (in the future)	Secondary	Rustam Language School, London	Tehran, Iran	5
22	Golders Green	London	Muslim	24	IT Professional	Computer Science	Tertiary (Bachelor)	Personal referral	Tehran, Iran	4
23	Barnes	London	Muslim	25	Student	Medicine	Tertiary (Bachelor)	UCL Persian Society	Tehran, Iran	9
24	Hampstead Garden Suburb	London	Muslim	19	Student	Languages at University	Tertiary (Bachelor)	Personal referral	Tehran, Iran	6
25	Kingston Upon Thames	London	Muslim	22	Student	Interactive Multimedia	Tertiary (Masters)	Rustam Language School, London	London	n/a
26	Bethnal Green	London	Baha'i	23	Lawyer	Human Rights Lawyer	Tertiary (Masters)	Baha'i National Spiritual Assembly, UK	London	n/a
27	Shepherd's Bush	London	Baha'i	33	Housewife	Languages at University	Tertiary (Bachelor)	Personal referral	Tehran, Iran	5
28	Enfield	London	Baha'i	25	Clerical	Molecular Biology /Nutrition	Tertiary (Bachelor)	Personal referral	Tehran, Iran	6
29	West Sussex/ London	London	Muslim	24	Lawyer	Law	Tertiary (Bachelor)	Personal referral	Tehran, Iran	1

Respondent #	Suburb	City	Religious group	Age	Current Occupation	Vocation/ Degree Course	Highest Education Level	Recruited Through	Born	Age Left Iran
30	Highgate	London	Baha'i	30	IT Marketing	Social Psychology	Tertiary (Bachelor)	Personal referral	Tehran, Iran	2
31	Kensington	London	Baha'i	36	Actor	Actor/ Comedian	Tertiary (Bachelor)	Personal referral	London	n/a
32	Wimbledon	London	Baha'i	30	Sales	Latin American Studies/Spanish	Tertiary (Bachelor)	Personal referral	Woking, UK	n/a
33	Highgate	London	Baha'i	30	Administrator, Printing Ind.	Languages at University	Tertiary (Bachelor)	Personal referral	Tehran, Iran	3
34	Castlecrag	Sydney	Muslim	23	IT Professional	Computer Science	Tertiary (Bachelor)	Macquarie University Persian Club, Sydney	Tehran, Iran	8
35	Winston Hills	Sydney	Muslim	19	Unemployed	Languages at University (enrolled)	Secondary	Imam Husain Islamic Centre	Tehran, Iran	4
36	St Ives	Sydney	Muslim	22	Student	Medicine	Tertiary (Postgraduate)	Persian Student's Assoc., Uni of Sydney	Tehran, Iran	3
37	Manly Vale	Sydney	Muslim	21	Student	Computer Engineering/ Biochemical Engineering	Tertiary (Bachelor)	UNSW Persian Society	Tehran, Iran	5
38	Drummoyne	Sydney	Muslim	21	Student	Computer Engineering	Tertiary (Bachelor)	UNSW Persian Society	Tehran, Iran	9
39	Vancouver	Vancouver	Baha'i	22	Student	Pharmacy	Tertiary (Bachelor)	UBC Campus Association of Baha'i Studies	Tehran, Iran	4
40	North Vancouver	Vancouver	Baha'i	22	Student	Marketing Management	Tertiary (Diploma)	Vancouver Baha'i Centre	Bournemouth, UK	n/a
41	West Vancouver	Vancouver	Muslim	19	Student	Nursing	Tertiary (Bachelor)	Personal referral	Tehran, Iran	5
42	Point Grey Vancouver	Vancouver	Baha'i	20	Student	Psychology/ Education	Tertiary (Bachelor)	UBC Campus Association of Baha'i Studies	St John's Newfoundland	n/a
43	Burnaby	Vancouver	Baha'i	23	Student	Molecular Biology/ Medicine	Tertiary (Bachelor)	SFU Campus Association of Baha'i Studies	Burnaby, B.C.	n/a
44	Vancouver	Vancouver	Muslim	45	Housewife	Languages at University	Tertiary (Bachelor)	Personal referral	Vancouver	n/a

Respondent #	Suburb	City	Religious group	Age	Current Occupation	Vocation/ Degree Course	Highest Education Level	Recruited Through	Born	Age Left Iran
45	West Vancouver	Vancouver	Muslim	18	Student	International Relations	Tertiary (Bachelor)	Personal referral	Vancouver	n/a
46	Maple Ridge	Vancouver	Baha'i	18	Student	International Relations	Tertiary (Bachelor)	UBC Campus Association of Baha'i Studies	Halifax, Novia Scotia	n/a
47	St Ives	Sydney	Baha'i	22	Student	Political Science	Tertiary (Bachelor)	Personal referral	Tehran, Iran	2
48	Dean Park	Sydney	Muslim	24	Student	Artist	Tertiary (Bachelor)	Personal referral	Ahvaz, Iran	4

Appendix 4: Canadian Multicultural Policy frameworks

The initial policy of Canadian multiculturalism, as enunciated by Trudeau, centred on four key points:

1. The government of Canada will support all of Canada's cultures and will seek to assist, resources permitting, the development of those cultural groups that have demonstrated a desire and effort to continue to develop, a capacity to grow and contribute to Canada, as well as a clear need for assistance.
2. The Government will assist members of all cultural groups to overcome cultural barriers to full participation in Canadian society.
3. The Government will promote creative encounters and interchange among all Canadian cultural groups in the interest of national unity.
4. The Government will continue to assist immigrants to acquire at least one of Canada's official languages in order to become full participants in Canadian society (Canada, House of Commons Debates, quoted in Li, 1999: 153).

The ten elements of the Multiculturalism Act (1988) expanded on Trudeau's original four to include:

1. to acknowledge the freedom of cultural choice for all Canadians;
2. to recognise and promote multiculturalism as a fundamental characteristic of Canada;
3. to promote full and equitable participation of individuals and communities of all origins;
4. to enhance the development of communities sharing a common origin;
5. to ensure equal treatment and protection for all individuals while respecting their diversity;
6. to encourage and assist social institutions to be respectful and inclusive of Canada's multicultural character;
7. to promote the understanding from intergroup interactions;
8. to foster the recognition and appreciation of diverse Canadian cultures;

9. to preserve and enhance non-official languages while strengthening the official languages of Canada; and
10. to advance multiculturalism in harmony with the commitment to official languages.

Appendix 5: Newspaper Survey

A study of newspaper articles containing references to 'Iran', 'Iranian', or 'Persian' was conducted from database records for the period 1st January, 2000 to 31st December, 2001. Table A5.1 details the number of articles sampled, whilst Figures A5.1 to A5.3 show a sample of the distribution of articles across the sample period. This initial sample, which included many articles with oblique references to Iran, was refined for the Sydney sample to better reflect the number of articles that dealt directly with Iran (see Table A5.2). From this refined Sydney data, and from the wider sample for Vancouver, a complete survey of the visual representations accompanying the articles was undertaken for the newspapers in these two cities. These visual representations of Iran and Iranians, along with a less rigorous sample of visual representations from the London sample, form the basis of the discussion at the end of Chapter 4.

Table A5.1: Initial sample of newspapers for media analysis.

Newspapers	No. of Articles Sampled, Jan 2000-Dec 2001		
	Iran*	Migrant**	Refugee***
Sydney			
Sydney Morning Herald	902	2291	2364
The Australian	1426	2774	3219
The Daily Telegraph	not sampled	not sampled	not sampled
London			
The Guardian	1492	1014	3519
The Times	1431	1291	2815
The Sun	529	623	1202
The Mirror	427	595	1417
Vancouver ****			
The Vancouver Sun	142	N/A	367
The (Vancouver) Province	86	497	292
The Globe and Mail	not sampled	not sampled	not sampled
Totals	6435	9085	15195

* papers sampled for articles containing 'Iran', 'Iranian', or 'Persian'

** papers sampled for articles containing 'immigration' or 'migrant'

*** papers sampled for articles containing 'refugee' or 'asylum'

**** Jan 2000 to August 2001 only

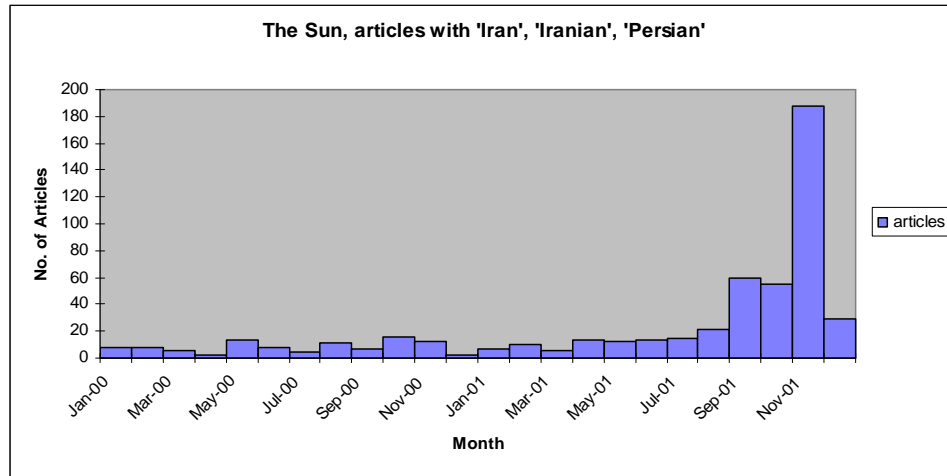


Figure A5.1: Distribution of articles referencing 'Iran', 'Iranian' or 'Persian' in The Sun newspaper from January 2000 to December 2001.

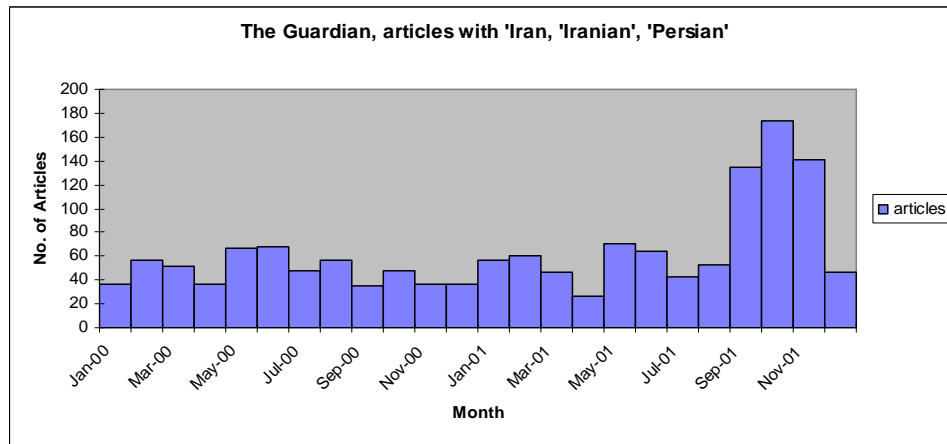


Figure A5.2 Distribution of articles referencing 'Iran', 'Iranian' or 'Persian' in The Guardian newspaper from January 2000 to December 2001.

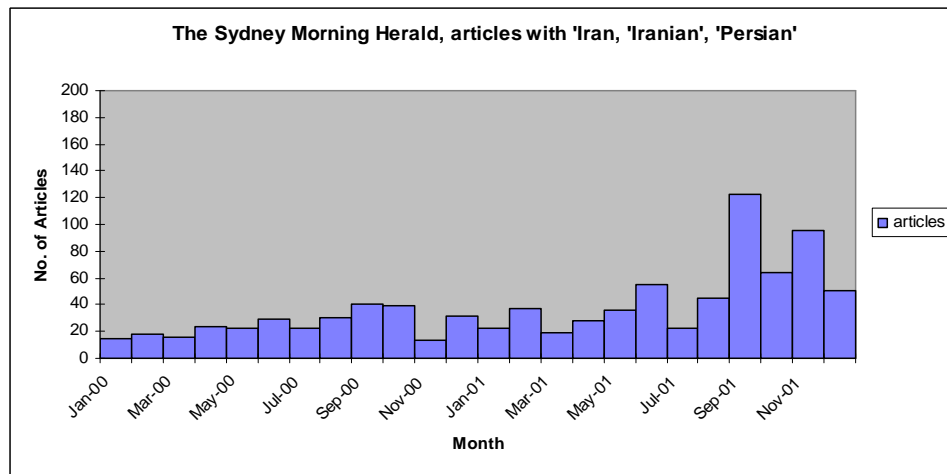


Figure A5.3: Distribution of articles referencing 'Iran', 'Iranian' or 'Persian' in The Sydney Morning Herald newspaper from January 2000 to December 2001.

Table A5.2: Refined newspaper sample detailing the number of articles focusing on Iran for the Sydney sample.

Newspapers	No. of Articles Sampled, Jan 2000-Dec 2001	
	Iran*	Iran focus**
Sydney		
Sydney Morning Herald	770	190
The Australian	1059	281
The Daily Telegraph***	661	226

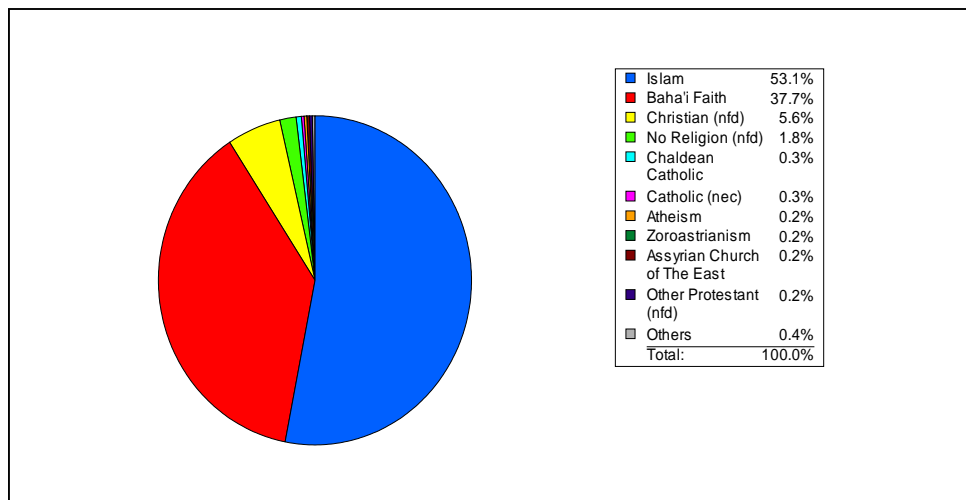
* papers sampled for articles containing 'Iran', 'Iranian', or 'Persian' using Factiva database, July, 2004.

** with Iran/Iranian/Persian as the primary or secondary focus in the article

*** Daily Telegraph was not included in earlier sampling due to database limitations (See Table A5.1).

Appendix 6: Details of Immigration Data.

Immigration raw data for Figure 5.4 as supplied by DIMIA.



Note: Chart excludes 'Religion Unknown'

Figure A6.1: Breakdown of religions of the Iranian born entering Australia with the intention to remain from January 1998 to December 2003 (source: DIMIA, settlement database, data extracted on 04/01/2004).

Table A6.1: Top 10 Religions of Iranian Migrants to Australia (Settlers Arriving From 01 Jan 2001 To 31 Dec 2003)

RELIGION	NUMBER OF SETTLERS
Islam	940
Baha'i Faith	667
Christian (nfd)	99
No Religion (nfd)	32
Chaldean Catholic	6
Catholic (nec)	5
Atheism	4
Zoroastrianism	4
Assyrian Church of The East	3
Other Protestant (nfd)	3
Others	7
Total Religion Known	1,770
Religion Unknown	461
Total	2,231

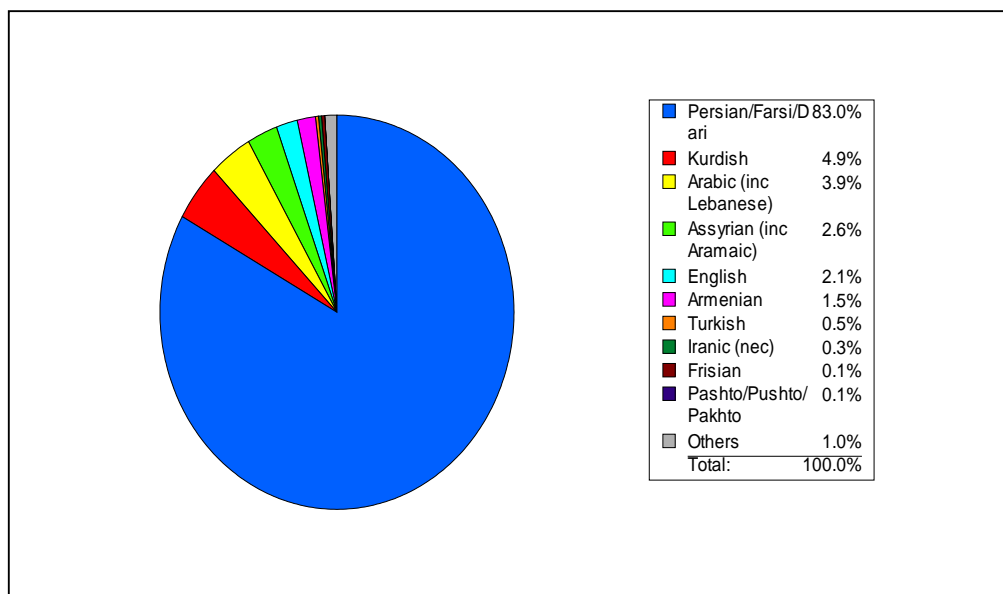
nfd = not further defined

nec = not elsewhere classified

Notes for Table A6.1:

1. The data shown here includes both persons who arrived during the reference period as migrants and persons who arrived as temporary entrants and were later granted permanent resident status onshore.
2. Data on non-visaed permanent arrivals (eg New Zealanders) is not included.
3. The data in this report has been compiled from a number of information sources within DIMIA. The collection of some data items in these information systems is not mandatory. As a consequence there may be a large number recorded as 'unknown' for some items, including some of the selection variables on which this report is based. Because of the possibility of a high number being recorded as 'unknown' for some items, the data shown here should only be taken as indicative of the actual number of settlers with these characteristics.
4. It has recently been found that the Settlement Database is undercounting records, both onshore and offshore, particularly in the Skill stream in recent years. For example, for arrivals in 2001-02, the Skill stream is undercounted by 5%, the Family stream by 3% and Humanitarian by 0.5%. Though estimates of settlement patterns will not be greatly affected, correction of this problem is proceeding as a priority.

Immigration raw data for Figure 5.8 as supplied by DIMIA.



Note: Chart excludes 'Language Unknown'

Figure A6.2: Language spoken by Iranian born migrants entering Australia with intention to remain from January 1998 to December 2003 (source: DIMIA, settlement database, 2004, data extracted on 04/01/2004).

Table A6.2: Top 10 Languages for Iranian Migrants to Australia Settlers Arriving From 01 Jan 1998 To 31 Dec 2003

LANGUAGE	NUMBER OF SETTLERS
Persian/Farsi/Dari	2,887
Kurdish	170
Arabic (inc Lebanese)	134
Assyrian (inc Aramaic)	92
English	74
Armenian	51
Turkish	18
Iranic (nec)	9
Frisian	5
Pashto/Pushto/Pakhto	4
Others	36
Total Language Known	3,480
Language Unknown	739
Total	4,668

nfd = not further defined

nec = not elsewhere classified

Notes to Table A6.2:

1. The data shown here includes both persons who arrived during the reference period as migrants and persons who arrived as temporary entrants and were later granted permanent resident status onshore.
2. Data on non-visaed permanent arrivals (eg New Zealanders) is not included.
3. The data in this report has been compiled from a number of information sources within DIMIA. The collection of some data items in these information systems is not mandatory. As a consequence there may be a large number recorded as 'unknown' for some items, including some of the selection variables on which this report is based. Because of the possibility of a high number being recorded as 'unknown' for some items, the data shown here should only be taken as indicative of the actual number of settlers with these characteristics.
4. It has recently been found that the Settlement Database is undercounting records, both onshore and offshore, particularly in the Skill stream in recent years. For example, for arrivals in 2001-02, the Skill stream is undercounted by 5%, the Family stream by 3% and Humanitarian by 0.5%. Though estimates of settlement patterns will not be greatly affected, correction of this problem is proceeding as a priority.

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