

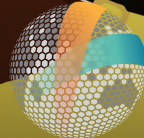
An illustration of a diverse group of people of various ethnicities and ages holding hands in a circle, symbolizing unity and community. The background features soft, warm colors and stylized green leaves.

# A Transcultural Approach to Belonging and Engagement among Migrant Youth

2024




Australian Government  
Australian Research Council



**ADI**  
ALFRED DEAKIN INSTITUTE FOR  
CITIZENSHIP AND GLOBALISATION





We respectfully acknowledge the Wurundjeri and Wadawurrung people of the Kulin Nation, and the Peek Whurrong people of the Maar Nation, as the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which Deakin University's Burwood, Melbourne City, Geelong, and Warrnambool campuses stand. We pay our respects to their Elders past and present, and to their Ancestors, and acknowledge their continuing custodianship, care and connection to Country over many thousands of years. We recognise that sovereignty over Country was never ceded.

ISBN: 978-0-7300-0901-6

**Suggested citation:** Mansouri, F; Jamal Al-Deen, T; A. Cubas, M; Beaman, L; & Hussain, S (2024)  
'A Transcultural Approach to Belonging and Engagement Among Migrant Youth', Deakin University.

Published by Deakin University, Burwood.

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Published March 2024.

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# A Transcultural Approach to Belonging and Engagement Among Migrant Youth

A Research Project Funded by an Australian Research Council Discovery Grant  
(DP180100786, 2018–2022).

By

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2024



**ARC DISCOVERY PROJECT**  
(DP180100786, 2018–2022)

'A Transcultural Approach to Belonging and Engagement Among Migrant Youth'

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Deakin University

Mansouri, F., Jamal Al-Deen T., Cubas, M.A., Beaman, L., & Hussain, S. (2024),  
'A Transcultural Approach to Belonging and Engagement Among Migrant Youth'.  
Deakin University Publishing, Melbourne.

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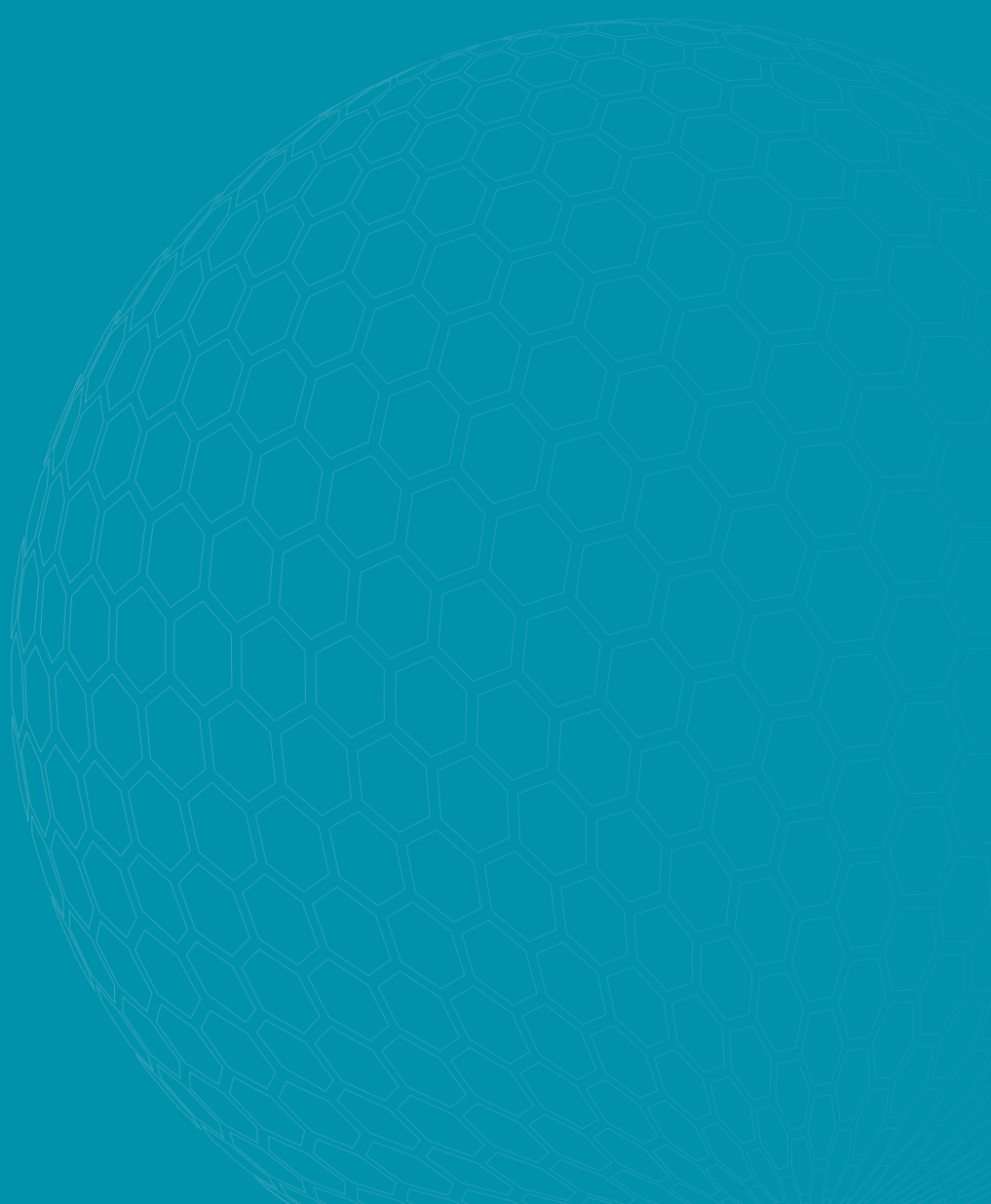
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# Acknowledgement

The research project underpinning this major research report was funded by the Australian Research Council (ARC) Discovery Projects scheme [DP180100786]. The field work for the project was undertaken across the three cities of Melbourne (Australia), Toronto (Canada) and Birmingham (the UK). We acknowledge and thank the research assistance towards data collection from a number of local researchers including Mehmet Basak, Yakov Clarke-Demaj, Kim Lam, and Sana Patel. We particularly thank them for their assistance with interviewee recruitment and interview implementation.





# Executive Summary

The research project underpinning the report was funded by the Australian Research Council Discovery scheme for a period of four years. It aimed to frame access to cultural diversity among migrant youth in Western cities positively, rather than problematically. The specific, inter-related aims of the project were:

- (i) to map transcultural capital and its impact on migrant youth's negotiation of cultural identity
- (ii) to explore how migrant youth understand, negotiate, and interpret transcultural capital for their own social purposes
- (iii) to analyse whether (and how) transcultural capital can impact political attachment vis-à-vis the host state.

To address these aims, this project employed a multi-sited mixed-method approach with first- and second-generation migrants (aged 18–25) in Melbourne (Australia), Toronto (Canada), and Birmingham (the UK). The three sites provide a unique opportunity to engage with these research questions and the associated implications of negotiating cultural identities within rapidly changing socio-political conditions.

## Approach

This project adopted the concept of transcultural capital as an analytical framework to examine how migrant youth negotiate their fluid identities, particularly in relation to cross-cultural connectivity and transnational practices and mobilities. Transcultural capital as adopted in this study emphasises a non-linear process of cultural fusion resulting in the emergence of a new form of cultural doing and being. Within this particular theoretical framing, the project aimed to unpack the complex manifestations of social belonging and cultural identity formations amongst migrant youth in super-diverse cities by going beyond the much-invoked notion of competing, even clashing, cultural identities. Conceptually, transcultural capital refers to the ability of migrant youth to access and utilise different repertoires of cultural knowledge (such as cultural values and heritage practices), networks and skills within and beyond their countries of residence.

Transcultural capital in this sense transcends the fixity of the state borders and enables the possibilities of accessing diverse interactive cultural repertoires. It emphasises the heuristic utility of networks, knowledge and skills that migrant youth can develop and deploy as potential societal assets. These assets enable them, their communities, and the wider societies in which they live, to live well with difference rather than being in a state of estrangement, disengagement, and disillusionment and, as a result, social exclusion.

## Methods

### Survey

Data collection took place between July 2019 and July 2020. A total of 1,147 completed and valid surveys were collected from first- and second-generation migrant youth across Australia, Canada, and the UK. This quantitative data was collected through an online survey that was scripted and hosted in Qualtrics, while participants were recruited from country panels managed by Dynata (formerly Research Now SSI). Of the 1,147 completed and valid surveys, 393 were completed in Australia, 386 in Canada and 368 in the UK, with a total of 601 females and 536 males completing the survey, including a total of 500 first-generation migrants and 647 second-generation migrants.

### Interviews

A total of 119 semi-structured interviews were conducted with migrant youth in Melbourne (39 participants), Toronto (40 participants), and Birmingham (40 participants). As with survey data, participants included a mix of first- and second-generation migrants, from a variety of genders, and ethnic and religious backgrounds. Each interview lasted between 45–90 minutes in duration and explored primarily questions on culture and transcultural capital. Interviews were recorded and transcribed before being analysed in NVivo using hierarchically structured thematic nodes.

## Research Sites

The project adopted a multi-sited mixed-method approach to capture the complex nature of transcultural interactions across diverse fields. The transnational approach aimed to overcome the limitations of country-specific research, which often fails to reflect context-specific variability within transcultural practices.

In terms of socio-demographics, the three cities exhibit similar features in relation to diversity and general migrant integration policies but also differ in terms of the demographic compositions of local migrant populations. In Australia, the latest Census revealed that 48.2 per cent of Australians have a parent born overseas, and 27.6 per cent were born outside Australia (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2021a). Similarly, while 22.0 per cent of the total population in Canada was foreign born, a further 17.4 per cent were second-generation migrants (Statistics Canada 2018). In the UK, while the Office of National Statistics (2018a) records that 14.4 per cent of the population was born overseas, there is no available data on second-generation migrants per se. One could use ethnicity as a proxy for the second-generation, whereby 9.0 per cent of the UK-born population in England and Wales identified as belonging to an ethnic or white minority other than “white” British.

## Key Research Findings

This executive summary first discusses commonalities across the three research sites, then focuses on site-specific findings.

## Commonalities Across Sites

### Difference and Diversity as Transcultural Capital in Specific Times and Places

Participants across the three sites expressed an understanding of the potential of their ability to engage with and draw from multiple cultural repertoires aka their transcultural capital. They spoke of their ability to move from one culture to the other, and their ability to reconcile two or more cultural systems in their everyday lives, thus engendering and deploying different forms of transcultural capital.

This transcultural capital exemplifies that migrant youth are not “caught” or “lost” between two worlds, as they can master several cultural repertoires and selectively deploy them in specific times and spaces. In many ways, this understanding of transcultural capital was related to their positive experiences of local diversity and their meaningful place-making practices. Almost all participants highlighted the advantage of living in multicultural spaces, as the entrenched demographic and cultural diversity helped reinforce a deeper sense of belonging. The spatial dimension of transcultural capital is of critical importance, as these specific opportunities for accumulating capital are afforded by the socio-cultural context of a specific place. Exposure to different cultures from living in multicultural areas, for example, was viewed as a resource that could be converted into capital essential for developing an ability to understand, communicate with, and effectively interact with people across difference.

Another common element across the three sites was the way identity was negotiated by the participants. There was frequent mention of the fact that the migrant youth identities are fluid, multifaceted, and multi-scaled (i.e. beyond uniform/homogeneous descriptions). Generally, study participants described their identity in terms of their religion, their families and friends, their countries of birth and/or ethnic communities, the music they listened to, and their education.

## Mobilising Resources: Cultural Knowledge, Skills and Network

Research findings across the three sites highlighted the benefits accrued from mobilising transcultural capital in response to the opportunities and challenges faced in everyday life. The majority of participants reported that social networks, within and outside their ethnic communities, constituted a resource that these young people used to overcome challenges and achieve goals in the countries of immigration.

Another element of transcultural capital was access to important skills, such as language skills gained from engaging with the cultures of countries of emigration and immigration. Linguistic skills represented an asset not only for the participants individually but also for their families, and other members of ethnic communities. Cultural knowledge and skills, including language skills, also represented a form of transcultural capital which could be mobilised effectively to acquire cultural and ethnic membership and to feel a sense of self and belonging within local, national, and transnational communities. Language competence helped with feelings of being integrated into and welcomed by the local ethnic community.

## Relationships with Families, Friends and Ethnic Communities

Study findings highlight the importance of families, friends and ethnic communities in supporting migrant youth with different aspects of their life, including developing and maintaining their cultural identity. Data shows commonalities in the ways the migrant youth (mostly second-generation youth) described their relationship with their families. They stressed that their upbringing had shaped their personal, cultural and religious identities. Through family, they have been socialised into a system of values, norms and beliefs which have contributed largely to the formation of their identity. Study participants spoke about how some aspects of their parents' culture were embedded in them and became part of their attitudes, orientations, behaviour and everyday practices. However, despite the critical role of family in intergenerational transmission of cultural knowledge and skills, participants, particularly members of the second-generation, were aware of the cultural differences between them and their parents as a result of them being socialised in two different cultural worlds.

Most importantly, forms of transnationalism were valued among youth from a cultural and social perspective that emphasised the benefit of being raised in a transnational social field. In particular, second-generation migrant youth across the three sites acknowledged the active role of their parents in maintaining cross-border connections. They reported that their families engaged with a variety of transnational activities to preserve ties, such as ethnic language maintenance, participating in cultural events within their ethnic communities, and frequent trips to their homelands. Access to home culture provided youth the avenue for different forms of belonging, including transnational belonging, which enabled them to be culturally connected to their parents' homelands across generations. This transnational model of belonging that transcends national boundaries is essential to capture the complex interconnectedness of contemporary reality.

## Differences Between Sites

Below, we discuss some of the site-specific findings.

### Melbourne

Melbourne is home to a large number of migrants, with the most common countries of birth including China (excluding SARs and Taiwan), India and New Zealand. In terms of religious affiliation in Melbourne, Islam is the largest minority religion followed by Buddhism and Hinduism (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2021b). These changing demographics reflect Australia's growing focus on attracting economic and temporary migrants (predominantly international students and temporary skilled workers). While multiculturalism remains the official policy to manage diversity, in recent decades there has been a controversial shift from a focus on social justice to one on social cohesion (Ho 2013).

The complexities of multiculturalism in Australia were captured in our interviews: while participants spoke highly of their experiences of diversity and multiculturalism in Melbourne, many also spoke of the challenges of growing up and coming of age as first- and second-generation migrants. While few participants spoke at length of racism, many highlighted practical challenges in their everyday lives. As noted above, those who grew up in Melbourne spoke about the hurdles of navigating inter-generational divides with their own families and ethnic communities. Meanwhile, recent arrivals spoke about language barriers, the cost of family separation and loss of social status.

## Birmingham

Overall, in contrast to Australia and Canada, the UK never explicitly adopted multiculturalism as a policy tool per se, as “race relations” initiatives were the primary tools for managing diversity. Despite this, there has been significant attention placed on integration and “community cohesion” in the UK since the early 2000s when state “multiculturalism” came under attack for supposedly encouraging minority communities to remain un-integrated into the majority society by living “parallel lives”. Anxieties regarding minority groups expanded from a “lack of integration” to a “threat to national security”, when government strategies as part of the “war on terror” were implemented after the 9/11 and 7/7 attacks. Spatial segregation of minority groups came under focus, as ethnic segregation can often be seen a sign of nonbelonging. According to the last census figures, approximately a fifth of the Birmingham’s residents are Muslim, and as such the city has gained attention in the media and policy circles (see e.g. Hussain 2021a). Birmingham is also home to the largest percentage of Sikhs and the second largest percentage of Hindu residents in the country.

Data shows that migrant youth, in particular those of Muslim backgrounds, perceived Birmingham as a multicultural and diverse city where they belonged. Study findings highlight the advantage of living in Birmingham where entrenched demographic and cultural diversity helped reinforce a deeper sense of belonging and intercultural interaction. This positive view of the city was often contrasted to other “less” multicultural places in the UK. Study participants mentioned their experiences of racial and ethnic/religious discrimination (including Islamophobia) while living or even travelling in less multicultural spaces. This spatial dimension is of critical importance in examining the integration of youth into the mainstream society. In addition, it is worth noting here that Birmingham has been portrayed as a site of “urban decay and religious ghettoization” within popular imagination (Karner and Parker 2008:519). This stigma has, as reflected in the data, possibly contributed to curtailing a sense of belonging for some of the study’s participants.

In addition to racial and ethnic discrimination, a few participants (in particular, international students from the EU) expressed their concerns regarding changes to migration and citizenship laws and policies such as Brexit. Prior to the 2021/22 academic year, EU students paid the same fees as local students. However, since 2021/22, EU students have been classified as international students, not only increasing incoming students’ tuition costs but dramatically impacting the entire application process. Other impacts of Brexit include changes to the current student visa system, affecting all international students. However, and in contrast to the concerns expressed by EU participants, it was notable how little UK-born participants spoke about Brexit in general, or about its impact on their mobility in particular.

## Toronto

Toronto is one of the most multicultural cities in the world, with a growing population of “visible minorities” (particularly South Asians and Chinese) (Statistics Canada 2017c). In Toronto, the largest religious minority is Islam (followed by Hinduism and Judaism) (Statistics Canada 2016). Like Australia, Canada adopted multiculturalism in the 1970s to manage the increasing cultural diversity. However, one significant difference between Australia and Canada is that Canada does not only have the Multiculturalism Act, but multiculturalism was enshrined into the fabric of Canadian life by including it in the constitution, specifically the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. This has become gradually sedimented into dominant narratives around what constitutes national identity (Day 2000).

The official support for multiculturalism in Canada is well reflected in the study’s data analysis. Almost all Toronto participants held positive views of multiculturalism in Canada in general and in Toronto in particular. Although participants believe that there are still challenges facing migrant youth in Toronto, these views were held with less severity than the challenges faced by migrant youth in Birmingham. Participants – particularly recent arrivals – spoke at length of practical challenges, such as language barriers, and the time and effort of building a community and a sense of belonging.

## Conclusion

This project provided important insight into the lives and experiences of first- and second-generation migrant youth in three key countries of immigration in general, and three young and diverse cities in particular. As explored throughout this report, for the youth participating in this study diversity and difference are enablers to productive transcultural capital. Data shows that the transcultural capital (skills, networks and knowledge) migrant youth access, develop and deploy by engaging with multiple cultures at different temporal and spatial points in their everyday lives has:

- enabled them to recognise and navigate cross-cultural differences and similarities and embrace them with time and skill
- become essential in building socio-cultural competencies and interpersonal skills (such as empathy, respect and tolerance) vital to belonging and social connectivity in an increasingly interdependent and super-diverse world
- become a potential asset for them, and for the local communities and societies with which they belong.

In this context, it is crucial to recognise the importance of networks – i.e. families, friends and ethnic communities – in supporting migrant youth with different aspects of their lives. Across the three sites, data shows commonalities with regard to the ways the migrant youth describe their relationship with their families: they stress that their upbringing has shaped their personal, cultural, and religious identities. Through family, they have been socialised into a system of values, norms and beliefs which have contributed largely to the formation of their identity.

It is thus important to acknowledge the complexity of participants' relationships, identities and belonging without falling into binaries. To be sure, there is a degree of conflict or strain, but more often than not there is also a strong degree of accommodation and solidarity. This is not only visible in their relationships with members of the "white" majorities, but also in their relationships with their parents and elders, and their local, national and transnational communities.

Another common finding of our research reflects the fluid ways in which identity is negotiated by participants. The participants frequently mentioned the fact that their identities are ever changing, multifaceted, and multi-scaled. Generally, participants described their identity in terms of their families and friends, their countries of origin and/or ethnic communities, their religion, the music they listen to, and their education. In other words, their identities are context specific and based on their relationships to others.

A key finding of this project points to the importance of time and space: the ability of migrant youth to mobilise different cultural repertoires to build intercultural capital is place- and time-dependent. In other words, participants believe that living in a specific place at a particular time provides particular opportunities for building transcultural capital. This temporal dimension was particularly important in the case of second-generation migrants, who most often described how their identity developed and their perceptions of their parents' culture positively changed over time. This captures a key realisation, that their ethnic and cultural difference is not a disadvantage, but rather a potential source of capital for themselves and broader society.

# Introduction

The practices and identities of migrant youth have become a focal point of contemporary sociological research in Western countries of immigration (Mansouri and Jamal Al-deen 2023). By moving away from the tensions and problems that have been associated with migration and diversity, this project examines and advances the concept of transcultural capital (Meinhof 2009; Triandafyllidou 2009; Meinhof and Triandafyllidou 2006) as a tool to account for the possibilities and opportunities embodied in young migrants' identities and competencies. With a focus on migrant youth in Melbourne (Australia), Toronto (Canada) and Birmingham (UK), this project reconceptualises diversity and difference as agentic, transformational resources to be valued, fostered and mobilised. This transcultural perspective brings to the fore the skills, networks and forms of knowledge that migrant youth access and develop through their multiple cultural repertoires. In doing so, it further transforms the very notion of being a "migrant" from a disadvantage to an asset in relation to the challenges and opportunities of living in an increasingly diverse and inter-connected world (Cubas, Jamal Al-deen and Mansouri 2022; Guerra 2008; Triandafyllidou 2009).

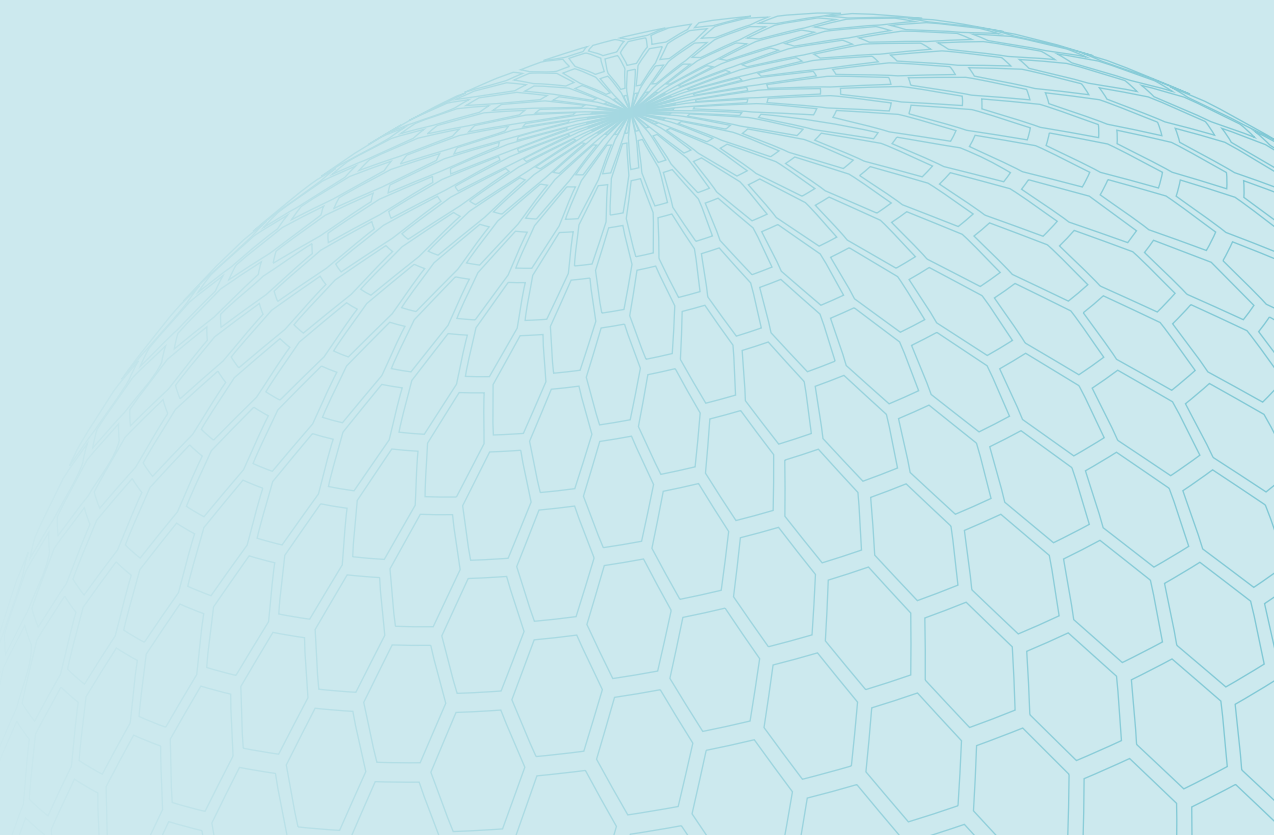
This project has three aims:

- (i) To map transcultural capital and its impact on migrant youth's negotiation of cultural identity.
- (ii) To explore how migrant youth understand, negotiate, and interpret transcultural capital for their own social purposes.
- (iii) To analyse whether (and how) transcultural capital can impact political attachment vis-à-vis the host state.

To address these aims, this project employed a multi-sited mixed-method approach with first- and second-generation migrants (aged 18–25) in Melbourne, Toronto and Birmingham. The cities chosen are not only increasingly diverse and home to large populations of migrants and their descendants, but they also have a significant young population overall. Furthermore, each of these cities is located in a major Western country experiencing immigration, which encapsulates both the early promises of multiculturalism – as a progressive social policy tool for managing diversity – and more recent and reactionary paradigm shifts in migrant integration policies. The three sites provide a unique opportunity to engage with the transcultural practices of migrant youth and the associated implications for negotiating rapidly changing socio-political conditions.

The project's theoretical significance is its extension of current research paradigms by examining the manifestations of transcultural capital in terms of dual, even multiple, cultural references within complex bi-focal and, in some cases, multi-focal, lived realities. The project's theoretical approach synthesises cutting-edge thinking from theories of transcultural capital, bi-focality and social inclusion – all of which reflect on the complex and multifaceted nature of new forms of cultural being. Of particular relevance to this project are the characteristics and manifestations of "cultural being" among migrant youth, and how these can affect their senses of identity, empowerment and belonging. Indeed, having access to dual frames of cultural reference, or as Agnew (2005) articulates it "dual conscientiousness", reflects the growing importance of understanding bi-focality and multi-focality at cognitive, cultural and social levels. Bi-focality refers to one's capacity to challenge and destabilise ideas (Hoerder et al. 2005) through "bi-focal" identifications with the "here" and "there" of societies of immigration and emigration respectively (Boccagni 2012).

In terms of methodological innovation, the project adopts a multi-sited mixed-method approach to capture the complex nature of transcultural interactions across diverse fields (Beck 2003). This includes interviews and online surveys with migrant youth in each of the research sites. The transnational approach employed overcomes the limitations of country-specific research, which often fails to reflect variability in transcultural practices. Furthermore, comparative multi-sited studies on migrant youth have the potential to challenge fixed conceptions of cultural identity, especially if the examination of belonging and social integration moves beyond the national frame. Whilst some studies do acknowledge the role of transnational processes through ideas such as “second-generation transnationalism” (Levitt and Waters 2002; Somerville 2008), what is often missing is a systematic examination of the key factors that impact the emergence of transcultural capital. The significance of this project, therefore, is its examination of the extent to which transcultural capital is shaped not only by key socio-demographic variables – such as age, gender, race, and religion (Bilge 2010) – but also by meso-level manifestations that reflect the trans-local nature of some of the networking practices employed, wherein local culture, rather than nationality, becomes the main driver of cultural identity.



# Background

Amid post-9/11 anxieties and Trump/Brexit nationalist politics, new forms of radicalisation, populism and estrangement have dominated national and global agendas (Cesari 2010; Akkerman et al. 2016). In this context, migrant youth in the West have become the focus of polarised debates about increased segregation and lack of social integration (Hussain and Read 2015; Mansouri and Modood 2020). The basis of these fears is a perception that migrant youth cannot simultaneously hold multiple allegiances. This understanding has contributed to a “sceptical turn” against multiculturalism and diversity, which has gathered international momentum, particularly in Europe (Mansouri 2015; Kymlicka 2015; Vertovec and Wessendorf 2010). This reaction has also been embraced within specific policy, media and academic circles (Abbas 2019; Barry 2001). At the heart of this “backlash” is a belief that “multiculturalism fosters accentuated or preserved cultural differences [that] lead to communal separateness and ... deepens socio-economic standing, intensifies the breakdown of social relations, and provides an incubator for extremism and possible terrorism” (Vertovec and Wessendorf 2010:13). Consequently, especially for Muslim communities in the West, the networking practices of migrant youth, be they on social media, in their neighbourhoods or overseas, have been increasingly scrutinised (Mansouri 2020; Yilmaz 2009; Brighton 2007) due to a belief that it is through such practices that this group estrange themselves from the societies into which they migrate (Hassan and Martin 2016).

In contrast, recent research illustrates how migrant identities are mediated through personal, local and cross-border networks that allow them to create and express multiple attachments to political communities. Scholars have begun to categorise these multiple attachments as transcultural processes (Mansouri and Modood 2020; Kabir 2016; Hoerder et al. 2005). However, the emerging literature does not address whether or not these processes result in increased forms of social and cultural capital (Marcu 2012). In other words, little is known of the potential gains transculturalism offers migrant youth; that is, what attributes and capacities they accumulate from learning to balance the demands of their cultural identities and wider social belongings.

Furthermore, while some comparative research focuses on migrant youth integration in Western countries experiencing immigration (Schmitt 2010; Favell 2016), this research fails to address migrants’ complex and multiple engagements; especially those now available as a result of technological and communications advancements. There is, thus, an urgent need to examine the multi-faceted, everyday experiences of migrant youth (Greiner and Sakdapolrak 2013) to better understand the broader utility of transcultural capital for them, their communities and their wider societies.

This project recalibrates the concept of transcultural capital (Schmidt 2010; Triandafyllidou 2009) as an analytical framework to understand how migrant youth foster “multiple ways of being and belonging, and in understanding how [they] make sense of their identity” (Moskal and Sime 2016:35), particularly in relation to cultural connectivity and transnational mobility. Transcultural capital (Hope 2011; Ortiz 1995[1940]) emphasises a non-linear phenomenon of cultural fusion resulting in the emergence of a new form of cultural being. As such, “transculturation deals with human interconnectivity and focuses on a selective weaving of cultural elements to create a new cultural belonging” (Moskal and Sime 2016:36). Within this framing, our project aims to decode the complex manifestations of social belonging and cultural identity formations amongst migrant youth in post 9/11 super-diverse cities by going beyond the much-invoked notion of competing cultural identities (Moskal and Sime 2016; Hope 2011). Conceptually, transcultural capital refers to the ability of migrant youth to access and utilise different repertoires of cultural knowledge (such as cultural values and heritage practices), networks and skills within their countries of residence (Meinhof 2009; Bourdieu 1986). Transcultural capital, in this framing, “is not just the fusing of two identities, but offers the possibility of something new being created” (Hope 2011:91) that transcends the fixity of the state and embraces the possibilities of diverse interactive cultural repertoires. It emphasises the networks, knowledge and skills migrant youth access and develop as potential assets for them, their communities and the societies in which they live, rather than being the source of estrangement, disengagement and disillusionment and, as a result, civic and social exclusion (Meer and Modood 2009; Victorian Government 2012).



# Theoretical Framework

Traditionally, much of the migration research on youth has been dominated by a dichotomous and often reductionist emphasis on assimilation and integration based on national frames of analysis (for an overview, see Zhou 2014; Vermeulen 2010). Alternative conceptualisations have emphasised the multi-faceted nature of migrant youths' identities (Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco 2002; Werbner and Modood 2015; Levitt and Waters 2002). Building on the latter, and on critical debates among youth sociologists that engage with migrant youth's everyday experiences and practices of diversity (Butcher and Thomas 2006; Colombo 2010, 2019; Harris 2013; Robertson et al. 2018; Nilan and Feixa 2006), this project revisits and critically explores the concept of transcultural capital (Triandafyllidou 2009; Moskal and Sime 2016; Meinhof and Triandafyllidou 2006) as a transformative, heuristic tool to account for the creative possibilities and relational opportunities embodied in migrant youth identities and socio-cultural competencies. Moving away from the tensions and problems that have been recently associated with migration and diversity (Cantle 2012; Steiner et al. 2013; Abdel-Fattah 2020), this transcultural approach highlights the capacity of migrant youth to mobilise multiple cultural repertoires at different temporal and spatial points in their everyday lives (Cubas, Jamal Al-deen and Mansouri 2022; Erel and Ryan 2018).

Based on Bourdieu's conceptualisation of capital as presenting itself in various forms – namely, cultural, economic and social capital – transcultural capital is conceptualised and operationalised as “the strategic use of knowledge, skills and networks acquired by migrants through connections with their country and cultures of origin that are made active at their new places of residence” (Triandafyllidou 2009:102). Fundamentally, this takes a critical approach vis-à-vis fixed and closed definitions of culture, identity and belonging by seeking to “re-conceptualise difference and diversity as negotiable, as inter-sectorial, as strategic, and as capital” (Hoerder et al. 2005:14–15).

Such a transcultural approach opens a conceptual space for better understanding the ability of migrant youth to navigate difference and to instigate and maintain socio-cultural connections that have transformative capacities across spatial and temporal terrains. This is especially important in relation to migrant youth cross-cultural connectivity and transnational mobility in an increasingly inter-dependent, super-diverse world (Levitt 2009; Robertson et al. 2018), where “one of the most important practices is to be able to cross differences and identities, to be able to sail round the multifaceted and interconnected world without being shipwrecked” (Colombo 2010:467).

This project adopts an extended notion of transcultural capital (Meinhof 2009; Triandafyllidou 2009; Meinhof and Triandafyllidou 2006) to reflect the creative, multi-localities of belonging and identity formation (Kalra et al. 2005; see also Cassim et al. 2020) among migrant youth embedded in local, national and transnational social fields (Levitt and Waters 2002; Levitt et al. 2011). This extended transcultural lens not only highlights that migrant youth often foster multiple and fluid ways of being and belonging (Moskal and Sime 2016) at different temporal and spatial points in their lives, but also that the transcultural capital they may therefore be able to access, develop and selectively deploy is a potential asset for them, and for the local, national and transnational communities and societies in which they belong. Thus, this extended notion of transcultural capital not only captures the agentic mobilisation of associated knowledge and cultural repertoires, but more importantly also the capacity to selectively apply these different forms of capitals to resist social marginalisation and cultural oppression, and to realise individualised forms of agentic being that connect rather than divide across cultural, national and ethnic lines.

In practice, this notion of transcultural capital recognises the potential “chameleonic disposition” of those embedded in multiple social contexts “for strategically rearranging one’s sense of cultural identity by drawing from an expanded repertoire – according to the moment, context or location” (Benessaïeh 2010:28; see also Hoerder et al. 2005). This agentic framing allows us to understand the ability of migrant youth to mobilise skills, networks and knowledge from an array of local, regional and global cultures to develop different forms of transformative transcultural capital (Meinhof and Triandafyllidou 2006; Triandafyllidou 2009). Notably, this framing also allows us to understand diversity and difference as potential enablers of, rather than obstacles to, productive transcultural capital (Marotta 2014; Moskal and Sime 2016). In other words, this framing allows us to unpack migrant youth’s efforts to engage productively with difference (Lam 2019), to highlight the skills, networks and forms of knowledge they draw from to embrace the fluidity of their identities and belongings (Cubas, et al, 2023), and to explore their ability to cross boundaries and to cope with the complexity and variability of everyday life (Colombo 2010). In an era of increasing mobility and diversity, such capital and agentic capacity should be understood as an asset to be nurtured and mobilised, rather than as a source of exclusion and liability, as it has sometimes been portrayed in the migration and diversity literature (Cantle 2012; Putnam 2007).

As an analytical tool, transcultural capital includes all forms of capital identified by Bourdieu, which are linked to membership of transnational networks and communities (Meinhof 2009; Meinhof and Triandafyllidou 2006; Triandafyllidou 2009). In this context, the extended approach adopted by this project recognises and emphasises that, while transnational social relations and practices (that reflect a degree of direct involvement in the economic, political and social life of the country or community of origin) may be common among first-generation migrant youth, these relations and practices may wane and adopt different qualities among members of second and subsequent generations (Klok et al. 2020; Levitt et al. 2011; Levitt and Waters 2002). From the perspective advanced by this project, this does not diminish the “the strong potential effect of being raised in a transnational social

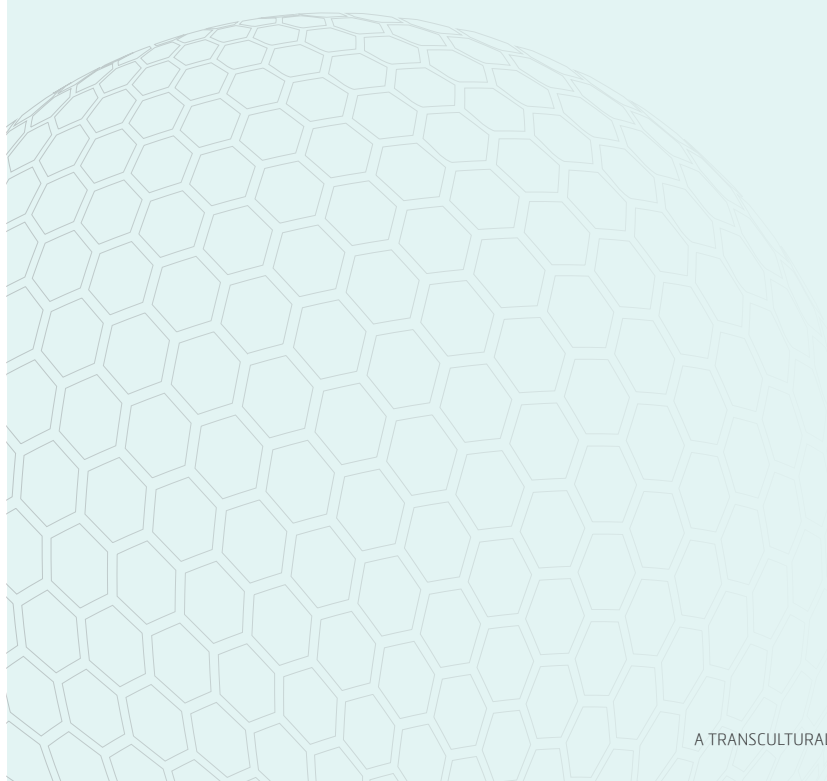
field” (Levitt 2009:1126) as a source of transcultural capital. Indeed, by being actively exposed to an array of local, regional and global cultures through families and friends, migrant youth “master several cultural repertoires that they can selectively deploy in response to the opportunities and challenges they face” (Levitt 2009:1126).

Fundamentally, this project does not assume that all migrant youth will be unequivocally willing or able to access and selectively deploy transcultural capital in its various manifestations. As noted by other migration scholars, Bourdieu’s notion of capital enables a rich description of how different forms of capital interact with each other in the context of the broader power relations in which migration is embedded (Erel and Ryan 2018; Erel 2010; López Rodríguez 2018). As such, bounded or essentialist notions of identity and culture may persist, as the ability of individuals and groups to contest, negotiate and transform boundaries may be limited by their location within the matrix of social, economic and political hierarchies (Meinhof 2009; Meinhof and Triandafyllidou 2006; Triandafyllidou 2009). Existing research demonstrates that those who can successfully move between boundaries hold a degree of social, economic or cultural capital that “appears a necessary even if not satisfactory condition for developing transcultural capital and aspiring towards building a transcultural community” (Triandafyllidou 2009:95). In this context, a way forward to understand conceptually, contextually and analytically the potential of transcultural capital is to link it to Bourdieu’s formulation, where different forms of capital are related to and rooted in wider structures that, if left uncontested, can reproduce social inequalities. This views migrant youth as having the agentic capacity – however limited – to recognise, navigate and challenge existing inequalities by engaging in creative processes of “disadjustment and readjustment, of deacculturation and acculturation” – to use Ortiz’s (1995[1940]:98) words. Nevertheless, this also draws attention to the need for broader change among dominant social institutions and structures, whereupon diversity and difference are re-conceptualised as assets or resources to be valued, fostered and mobilised for transcultural engagement (Jakubowicz et al. 2014).

# Methodology

This project adopts a transnational (Glick Schiller 2007) and intersectional (Yuval-Davis 2011) perspective to compare the transcultural capital practices of migrant youth in Melbourne, Birmingham, and Toronto. It focuses on first- and second-generation migrant youth, aged 18–25, from both new and old immigrant communities. For first-generation migrants, this cohort has been subdivided according to their length of settlement: 0–5 years, 6–10 years, and 11+ years. By concentrating on the length of settlement, the project addresses the temporal nature of transcultural capital, which is a neglected aspect of current research (Triandafyllidou 2009; Schmidt 2010). In addition, the project introduces a multi-sited mixed-method approach that is not bound by the rigidity of “methodological nationalism”, where the state and its perceived homogeneity become the defining features of the research paradigm. The project’s multi-sited approach reflects a critical turn in transnational studies in two ways (Boccagni 2012). First, it offsets the dangers of mono-cultural assimilationist assumptions that expect migrant youth to be solely immersed within host societies and their cultural practices. Second, it moves beyond the binaries of origin/host societies in understanding transcultural identities and transnational relations.

The transcultural perspective has been operationalised through a mixed-method approach that “collects and analyses data, integrates the findings, and draws inferences using both quantitative and qualitative approaches and methods in a single study” (Teddlie and Tashakkori 2009:286). The two-pronged methodological strategy includes: (i) a quantitative dimension in the form of online surveys describing and measuring the nature and extent of transcultural capital amongst migrant youth; and (ii) a qualitative dimension in the form of semi-structured interviews exploring the ways in which transcultural capital develops, how this is shaped by gender, age, class and religion, and how it impacts (and is impacted by) people’s social, cultural, civic and economic activities. In other words, the surveys measure the structural manifestations and intensity of transcultural capital practices based on key sociodemographic features of the youth cohort under study, and they map and quantify the types of skills, networks and knowledge the young migrants access to reconcile their multiple cultural repertoires. Furthermore, the interviews focus on examining the agentic formation of transcultural capital from the perspective of young people’s lived experiences. The interviews investigate the young people’s agency by exploring how they shape their transcultural capital, make sense of it, and use it in their social (education or civic participation), economic (employment or business development) and cultural (identity formation) life.



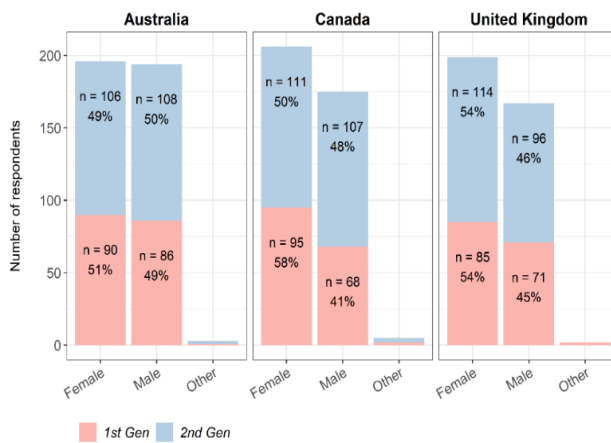
# Research Sample

Data collection took place between July 2019 and July 2020. A total of 1,147 completed and valid surveys from first- and second-generation migrant youth were collected across Australia, Canada, and the UK. This quantitative data was collected through an online survey that was scripted and hosted in Qualtrics, while participants were recruited from country panels owned and managed by Dynata (formerly Research Now SSI). In addition, a total of 119 semi-structured interviews were conducted with migrant youth in Melbourne, Toronto, and Birmingham. Research in all sites received full ethics approval from Deakin University Human Research Ethics Committee (project no. 2018-258), the Office of Research and Integrity at the University of Ottawa (project no. S-09-18-1135) and Coventry University's Centre for Trust, Peace and Social Relations (project no. "A Transcultural Approach to Belonging and Engagement among Migrant Youth").

# Survey

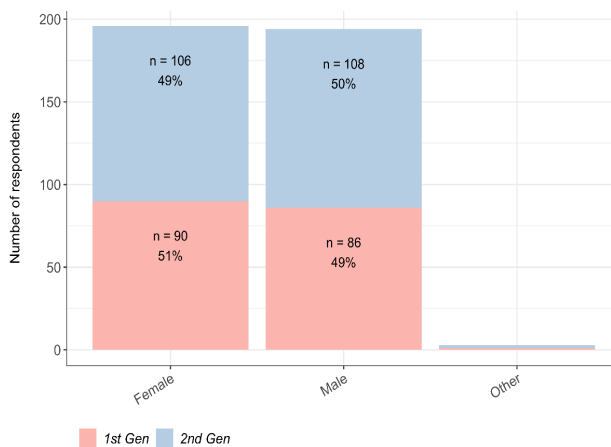
Out of a total of 1,147 completed and valid surveys, 393 surveys were completed in Australia, 386 in Canada and 368 in the UK. As shown in Figure 1, a total of 601 females and 536 males completed the survey. This included a total of 500 first-generation migrants and 647 second-generation migrants. The number of respondents was relatively consistent between the two key genders, and across the three countries.

**Figure 1: Survey participants by gender and generation**



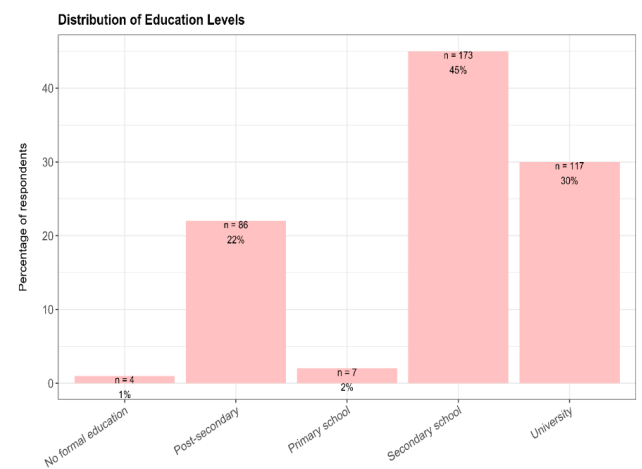
In **Australia**, the number of respondents was consistent between the two key genders, while the number of first-generation participants was relatively lower than that of second-generation participants (see Figure 2).

**Figure 2: Australia – gender and generation**



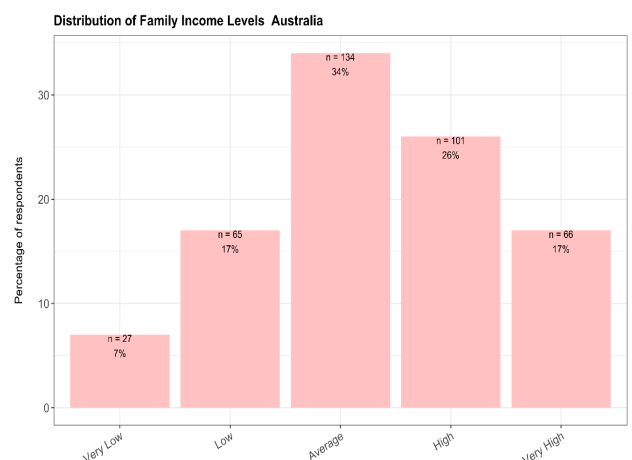
When asked about their highest educational attainment, four (1%) participants reported having no formal education, seven (2%) had primary school education and a further 173 (45%) had completed secondary education. Among the remaining respondents, 86 (22%) were post-secondary educated and 117 (30%) were tertiary educated (see Figure 3).

**Figure 3: Australia – highest level of education**



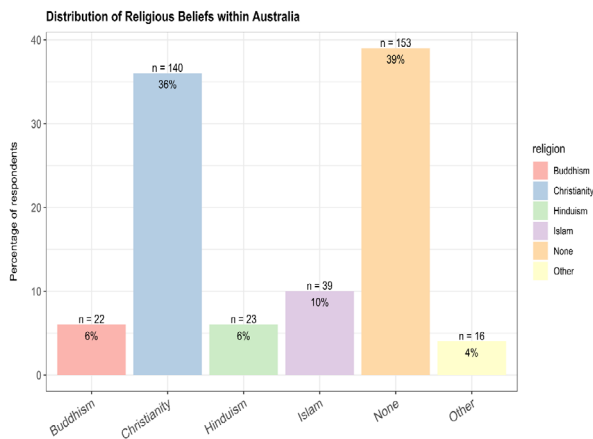
The total household income of participants ranged from very low to very high. The number of participants with high to very high income (167) was higher than participants with average income (134) and low and very low income (92) (see Figure 4).

**Figure 4: Australia – household income**



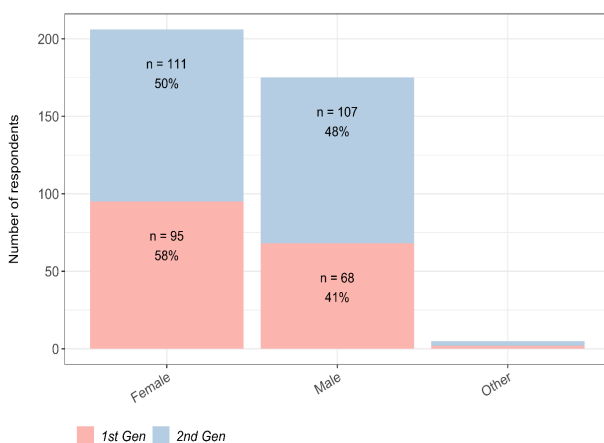
Regarding religious beliefs, Christianity and No Religion were the most common categories in the Australian sample, followed by Islam (see Figure 5).

**Figure 5: Australia – religion**



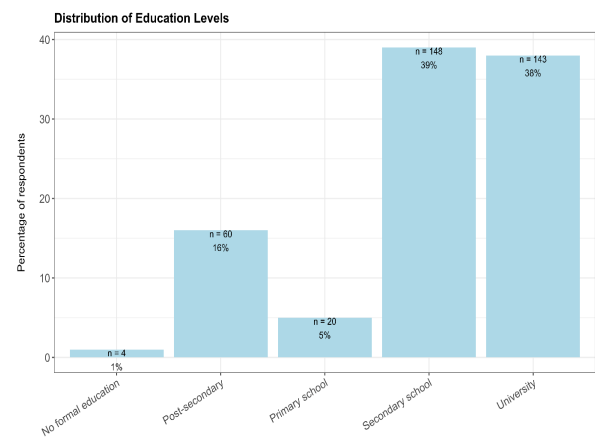
Similarly in **Canada** the overall number of first-generation respondents was generally consistent between the two key genders, while the number of first-generation female participants was relatively higher than that of first-generation male participants. In addition, the overall number of first-generation participants was relatively lower than that of second-generation participants (see Figure 6).

**Figure 6: Canada – gender and generation**



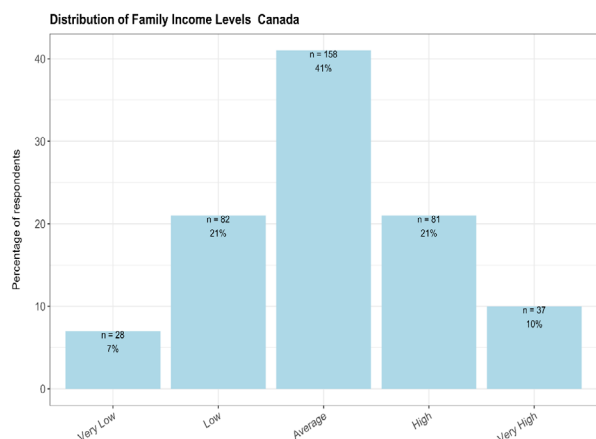
In Canada four (1%) participants reported having no formal education, 20 (5%) had primary school education and a further 148 (39%) had completed secondary education. Among the remaining respondents, 60 (16%) were post-secondary educated and 134 (38%) were tertiary educated (see Figure 7).

**Figure 7: Canada – highest level of education**



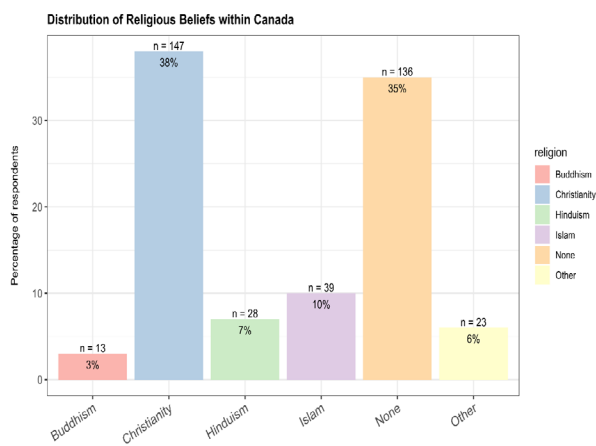
The number of participants with high to very high income (118) was lower than participants with average income (158) by a significant margin, while the difference with participants with low and very low income (110) was marginal (see Figure 8).

**Figure 8: Canada – household income**



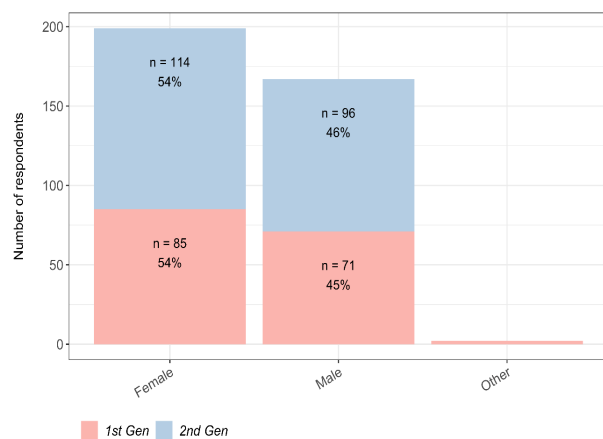
Regarding religious beliefs, 147 (38%) of the participants were affiliated with Christianity, 39 (10%) with Islam, 28 (7%) with Hinduism, 13 (3%) with Buddhism and 23 (6%) with other religions, while 136 (35%) of the participants reported they had No Religion (see Figure 9).

**Figure 9: Canada – religion**



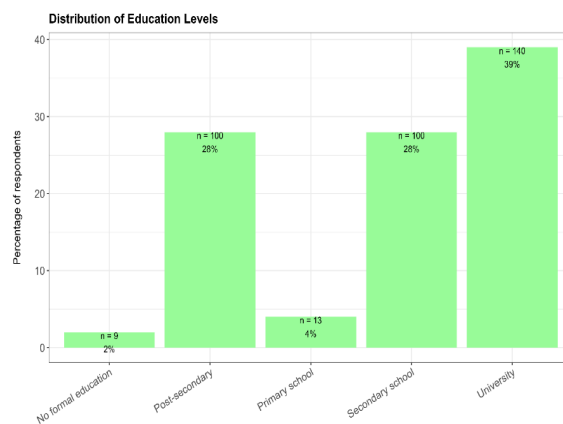
In the **UK**, the number of female respondents across first and second-generation participants was a little higher than that of male participants, while the number of first-generation participants (116) was relatively lower than that of second-generation participants (210) (see Figure 10).

**Figure 10: UK – gender and generation**



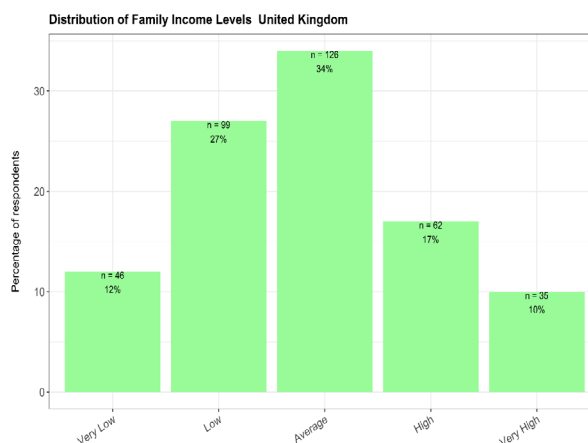
Regarding level of education, nine (2%) participants reported having no formal education, 13 (4%) had primary school education and 100 (28%) had completed secondary education. Among the remaining respondents, 100 (28%) were post-secondary educated and 140 (39%) were tertiary educated (see Figure 11).

**Figure 11: UK – highest level of education**



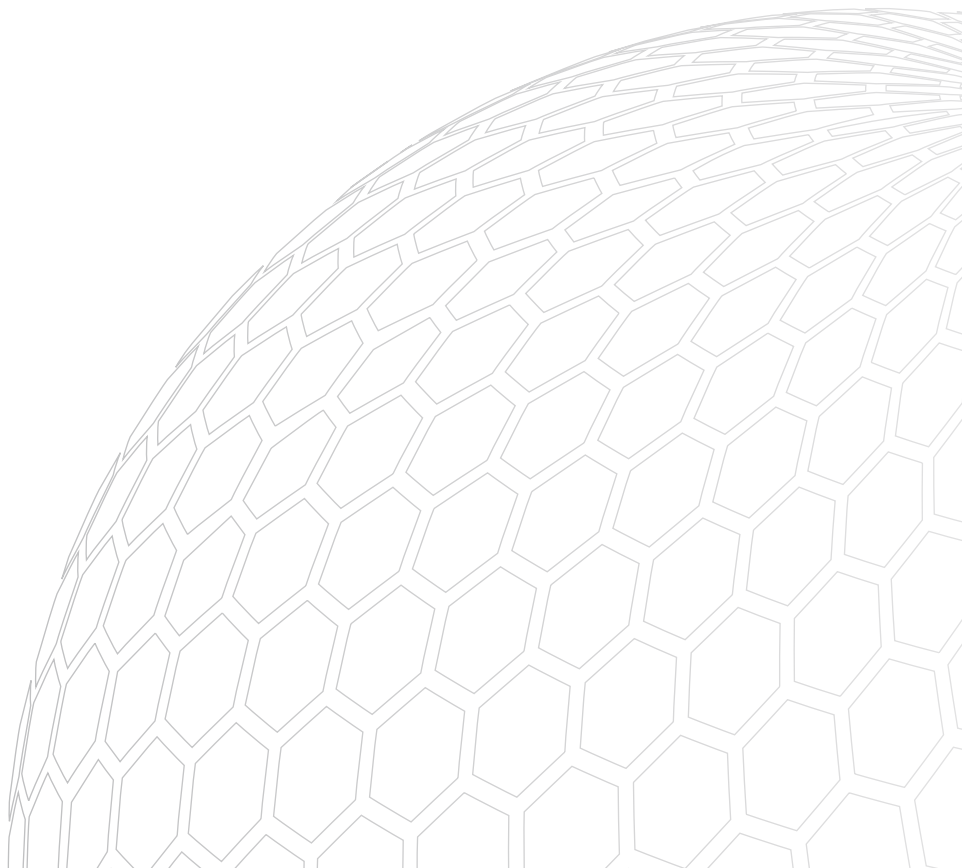
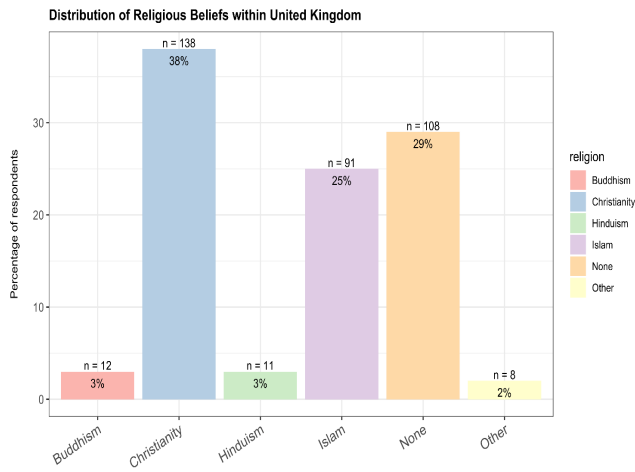
The number of participants with high to very high household income (97) was lower than participants with average income (126) and low and very low income (145) (see Figure 12).

**Figure 12: UK – household income**



Regarding religious beliefs, Christianity and No Religion, followed by Islam, were the most common categories in the UK sample (see Figure 13).

**Figure 13: UK – religion**





# Interviews

A total of 119 interviews were conducted across Melbourne, Toronto and Birmingham. Interviews were conducted in English with the help of local research assistants. Participants included a mix of first- and second-generation migrants, from a variety of genders, and ethnic and religious backgrounds. Each interview lasted between 45–90 minutes in duration, and primarily explored questions on culture and transcultural capital. Interviews were recorded and transcribed, before being analysed in NVivo using hierarchically structured thematic nodes.

In Melbourne, 39 participants were recruited to participate in the interviews (see Table 4 in the appendices). This included 24 females and 15 males, of whom 29 were first-generation migrants and 10 were second-generation migrants. Among first-generation migrants, the most common countries of birth were Afghanistan (five) and Vietnam (three) (followed by India, Indonesia, and the US). Of these participants, 15 had lived in Australia for 0–5 years, while five had lived in the country for 6–10 years and nine had lived there for 11+ years. Among all participants, the most common religion was Islam (15), followed by Christianity (11), and No Religion (5). The top reasons for migrating to Australia included economic or work, and political and asylum reasons.

In Toronto, 40 participants were recruited to participate in the interviews (see Table 5 in the appendices). This included 24 females and 16 males, of whom 24 were first-generation migrants and 16 were second-generation migrants. Among first-generation migrants, the most common countries of birth were China (three) and Pakistan (three) (followed by Bangladesh, India, Mexico, and Taiwan). Of these participants, nine had lived in Canada for 0–5 years, while nine had lived in the country for 6–10 years and six had lived there for 11+ years. Among all participants, the most common religion was No Religion (17), followed by Christianity (nine) and Islam (eight). The top reasons for migrating to Canada included economic or work, and study reasons.

In Birmingham, 40 participants were recruited to take part in interviews (see Table 6 in the appendices). This included 23 females and 17 males, of which 22 were first-generation migrants and 18 were second-generation migrants. Among first-generation migrants, the most common countries of birth were India (five), followed by Italy and Pakistan. Of the first-generation cohort, 14 had lived in the UK for 0–5 years, while two had lived in the country for 6–10 years and six had lived there for 11+ years. Among all participants, the most common religion was Islam (18), followed by No Religion (12) and Hinduism (four). The top reasons for migrating to the UK were economic or work, and study reasons.

# Research Sites

According to recent data from the United Nations (2017), there are more than 52.4 million international migrants aged between 15 and 29 years old. Of these, 1.3 million live in Australia, 1.2 million live in Canada and 2.2 million live in the UK. These migrants account for a significant proportion of these countries' youth cohorts (see Table 1). Importantly, this figure does not capture those young people who belong to the so-called second generation – that is, those individuals born in Australia, Canada or the UK to one or both overseas-born parents. In Australia, for instance, the latest census revealed that 48.2 per cent of Australians have a parent born overseas, and 27.6 per cent were born outside Australia (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2021a). Similarly, while 22.0 per cent of the total population in Canada was foreign born, a further 17.4 per cent are second-generation migrants (Statistics Canada 2018). In the UK, while the Office of National Statistics (2018a) records that 14.4 per cent of the population was born overseas, there is no available data on second-generation migrants per se. One could use ethnicity as a proxy for the second-generation, whereby 9.0 per cent of the UK-born population in England and Wales identified as belonging to an ethnic or white minority other than “white” British (Nomis 2013a).<sup>1</sup>

Young migrants, like most international migrants, are increasingly concentrated in major cities and metropolitan areas. In Australia, migrants are concentrated in Sydney, followed by Melbourne (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2021a). In Canada, migrants are concentrated in Toronto, Vancouver, and Montréal (Statistics Canada 2017c). In the UK, the migrant population is concentrated primarily in London, followed by Birmingham and Manchester. As reflected in the heterogeneity of recruited participants, Melbourne, Toronto and Birmingham are increasingly diverse (see Table 2). In Melbourne, for instance, 40.9 per cent of the population is born overseas, while in Toronto and Birmingham the figures stand at 46.1 per cent and 18.6 per cent respectively (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2021b; Office of National Statistics 2018a; Statistics Canada 2017b).<sup>2</sup> Importantly, the cities in this case study not only have a significant proportion of migrants, they also have a significant young population overall. As noted by the likes of Nilan and Feixa (2006:8), “the vast multi-ethnic cities of the planet are overwhelmingly where young people live and where they engage in representations of identity”. In Melbourne’s metropolitan area, 39.8 per cent of the population is aged under 29, while in Toronto and Birmingham the figures stand at 36.9 per cent and 42.2 per cent respectively.

**Table 1: Melbourne – interview participants (selected demographics)**

	15–19	20–24	25–29
World	10,868,872 (1.8%)	17,039,051 (2.9%)	24,531,891 (4.0%)
Australia	328,259 (18.2%)	542,778 (28.4%)	698,884 (34.2%)
Canada	306,976 (15.1%)	360,807 (14.8%)	562,059 (22.2%)
UK	351,224 (9.5%)	790,662 (19.3%)	1,079,679 (24.4%)

Source: United Nations (2017).

1. This includes individuals who identified as Black, Asian, Mixed/Multiple, and other more specific categories of ethnicity as well as “white” minorities (such as Irish or Any Other). The use of ethnicity as a proxy is problematic for two reasons: first, because it depends on the self-identification of individuals, and second because one cannot truly differentiate between second-generation and third-generation migrants or other minorities who may still identify with the ethnic group of their ancestors.

2. While the foreign-born population in Birmingham is smaller in both absolute and relative terms when compared to that of Melbourne and Toronto, this area has witnessed a significant increase in its foreign-born population from 294,082 in 2001 to 540,000 in 2017 (Nomis 2001; Office for National Statistics 2018b). Similarly, as recorded in the latest census, 33.9% of the population of metropolitan Birmingham identified as belonging to an ethnic or white minority other than “white” British (Nomis 2013b).

In all three cases, the median age – ranging from 35.6 years old in Birmingham to 36 years old in Melbourne and 39.4 years old in Toronto – is also lower than their respective national medians (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2021b; Office for National Statistics 2018b; Statistics Canada 2017b).

While Melbourne, Toronto and Birmingham can be characterised as young and diverse, there are important differences between their populations. For instance, while English is the most common spoken language in the three cities, these are linguistically diverse sites. In metropolitan Melbourne, 4.3 per cent of the population speaks Mandarin at home, while other commonly spoken languages include Greek, Italian and Vietnamese (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2021b). In metropolitan Toronto, 4.4 per cent of the population speaks Cantonese, while Mandarin, Panjabi, Italian and Tagalog are also common (Statistics Canada 2017b). In metropolitan Birmingham, 2.1 per cent of the population speaks Panjabi, and other frequently spoken languages include Urdu, Polish, Bengali and “Chinese” (i.e., either Mandarin or Cantonese) (Nomis 2013a).

In addition, immigration has led to the growth of religious diversity across these cities. While Christianity remains by far the dominant religious denomination, Islam is to varying degrees the second largest religion in these three cities.<sup>3</sup> Notably, there is also a significant component of the population – larger than the Muslim minority in each city – who identify as being nonreligious.<sup>4</sup>

**Table 2: Population profile of research sites**

	MELBOURNE	TORONTO	BIRMINGHAM
Total Population	4,485,211	5,928,040	2,897,303
Overseas Born Population	1,801,139	2,705,550	540,000
Overseas Born as % of Total	40.2%	46.1%	18.6%
Median Age of Total Population	36 years	39.4 years	35.6 years
% of the Population Aged under 29	39.8%	36.9%	42.2%

Sources: for Melbourne, Australian Bureau of Statistics (2021b); for Toronto, Statistics Canada (2017b); and for Birmingham, Office of National Statistics (2018b).

3. In Melbourne, 24.2% of the population belongs to a Christian denomination, but 3.9% practices Islam, and 6% practices Buddhism (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2021b). In Toronto, 56.7% of the population practices Christianity, while 7.7% of the population are Muslim, 5.9% are Hindu and 3.0% are Jewish (Statistics Canada 2017a). In Birmingham, 53.8% of the population is Christian, while an additional 12.2% are Muslim, 4.3% are Sikhs and 2.2% are Hindu (Nomis 2013c).

4. This is particularly the case in Melbourne, where 34.6% of the population reports no religious affiliation. The percentages are also high in Toronto and Birmingham, where figures stand at 21.1% and 20.3% respectively.

# Research site 1: Melbourne (Australia)

Currently, the largest immigrant populations in Melbourne are from India, China, England and Vietnam, although in the past century there were also large migrations from Italy and Greece (Victoria State Government 2018). These trends reflect changing immigration policies at the national level. Ever since Federation in 1901, the Australian government has had a proactive approach to controlling immigration (Jupp 2007). One of the first acts of the newly formed parliament was to establish the so-called White Australia Policy in response to popular discontent about immigration of workers from Asia and the Pacific Islands, which had grown following the end of convict transportation and in response to the gold rush. This policy was epitomised by The Immigration Restriction Act (1901), which, along with other pieces of legislation such as the Pacific Island Labourers Act, sought to facilitate the deportation of non-whites and restrict the immigration and settlement of non-British migrants (National Museum of Australia 2018a, 2018b). Following WWII, this was supplemented by efforts to increase immigration from the UK through initiatives such as the Assisted Passage Migration Scheme. Efforts to increase Australia's population (under the "populate or perish" slogan) led to the relaxation of policies, first by permitting immigration from southern and eastern Europe and later by allowing the immigration of "distinguished and highly qualified" individuals from Asia (Department of Home Affairs 2018). The White Australia Policy was formally dismantled in the 1970s, when the Whitlam government implemented a non-racially based immigration policy and ratified international agreements relating to racial discrimination (Department of Home Affairs 2018; National Museum of Australia 2018c). Since then, the proportion of migrants coming from the UK and continental Europe has fallen, while that of migrants from Asia, the Middle East and Africa has grown.

Immigration policy in Australia has been altered significantly "since 1945 when attracting general migrants (primarily from the UK) was the priority, to focussing on attracting economic migrants and temporary (predominantly skilled) migrants" (Parliament of Australia 2017). Two important and inter-related changes have taken place as Australia has refocused its migration program towards the selection of "skilled, entrepreneurial and youthful immigrants" (Committee to Advise on Australia's Immigration Policies 1988). First, there has been a growing emphasis on economic criteria, where – in a reversal to pre-1996 trends that favoured family reunification based on non-economic criteria – the majority of migrants now come to Australia through the "skill" rather than the "family" stream of the migration program. Second, there is a larger number of temporary migrants, where in another reversal to pre-1990s trends, temporary migration – driven primarily by international student and temporary skilled worker visas – has overtaken settlement migration (i.e., those coming through the capped migration program that combines the skill and family streams mentioned above) (Hugo 2004). This is important in terms of migrant youth in places like Melbourne and in terms of the overall demographics of Australia. As recently noted by an economics commentator: "particularly because of our emphasis on skilled workers and students (as opposed to bringing out nonna and nonno), the median age of new migrants is between 20 and 25, more than 10 years younger than the median age of the rest of us" (Gittins 2018).

Throughout these changes, and as a move away from policies of assimilation and integration, Australia (as was the case in Canada) adopted multiculturalism in the 1970s as an approach to manage the country's diversity and facilitate the incorporation of migrants (see Department of Home Affairs 2017 for a timeline of policy developments). As described by Castles (2002:1156), multiculturalism implies "recognizing rights to cultural maintenance and community formation and linking these to social equality and protection from discrimination". While Australia's multiculturalism is a success story in many ways (Soutphommasane 2016), this shift towards recognition of cultural diversity did not eliminate some of the deep-seated racial preconceptions and inequalities that have characterised Australia since colonisation (Mikola and Mansouri 2015). This remains a latent tension as evidenced by increasingly draconian policies against asylum seekers, persistent anxieties over "Muslim" extremism and "African" youth gangs, or

media and political bashing of the undesirable impact of immigration on employment and population size. Australia has not experienced a "backlash against multiculturalism" like that witnessed in Europe (Vertovec and Wessendorf 2010). Nonetheless, in the last decades, there have been significant policy changes at the national level away from what Jayasuriya (2007:2) calls "civic multiculturalism" (which stresses full and equal participation in political and social life) and towards "cultural/ethnic multiculturalism" (which emphasises integration into "core" or Anglo Celtic cultural values). This transition is summarised by Harris (2010:576), who argues that "policy is no longer grounded in ideas of rights, justice and equity, but cohesion, shared values and harmony, with the terms 'community cohesion' or 'social cohesion' becoming particularly dominant" (see also Ho 2013).<sup>5</sup> As further explored below, this shifting emphasis to cohesion is common also to Canada and the UK.



5. Ho (2013) identifies three phases in the history of multiculturalism in Australia. First, the phase of "social justice" (1970–1980s), with an emphasis on social economic inequalities in line with the development of the welfare state in Australia. Second, the phase of "productive diversity" (1980s and 1990s), with a focus on economic efficiency in line with the rise of neo-liberalism. Third, the phase of social cohesion (2000s to present) which – within market-led approaches to policy-making – responds to anxieties about minorities and the threat of terrorism.

## Research site 2: Toronto (Canada)

The history of immigration in Canada is somewhat similar to that of Australia. Some of these similarities are reflected at the local level in Toronto, where the largest migrant populations are currently from India, China, the Philippines and Pakistan, and where large flows from the UK, the US, Italy and Greece took place in previous decades. Canada – like Australia – has had a very proactive and selective approach to managing immigration.

While previously open to labour migration from across Europe and Asia to support rural agricultural, mining and lumbering activity, Canada shifted considerably in its approach, implementing significant restrictions against non-British migrants, starting with the Chinese Immigration Act of 1885 (and consequent amendments) and the Immigration Act of 1906 (Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21 2018).

Restrictions based on race or ethnic origin increased while Canada pursued the recruitment of British and northern European migrants for the first half of the 20th Century. As in the Australian case, a combination of international and national events – such as the two world wars, economic depressions and changing demographics, to name a few – led to the loosening of these restrictions (Jansen and Lam 2003). This is exemplified by the recruitment of Slavs and Jews from displaced-person camps in Europe and by the small quotas set for non-white immigrants from Commonwealth countries in the 1950s (Troper 2003). Overt racial discrimination was eliminated in the 1960s, when a points system was introduced to assess potential immigrants based on factors such as their education and occupational and language skills (Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21 2018).



6. "Visible minorities" are "persons, other than Aboriginal peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour". As per 2016, the "visible minority" population consists mostly of the following groups: South Asian, Chinese, Black, Filipino, Latin American, Arab, Southeast Asian, West Asian, Korean and Japanese (st 2017b).

This resulted in a decrease of immigration from Europe and the US and an increase in immigration from other parts of the world (particularly Asia and the Pacific). According to Jansen and Lam (2003:64), the proportion of immigrants from Europe fell from 91 per cent in 1946–1955 to 19 per cent in 1995–1999. At the same time, migration from Asia and the Pacific grew from 1.2 per cent to 53 per cent.

Significant changes have accompanied the transformation of Canada's immigration policy (Griffith 2017). Echoing changes in Australia, immigration to Canada has become more selective. While the proportion of economic immigrants remained relatively stable (at about half of the total intake) until the 1990s, since 1994 the number of economic migrants has exceeded that of the other categories (Reitz 2014). Furthermore, the migrant population has become more diverse and urbanised. As mentioned previously, the introduction of the points system for screening potential immigrants opened the door to non-European migrants. And contrary to migrants in the past, who settled in rural areas, migrants in the last decades have settled in urban areas such as Toronto, where "visible minorities" now account for more than 51 per cent of the total population (Statistics Canada 2017b).<sup>6</sup> Finally, temporary migration has also grown in Canada. For instance, in 2016 over 286,000 work permits were granted to temporary workers (in comparison to the 296,000 permanent residents who were also welcomed that year) (Government of Canada 2017).

It is well known that Canada implemented a multicultural policy in 1971 to manage this increasing diversity. This was consequently revised in the Canadian Multiculturalism Act of 1988. Canadian multiculturalism developed in the context of French and English bilingualism and biculturalism and, unlike the Australian model, has its principles enshrined in the country's constitution. While the Canadian model has been criticised, it can be considered successful insofar as "services have been developed and influenced by ... values, such as human rights, equality, and the recognition of diversity, perceived as fundamental in the process of uniting Canadians" (Vasta 2007:17). Yet, the focus of multiculturalism in Canada has also changed throughout the years. According to Fleras (2009), there are four distinguishable policy stages in Canadian multiculturalism (see also Kymlicka 2015).<sup>7</sup> First, the 1970s can be seen as the stage of "ethnicity" multiculturalism, with a cultural emphasis on respecting differences. Second, the 1980s to early 1990s can be seen as the stage of "equity" multiculturalism, with a structural emphasis in fostering equality. Third, the stage between the mid-1990s and early 2000s can be seen as that of "civic" multiculturalism, with a social emphasis on living together. Finally, a fourth stage of "integrative" multiculturalism has taken place in recent years, with a social emphasis on integration. While there are continuities between the last two phases, Fleras (2009:70) emphasises that "a repositioning toward integration as [a] governance mode reflects parallel developments in Europe and the Antipodes, including a shift from diversity and disadvantage to that of integration, youth-at-risk, intercultural understanding, and Canadian values".

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7. Kymlicka (2015) identifies three stages in the history of multiculturalism in Canada, where "ethnicity", "race" and "religion" each form the cumulative basis for multicultural claims.

# Research site 3: Birmingham (UK)

The UK is vastly different from Australia and Canada in terms of its history of immigration and diversity management. While the UK has a long history of emigration and immigration, it only became a country of net immigration in the mid-1980s (Fleras 2009), with numbers surging since the late 1990s (Hansen 2014). Immigration into the UK over the last century has been closely linked to its colonial past. British subjects as well as citizens from Commonwealth nations could freely migrate and remain in the UK prior to 1962 (while there were many restrictions against non-British “aliens”). The existing populations of migrants from India, Pakistan, Ireland and Jamaica, and their descendants in places such as Birmingham are largely a legacy of this policy and the consequent development of migrant networks and family reunifications. However, these migrations were not without controversy, and the Commonwealth Immigrants Act 1968 and the Immigration Act 1971 imposed important restrictions on these movements (Hansen 2014). In particular, the later Act reshaped immigration policy by removing the privileged access of citizens of the Commonwealth and by establishing family reunification and work permits as the only avenues for immigration. While the UK immigration system throughout the 1970s and the 1980s can be described as restrictive, the Labour government adopted an expansive immigration regime in the late 1990s and throughout the 2000s. This is demonstrated by the record increase in work permits issued under the 1971 Act, and by the granting of entry rights to A8<sup>8</sup> nationals as part of the enlargement of the European Union (EU) (Gower 2015; Hansen 2014).<sup>9</sup> Since 2010, however, restrictions have been imposed with the goal of reducing net migration from the “hundreds of thousands” to the “tens of thousands” (see Gower 2015 for a summary of policy changes between 2010–2015).

Important changes have also taken place in the UK throughout these years. In demographic terms, and although the population of migrants from former colonies – and their descendants – remains significant both quantitatively and qualitatively, there has been a growth in the population of migrants from the EU. While official estimates suggest that between 2004–2013 the net migration from the EU to the UK was 839,000 (with citizens of the A8 accounting for just over half of these migrants), the numbers could be higher due to the undercounting of migrants (Vargas-Silva 2014). The growth of the European migrant population is reflected at the local level in the metropolitan area of Birmingham, where there is now a relatively large Polish immigrant population (Nomis 2013d). In terms of policy, there has also been a shift towards selectivity to “attract more of the brightest and the best at the same time as we reduce the overall number” (May in Gower 2015:3). This has resulted in reforms to restrict study, work and family migration while creating a more “hostile environment” against irregular migrants (Gower 2015). While the government had a limited ability to regulate the entry rights of migrants from the EU, several reforms – such as imposing restrictions on access to welfare benefits and limiting the movement of migrants from Croatia, Romania and Bulgaria (the latest three members to join the EU) – were implemented to try to curtail unwanted flows (Gower 2015). Yet, immigration levels continued to be a polarising issue, as demonstrated by the Brexit referendum. Consequently, in early 2021, a new migration system (which halted free movement between the EU and the UK and imposed a new visa regime) was implemented (Somerville and Walsh 2021).

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8. The A8 refers to eight Eastern European countries – Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, and Slovenia – that joined the European Union following its expansion in 2004.

9. Other policy changes adopted between 1997 and 2010 included: the liberalisation of the work permit system (e.g. lowering entry requirements, extending periods of stay, etc.); the introduction of a point system (based on the Canadian and Australian models) to attract skilled workers; and the creation of a Sector Based Scheme and the reform of the Workers Holiday Scheme, to attract temporary migrants (Hansen 2014).



Against this background, and when compared to Australia and Canada, the UK appears multicultural by drift or by proxy (Fleras 2009). As argued by Fleras (2009:166), “multicultural governance [was] based on the principle of passive coexistence, but neither codified in official documents nor expressed as formal nationwide policy” and “many of the ideas and practices associated with multiculturalism were pursued ... through race relations initiatives”. In practice, following the introduction of immigration controls in the 1960s and 1970s, and partly as a response to mobilisations by migrant communities, the UK introduced anti-discrimination measures as exemplified by the Race Relations Acts 1965, 1968 and 1976 and the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 (Somerville and Cooper 2009). While this was not framed explicitly in terms of advancing a multicultural agenda, it

aimed to tackle individual and institutional forms of discrimination and inequality in terms of access to employment, housing, education, health and welfare while reducing inter-group tensions (Fleras 2009; Grillo 2009). Important changes to this model have been pursued in the last decade as “multiculturalism” has come under sustained criticism (see Modood 2013 for a summary of this). Two inter-related changes have taken place. First, “a neo-monocultural model of governance emerged, foundationally anchored around the principles of cohesion and integration with primary goals fixated on community, Britishness, and shared values” (Fleras 2009:181). Second, there has been a reframing of diversity (and difference) from “race” to “faith” (Grillo 2009) and an associated reframing of “Muslim integration as a security issue” (Somerville and Cooper 2009:132).



# Research Findings

In the following two subsections we discuss the key findings of the project. We first focus on emergent commonalities across the three research sites, including how – for the youth participating in this study – diversity and difference are enablers of productive transcultural capital. Data reveals that the transcultural capital that migrant youth access, develop and deploy in their everyday lives has enabled them to recognise and navigate cross-cultural differences and similarities, and embrace them with time. Furthermore, data shows that this capital has become essential in building socio-cultural competencies and interpersonal skills (such as empathy, respect and tolerance), which are vital in an increasingly interdependent and super-diverse world. Likewise, we explore how this capital becomes a potential asset for them, and for the local communities and societies with which they interact.

Following this discussion on commonalities, we explore key differences between the research sites. Data shows that while living in emigre societies, migrant youth are faced with many challenges, including equality concerns, social exclusion and racism. However, there are differences in relation to the nature and severity of these challenges. Clearly, these variations are due to the local dynamics that are reflective of politics and trends across Australia, Canada and the UK. Each of these host countries has its own immigration and citizenship policies as well as different approaches to multiculturalism and religious and cultural diversity, while the demographic makeup – and the challenges faced by specific groups – also varies from one country (and city) to another.

# Commonalities Across Sites

## 1. Difference and Diversity as Transcultural Capital in Specific Times and Places

Participants across the three sites expressed an understanding of the potential of transcultural capital, or their ability to engage with and draw from multiple cultural repertoires. They spoke of their ability to move from one culture to the other, and to “be able to bring two [cultures] together, to be able to have ... [a] unique sense of cultural identity, and confidence and pride in both” (Mary, 20, female, born in Ethiopia, living in Australia for 11+ years, Melbourne). They also spoke of their ability to navigate difference:

... it’s more of an advantage because it makes you more open minded to different types of cultures. You’re not just looking at, you’re not thinking of, you know, just how you’ve been raised, you can see how other people think and how other people maybe want to, you know, interact with you or their own upbringing, you see the differences and you can kind of connect in certain ways and you can, sort of, you know, become a little bit more different to them as well. (Viraj, 21, male, born in the UK, Birmingham)

Importantly, this transcultural capital exemplifies that migrant youth are not “caught” or “lost” between two worlds, as they can master several cultural repertoires and selectively deploy them in specific times and spaces:

I’m good at, like... sort of switching it on and off, in a weird way. I can adapt between both of the cultures, depending on what scenario I’m in, and it happens fairly quickly ... So, when I’m in a scenario where I’m interacting with a Canadian group and a Tamil group, I can go back and forth a lot more fluently than some other people can. (Thilini, 25, female, born in Canada, Toronto)

In many ways, this understanding of transcultural capital was related to their positive experiences of local diversity and their view of Australia (Melbourne), Canada (Toronto) and the UK (Birmingham) as multicultural and/or diverse places. Almost all participants highlighted the advantage of living in these multicultural spaces, as the entrenched demographic and cultural diversity helped reinforce a deeper sense of belonging: “...especially since we live in Toronto, like, we’re known for being a melting pot – a lot of different backgrounds, a lot of different people, so you don’t feel like you stick out, you feel like you blend in” (Anh, 24, female, born in Canada, Toronto). This spatial dimension is of critical importance, as these specific opportunities for accumulating capital are afforded by the socio-cultural context of a specific place (Berry et al. 2006; Thrift 2008). Exposure to different cultures from living in multicultural areas, for example, was viewed as a resource that could be converted into capital essential for developing an ability to understand, communicate with, and effectively interact with people across difference, to “challenge normative separations or dominant hegemonies” and prepare “the grounds for reflexivity and for the public bridging of cultural differences” (Werbner and Modood 2015:xv).

This type of transcultural capital, gained through building knowledge and understanding of multiple cultures, situates difference and diversity in positive terms, with reference to the possibilities and opportunities embodied in the migrant youth’s competencies.

Being actively exposed to multiple cultures and difference resulted in developing many socio-cultural competencies and interpersonal skills, such as nuanced cultural awareness, open-mindedness, empathy towards people of different cultural backgrounds and reflexivity. As noted by Fiona:

... there's so many different kinds of cultures and ... of different ethnicity backgrounds, then we also need to learn to, kind of, blend with them and to how to respect them so we can create, like, good community ... in China, mostly it's just dominated by just Chinese people so they have their own, kind of, way of thinking but in Canada, because we have so many kinds of different people so there is many different kind of opinions and different kinds of thinking. But that's also ... helped me to also have a more moderate and more open view of, like, just in general and it is good ... I think it also makes me ... more open to accepting different kinds of people who are also coming from different places. (Fiona, 20, female, born in China, living in Canada for 11+ years, Toronto)

Similarly, as noted by Ahmed:

I think in two fronts, one, because you can, in one regard, appreciate and understand the cultural nuances or people's problems often that people are going through ... And secondly, by actually having that emotion with different people with different cultures, it allows you to see beyond the culture ... the more people you meet, the more you realise everyone has similar fears and insecurities and that's what allows you to help them. Because in many regards you're not looking at them through a cultural lens, you're seeing what their problem is as a human problem and not as a Chilean problem, a Lebanese problem, a Christian problem... (Ahmed, 21, male, born in Australia, Melbourne)

Not only space but time was also significant in building transcultural capital. A wide range of participants emphasised the importance of time in realising that difference was not a disadvantage. Coming of age or reaching adulthood often presented an opportunity to reconcile the multiple cultures they belonged to, and to value them:

... I guess when I was younger it was more, at times, I was more ashamed of my culture because it made me different from everyone else and obviously when you're a pre-teen or whatever you just want to be like everyone else. You don't want to be different. So it wasn't something that really resonated with me and it was just kind of a roadblock to being normal. But as time has gone on, I've grown to really appreciate my culture much more and kind of get into it and really understand the value of it, what it means to me, et cetera. (Alla, 21, female, born in Ukraine, living in Canada for 11+ years, Toronto)

The temporal dimension emerged as one of the overarching themes, particularly concerning how migrant youth in general – and second-generation migrants in particular – constructed their identities. Most participants described how their identity had developed and their perceptions of their parents' original culture had positively changed over time. Based on their age and developmental period, they were in an ongoing process of constructing and reconstructing their transcultural identities (Moskal and Sime 2016), which represented resistance, negotiation and adaptation, but most importantly change – which was often positive. They explained how they realised that their ethnic and cultural difference was not a disadvantage, but rather a source of self-identification and self-empowerment:

I projected self-hate upon myself. I didn't like being Asian. I wanted to be white, or I wanted to be black or I wanted to be something else. I didn't embrace the music, the Bollywood films, the clothes, and the culture ... And it was only until I got to a later age in my life, I'd say 16–17 but specifically when I started university at 18–19 where I definitely developed more of a sense of an empowerment, where I was studying South Asian history, the Mughal empire, Partition and I could connect with a lot these things that made me feel proud of who I was rather than feeling like I didn't really fit in. (Talha, 23, male, born in the UK, Birmingham)

Another common element across the three sites was the way identity was negotiated by the participants. There was frequent mention of the fact that migrant youth identities are fluid, multifaceted and multi-scaled (i.e. beyond uniform/homogeneous descriptions). Generally, participants described their identities in terms of their religion, their families and friends, their countries of birth and/or ethnic communities, the music they listened to, and their education. With regard to multi-faceted and multi-scalar identities, participants described them as changing, context specific and based on their relationships to others. As noted by Farah:

It depends on who I'm around, I feel like, because if I'm around people that are Pakistani, then I start adapting to that more and if I'm around people that are completely Western, then I act like I'm completely Western. So it does depend on who I'm around more. (Farah, 22, female, born in Pakistan, living in Canada for 11+ years, Toronto)

Likewise, as noted by Matthew:

... here I define as Italian because I feel like everyone from here is usually from somewhere else and then when I'm overseas I'm Australian ... I feel that just helps define me better. So, in Australia I'm Australian Italian, and then when I'm overseas it's just a bit misleading, so I'm just clear if I'm just Australian... (Mathew, 24, male, born in Australia, Melbourne)

However, for many of the participants, the multi-faceted nature of their identities posed a challenge to their sense of belonging in the host countries. Participants – particularly second-generation migrants – spoke of the mismatch between the way they see themselves and the way others see them. Some also questioned what it means to be “Australian”, “Canadian” or “British”:

... I will never be feeling like an Australian because here I am brown skin, English is not my first language, I don't eat Vegemite, yes, quite a lot of things quite contradictory to it ... because I feel that the word “Australian” at the moment is only applicable to the people who tend to have white skin and people who tend to have a European heritage and all the Anglo Saxon. (Muhammad, 23, male, born in Indonesia, living in Australia between 6–10 years, Melbourne)

Participants like Muhammad and Hamza pointed to persistence of whiteness in defining their sense of identity and belonging and in creating a divide between themselves and others:

... I think a lot of people do suffer from the fact that they might not be British enough or might not be perceived as British enough by the British public. So, and then that can cause a lot of barriers between, like, integrations of two different, like, societies basically. (Hamza, 21, male, born in Pakistan, living in the UK for 11+ years, Birmingham)

## 2. Mobilising Resources: Cultural Knowledge, Skills and Networks

Participants across the three sites highlighted the benefits accrued from mobilising transcultural capital in response to the opportunities and constraints they faced in their everyday lives. The majority of participants reported that social networks, within and outside their ethnic communities, constituted a resource that they used to overcome challenges and achieve goals in the countries of immigration. In Melbourne in particular, organisations such as migrant centres, teachers, and homework clubs were important networks of support for migrant youth through offering opportunities in relation to study and employment and building networks:

... multicultural groups like the CMY [Centre for Multicultural Youth] have been a lot more helpful for developing employment ... study opportunities, or just being able to do more ... I think it's just introduced to a whole bunch of other people who have had similar but different stories, and all kind of push each other to grow, and point out different opportunities. (Sofia, 21, female, born in Ukraine, living in Australia for 11+ years, Melbourne)

And across all sites, participants highlighted the importance of friendship networks to their everyday lives:

The networks that help me fit in and succeed would probably be the friends that I had, growing up, especially currently, especially in university. Going into university, you experience a lot more culture, a lot more different people, whether that be your classmates, or international students. I think that helped me fit in, and a lot of these kids in university, with different backgrounds, they have drive, and that helped me succeed, because they want to succeed as much as I do. (Anh, 24, female, born in Canada, Toronto)

Furthermore, participants, particularly new arrivals, spoke about how having access to a network within their families and ethnic communities enabled them to settle in Melbourne, Toronto or Birmingham. Access to an "ethnic-specific network" showed how migrant youth utilised cultural and social resources to build capital in the host society (Ryan and Mulholland 2014). These networks may provide accommodation, jobs, information and emotional support, and may eventually facilitate community formation and permanent settlement (Patulny 2015; Hussain 2021b):

I guess during high school definitely that was quite intense where you're not only just resettled but you're learning a whole different culture and all of a sudden, you're forgetting about your own culture and that's exactly what I did. I didn't find a friend from Indonesia because I didn't know where to go. I didn't know there's young people there, so a youth community there, until three years after my resettlement ... there is a community that are basically Australian Indonesian Youth Association and they're making dinner for us or they get together, get along ... I was feeling safe over there that's for sure. So I decided to come every week and I feel like I was being part of it. I feel that I can learn, and I can feel like I belong and I am respected as well. (Muhammad, 23, male, born in Indonesia, living in Australia between 6–10 years, Melbourne)

Another element of transcultural capital was access to important skills, such as language skills gained from engaging with the cultures of countries of emigration and immigration. Linguistic skills represented an asset not only for the participants individually but also for their families, and members of ethnic communities. Most participants spoke of their role as everyday translators for their families (Butcher and Thomas 2006) – particularly for older relatives and members of their ethnic communities with less English-speaking skills:

... since we can speak Finnish, I can translate things for them. If they're having trouble, if they need to send a message or email to somebody, I'll tell them in Finnish and then they'll say it in Finnish to me and then I'll translate that to the message, sort of thing. My dad will do that often, because even when he talks, he's not too bad but sometimes he'll use words that are of a similar meaning but not quite the sort of thing. That's just how he speaks, but I'll usually or one of my brothers will just sort of help him with that. (Lucas, 21, male, born in Finland, living in Australia for 11+ years, Melbourne).

Additionally, multilingualism constituted a cultural capital that allowed participants to access job opportunities (Erel and Ryan 2018). Many of our participants spoke about how linguistic competence was beneficial in accessing the job market and finding a job easily:

... here it's more easy, because in Canada, they hire a lot of people like the native French speaker, and it's that a skill I can have because I am native French speaker ... Because I found a job to translate some stuff by phone, for example. It was a customer service with a company, and also in the restaurants, because I was a server in a French restaurant... (Thomas, 22, male, born in France, living in Canada for less than 5 years, Toronto)

Cultural knowledge and skills, including language skills, also represented a form of transcultural capital that could be mobilised effectively to acquire cultural and ethnic membership and feel a sense of self and belonging within local, national and transnational communities. A number of participants explained how language competence was an advantage to them in terms of feeling integrated into their ethnic community and being valued and welcomed by members of this community:

... if you're a Chinese person and you start speaking in Chinese ... they actually treat you differently than when you speak in English ... they will be like, okay she's trying at least, but she's trying to keep her culture, rather than when you're asking ... person who identifies as Chinese, and you're asking them in English they will just sometimes roll their eyes at you just like, how can you be part of a Chinese culture and not speak the language? (Jessica, 19, female, born in Canada, Toronto)

Cultural knowledge and skills not only provided opportunities for connection and belonging locally but transnationally. Many participants spoke about how being socialised to the norms, values and practices of their families' home cultures served as a bridge to enable feelings of belonging and connection to their country of origin throughout their life trajectories:

I did go back to India in March and I think being able to speak Punjabi helps me connect with my relatives over there. I know a lot of my friends can't speak Punjabi, when they go to India it's like a big disconnect between their relatives and them. But being able to converse with my relatives, I think that's a way to connect with people. (Chitleen, 19, female, born in the UK, Birmingham)

### 3. Relationships with Families, Friends and Ethnic Communities

Across the three sites, participants appreciated the importance of their families, friends and ethnic communities in supporting them with different aspects of their life, including developing and maintaining their cultural identity. Data shows commonalities regarding the ways the migrant youth (mostly second-generation youth) described their relationship with their families. They stressed that their upbringing had shaped their personal, cultural and religious identities. Through family, they have been socialised into a system of values, norms and beliefs that have contributed largely to the formation of their identity. This set of dispositions played itself out through their tendency to develop their sense of self and belonging. Participants spoke about how some aspects of their parents' culture were embedded in them and became part of their attitudes, orientations, behaviour and everyday practices:

... what defines me as a person ... a lot of it goes to cultural aspects from my parents. Upbringing-wise I've always been quite conscious of particular manners and behaviours because the cultural aspect of Indonesia is embedded into my parents, which was passed onto [their] children, which is obviously me. (Anisa, 20, female, born in the UK, Birmingham)

Additionally, the accounts of many participants suggested that some social and cultural values (for example, the high value placed on education by some cultures and societies) transmitted by their families post migration contained elements that supported their academic achievement. This finding is in line with other studies which have found that "the motor of ... overcoming of disadvantage lies in migrant parents getting their children to internalize high educational ambitions and to enforce appropriate behaviour" (Modood 2004: 87; see also Archer and Frances 2007). The narratives of the participants suggest that a complex connection of time and space allowed for replication and reinforcement of cultural values and norms across generations to accrue benefits for the younger generation:

So I think in terms of success or helping me succeed, I wouldn't necessarily associate the places where I wouldn't necessarily include the practices in terms of food and stuff ... but I think it's really the values for me, being able to work hard, should do things to a high standard, to put in a lot of effort, to be highly adaptable so it's kind of those beliefs that are very much part of a Chinese cultural fabric have allowed me to succeed in Australia. (Will, 24, male, born in Australia, Melbourne)

However, despite the critical role of family in intergenerational transmission of cultural knowledge and skills, the transmission – as participants reported – was complex and multifaceted, and at times resulted in intergenerational gaps. Participants, particularly members of the second generation, were aware of the cultural differences between them and their parents as a result of them being socialised in two different cultural worlds. However, their narratives suggested that they adopted strategies to navigate those differences and avoid intra-familial conflicts. As noted by Foner and Dreby (2011:547), "the common image of children of immigrants engaged in pitched battles against tradition bound parents from the old country is a partial, and often misleading, view", as their changing relationships with parents and elders are not only characterised by strain and conflicts, but also by caring, accommodation and solidarity. In this context, intergenerational gaps did not necessarily generate intra-familial conflicts – which may undermine a range of aspects of family solidarity as suggested by the "acculturation gap hypothesis" (Berry 1997, 2001; Kwak 2003; Attias-Donfut and Waite 2012). In fact, a large number of participant accounts indicated generational solidarity and compromise within their families.



In these ways, participants did not simply resist these intergenerational divides or rebel against them; believing resistance may lead to unresolved conflicts, they instead employed strategies to avoid, smooth and negotiate potential tensions. More specifically they acknowledged the value of belonging and connectedness with their families, in contexts where migrants might face social and economic difficulties and social exclusion, and also acknowledged the desire to preserve their cultural identity and traditions. Therefore, the ability to see their own interests and acknowledge the concerns of their parents and elders to reach a mutually beneficial arrangement reveals both an agentic quality and their desire to maintain family ties that strengthen generational solidarity within their families. This resonates with studies that show that the degree of cohesion, solidarity and support exchange tends to be stronger among migrant families than among both native populations and stayers in origin countries (Cela and Fokkema 2016; Baykara-Krumme and Fokkema 2019):

I think when I was 16 it was just a “draw a line and close off our relationship to be a certain thing” and now that I’ve matured, I feel we both feel more comfortable opening back up and that’s partially because I have a far greater understanding of – I always knew their story and how they got here but I never really understood the gravity of it until a few years later ... I just saw it as a burden like, “Oh they’re trying to guilt me into feeling bad about myself for not getting 99”. When really they just wanted me to have a safe and secure future, but they’ve come from this very different experience and so they’re not necessarily well versed to express that in a very articulate way ... I didn’t have the context and we’ll always have our conflicts, it’s just around making sure that there’s an understanding of the values and where we’re coming from ... I think it’s around focusing the conversation on what we do have in common. (Will, 24, male, born in Australia, Melbourne)

Importantly, forms of transnationalism were valued among youth from a cultural and social perspective that emphasised, “the strong potential effect of being raised in a transnational social field” (see Levitt 2009:1126). In particular, second-generation migrant youth across the three sites acknowledged the active role of their parents in maintaining cross-border connections. They reported that their families engaged with a variety of transnational activities to preserve ties, such as ethnic language maintenance, participating in cultural events within their ethnic communities and frequent trips to their homelands. Participants in turn invested in the cultural knowledge transmitted by their parents to develop and build transnational ties and engage in practices within the local and transnational contexts (although their access to the transnational field could be limited compared to their parents) (Kwon 2017; Levitt 2009). Access to home culture provided youth with an avenue for different forms of belonging, including transnational belonging, which enabled them to be culturally connected to their parents’ homelands across generations. This transnational model of belonging that transcends national boundaries is essential to capture the complex interconnectedness of contemporary reality.

This cultural knowledge, which represented a form of transcultural capital, was also an asset for forming friendships with youth not only within the participants’ ethnic circles, but also cross ethnically. Those types of friendships, from the participants point of view, due to shared solidarity and experiences, could help facilitate better communication and develop open-mindedness, flexibility, and intercultural understanding:

For instance the way that, I notice, I notice when I build rapport with people that are also like wog, I can talk about, like, having wog grandparents or growing up in that sort of household, there’s always, always, the set, like, traditions that we do that you can, sort of, bond over... (Stephani, 20, female, born in Australia, Melbourne)

As explained further by Anisa:

I think we share the same bond of being children of immigrants ... Even though we're not from the same part of the world ... even though they're different situations or difficulties that they face it's similar because you get used to the fact that your parents come over to the UK from a foreign land, they have different cultural aspects and then they have difficulties in assimilating to the culture here. You know dealing with language barriers. It's nearly the same thing. My friends are from Jamaica, they're from Zimbabwe, they're from Sri Lanka. And so they have the same thing where the parents sometimes had language barriers or sometimes had financial hardships trying to do studying and then settling with family over in the UK. (Anisa, 20, female, born in the UK, Birmingham)

Living in super-diverse societies enabled participants to interact across difference and to feel comfortable dealing with friends from different cultural groups. Studies (see Harris 2013, 2016; Hussain 2021c) demonstrate that youth cross and mix cultural and ethnic differences in their interactions in local spaces. This does not suggest "that heterogeneity is automatically embraced, but in the mix of everyday diversity" (Harris 2016:361) migrant youth are considerably less inclined to view their differences as "unusual, undesirable, temporal" (Back et al. 2008:19). The engagement that allows them to navigate these social divides does not emerge solely "from shared values, entirely good feelings or an absence of conflict", but rather from "the inevitability and unavoidability of dealing with difference" in mundane ways through their everyday lives (Harris 2014:585; Selby et al. 2018). It is this ability to deal with difference, to cross boundaries, that stands as a valuable form of transcultural capital:

I think that when you engage with these different cultures it will remind, if anything it will remind you of the challenges, it will remind you of how different you are ... But I think what helps you overcome the challenge is when you go beyond the culture and you look at the individual and you realise even though our culture is maybe very different, this person as an individual is not that different from me as an individual ... I think that by engaging with these different cultures I think it's given me a skill and knowledge. The knowledge that it's given me is that I think that for the most part regardless of where people are from or where they grew up, they're mostly the same in some ways ... So the skill that I think that being exposed to these different cultures has given me is that now when I talk to people or meet people or engage with people I try to strip away the culture layer, in a sense, and get to what that cultural layer, what impact that has had on them as a person, like what are their values, what do they like to do for fun, what do they want to do, what do they want for their future, things like that. (Asir, 22, male, born in Bangladesh, living in Canada for less than 5 years, Toronto)

On the other hand, some participants across the three sites shared the perception that forming relations with "white" (Anglo) youth was challenging, due not only to differences between cultures, but also to differences in their lived experiences of growing up as racialised or classed minorities in school, university and the workforce:

[Do I identify as British] I would say yes and no. In a lot of ways British culture has always been embedded because it's the place where I was born. But growing up you can see a lot of differences as to peers that are born here but their parents haven't migrated from anywhere. They were just purely British. Or I'd say white British. So you can see growing up it was a multi-cultural society but at the same time you can tell at one point you didn't feel British enough too – because of different cultures playing a part my life, basically. (Anisa, 20, female, born in the UK, Birmingham)

As noted by both first- and second-generation migrants, this divide challenged their sense of belonging:

I remember in my first year here I tried to make some friends and I remember telling them that it's just so hard for me to find something in common with them because for a, the previous group that I was interacting with, they were mostly, you know, born in Canada, their parents and grandparents had been born in Canada, they are mostly Caucasians and yeah, I guess, that, not only, I guess because they also come from a better social economic status than I do, so, yeah, I found it harder to, you know, to belong, find a sense of belonging in that environment (Annie, 20, female, born in Taiwan, living in Canada between 6–10 years, Toronto).

In contrast to this, one of the other similarities identified in the data is that relationships with their own ethnic communities were particularly important for many participants in terms of maintaining their cultural identity and feeling a sense of belonging. Ethnic ties and bonds may indirectly contribute to providing the means for accessing social capital through feeling a sense of belonging, raising confidence, or generating cultural capital (Anthias 2007).

I feel like most of the people my age in this community are in a similar situation to me, where either they came when they were very young, or even when their parents came here, and they were born here ... I don't know if the Ukrainian community would help with my own development in employment or anything like that, but I think it has definitely helped with the interpersonal community-based aspect of it. So, feeling like I've got a community to belong to. (Sofia, 21, female, born in Ukraine, living in Australia for 11+ years, Melbourne)

As explored before, ethnic ties can also provide an important source of social capital in the form of support, information and community, in particular for new migrants (Ryan and Mulholland 2014; Hussain 2021b).

# Differences Between Sites

## 1. Melbourne

Melbourne is home to a large number of migrants, with the most common countries of birth including China (excluding SARs and Taiwan), India and New Zealand. In terms of religion, Islam is the largest minority (followed by Buddhism and Hinduism). As noted above, and in terms of immigration policy, these changing demographics reflect Australia's growing focus on attracting economic and temporary migrants (predominantly international students and temporary skilled workers) (Hugo 2004). Likewise, while multiculturalism remains the official policy to manage diversity, in recent decades there has been a controversial shift from a focus on social justice to one on social cohesion.

The complexities of multiculturalism in Australia were captured in our interviews: while participants spoke highly of their experiences of diversity and multiculturalism in Melbourne, many also spoke of the challenges of growing up and coming of age as first- and second-generation migrants. Similarly, many also demonstrated a keen understanding of the struggles of previous generations (i.e., their parents and grandparents) and the challenges that more recent arrivals (i.e., friends) have faced:

... you know when you're going to university there's, I think, maybe forty per cent of the population are like first generation Chinese and, like, I can sort of, empathise with them ... when I was younger I got, like the first time I ever did work experience, that was actually the first time that I'd met somebody that was "Australian", and I got on, like, I definitely got racially discriminated, I was told to like, go back to my country, that was like when I was fifteen, and so I can, even though it's a very small, it was only one person that did it, in one point of my life, my parents would have gotten that all the time, I can sort of understand better what new migrants are going through. (Stephani, 20, female, born in Australia, Melbourne)

While few participants spoke at length of racism, many highlighted practical challenges in their everyday lives. As noted above, those who grew up in Melbourne spoke about the hurdles of navigating inter-generational divides with their own families and ethnic communities. Meanwhile, recent arrivals spoke about language barriers, the cost of family separation and loss of social status:

I think for me it's very interesting but a little bit sad, because I told you that in my country my family like middleclass, because I think at that time for me I think my life be perfect at that time because I study, I got my jobs ... So I come here and when I come here my cousin told me that when you come to the new country it's like you were born one more time. So you have to start everything again. So I come here and I don't got a job, I don't got friends, I don't got anything ... the life now is different, not like the life in my country ... I have to start everything again. I have to work. I have to go to study English first because it's very important when you live here, and I start to make friends again. So I have to start my life, to become poor and maybe keep going, keep trying. (Vinh, 21, female, born in Vietnam, living in Australia for less than 5 years, Melbourne)

## 2. Toronto

Toronto is one of the most multicultural cities in the world, with a growing population of “visible minorities” (particularly South Asians and Chinese). The largest religious minority is Islam (followed by Hinduism and Judaism). Canada adopted multiculturalism in the 1970s as embedded in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (Ryan 2010). This has “over time become sedimented into prevailing ideas of national identity” (Day 2000; Kymlicka 2021:124). In a recent survey that asked participants about what Canada’s most positive contribution to the world is, multiculturalism was the most common answer (Rafter 2018). This is particularly true of younger generations, who show high support for multiculturalism (Beyer and Ramji 2013; Environics Institute for Survey Research 2018).

Governmental encouragement of multiculturalism, which is evident in the above mentioned policies and laws, is well reflected in the data. Almost all participants view multiculturalism positively, in Canada in general and in Toronto in particular:

I mean, Canadian culture, especially in Toronto, it’s kind of like a mosaic of like different cultures. There’s not like one strong, like one way to kind of be Canadian, because like everyone here kind of comes from different backgrounds and different experiences” (Daniella, 19, female, born in Canada, Toronto)

Participants believed that multiculturalism provided opportunities for mutual interaction and positive exchange among the different religious and cultural identities. The great majority felt comfortable living in Canadian society, and a great many felt that they were full and equal members of that society. Unlike the Birmingham cohort (see below), Canadian youth migrants reported very few incidents of racial and ethnic discrimination in their everyday lives. In other words, the interview data in Toronto reveals that, while some individual participants had experiences of everyday racism, in general they saw themselves as enjoying the same privileges and rights as other Canadians irrespective of their ethnic or religious background.

Canada has given me so much more opportunities, so much chance to do what I want ... I’ve been educated here. I grew up here, all my friends, they come from different parts of the world, but we’re all Canadian as well ... Canada itself is a very welcoming country. You’re not shunned for, you know, having a different religious belief, a different background or not. So, I’m very grateful for that. (Bruno, male, born in Canada, Toronto)

Undeniably, Canadian participants believed that there were challenges facing migrant youth in Toronto. However, they were less severe than the challenges migrant youth in Melbourne and Birmingham believed they were facing. Participants – particularly recent arrivals – spoke at length of practical challenges, such as language barriers, and the time and effort of building a community and a sense of belonging. As explained by Renata:

I would say, okay, number one would definitely be getting adjusted to a new life and the language barrier too ... I moved here, I could not understand anything people were saying because they were speaking so fast. I remember from being in high school it took me three months to feel like fully comfortable with the language. But again, like not being super fluent in English at the beginning it did hinder my ability to make connections with people ... I would say just like fitting in as well because you just came from this new – from another country and then you’re thrown into this country with a different culture that you’ve probably never seen before, so you don’t really know like in what way you should act or maybe like something you think is super normal to you may be offensive to other people. (Renata, 21, born in Peru, living in Canada for 6–10 years, Toronto)

### 3. Birmingham

Birmingham is one of Britain's largest minority-majority cities. It is home to the largest number of Muslims and Sikhs in the country, and the second largest number of Hindus outside of London. Muslim communities, Pakistanis and Bangladeshis in particular (the majority of second-generation migrants from Birmingham who participated in the project are of Pakistani and Bangladeshi origins), are often presented as the least successfully integrated and continue to be framed this way within wider public policy narratives. As noted in the previous section, and in contrast to Australia and Canada, the UK never explicitly adopted multiculturalism as a policy tool per se, as "race relations" initiatives were the primary tools for managing diversity (Fleras 2009). Despite this, there has been significant attention placed on integration and "community cohesion" in the UK since the early 2000s, when state "multiculturalism" came under attack for supposedly encouraging minority communities to remain un-integrated into the majority society by living "parallel lives" (Cantle 2001). Anxieties regarding minority groups expanded from a "lack of integration" to a "threat to national security" when government strategies as part of the "war on terror" were implemented after the 9/11 and 7/7 attacks (Kalra and Kapoor 2009). Spatial segregation of minority groups came under focus as "ethnic segregation, which was read as a sign of nonbelonging" (Phillips, 2007:1143) – Birmingham has been flagged up for the "self-segregation" of Muslims (Abbas 2004; Karner and Parker 2010; Awan 2018).

Data shows that migrant youth, and in particular those of Muslim backgrounds, perceived Birmingham as a multicultural and diverse city where they belonged. Almost all participants stressed the advantage of living in Birmingham, as the entrenched demographic and cultural diversity helped reinforce a deeper sense of belonging by providing opportunities for interaction with their intra-ethnic/interfaith and other ethnic communities. This positive view of the city was often contrasted to other "less" multicultural places in the UK. For them, Birmingham was a safe haven, yet moving outside of the city may be quite challenging. This is well reflected in the data – almost all participants mentioned their experiences of racial and ethnic/religious discrimination (including Islamophobia) while living or even travelling in less multicultural spaces. This spatial dimension is of critical importance in examining the integration of youth into the mainstream society. In addition, it is worth noting here that Birmingham has been portrayed as a site of "urban decay and religious ghettoization" within popular imagination (Karner and Parker 2008:519). This stigma has, as reflected in the data, possibly contributed to curtailing a sense of belonging and opportunity for some of our participants, such as Viyan:

It's just general like, "Oh go back to your country. You don't belong here." You know, it's these kind of general comments that people throw at you when you just walk past them, or the way they stare at you and you can tell that, yeah, I don't fit in here in that part ... I wouldn't say in Birmingham ... because there's a lot of diversity, especially there's a lot of Muslims here, so you kind of feel a little bit at home at the same time (Viyan, 22, female, born in Iraq Kurdistan, living in the UK for 11+ years, Birmingham).

In addition to racial and ethnic discrimination, a few participants (in particular, international students from the EU) expressed their concerns regarding changes to migration and citizenship laws and policies such as Brexit. Prior to the 2021/22 academic year, EU students paid the same fees as local students; however, since 2021/22, EU students have been classified as international students, not only increasing incoming students' tuition costs but dramatically impacting the entire application process. Other impacts of Brexit include changes to the current student visa system, affecting all international students (Scott and Mhunpiew 2021).

Well, Brexit was the worst thing that ever happened. I think it was a very bad – bad choice. It's going to make things harder if you will think about European mobility. So you won't be able – maybe; we still don't know what's going to actually happen. So maybe it will be – it would be harder to move from a place to another than for students – students maybe from other countries to come here and – I don't know, like, let's say study – study for three, four months, you know, when they do exchanging; there's more people that want to come here and study. So there's going to be some obstacles... (Nadia, 25, female, born in Italy, living in the UK for less than 5 years, Birmingham)

However, and in contrast to the concerns expressed by EU participants such as Nadia, it was notable how little UK-born interviewees spoke about Brexit in general, or about its impact on their mobility in particular.



# Findings Site-By-Site

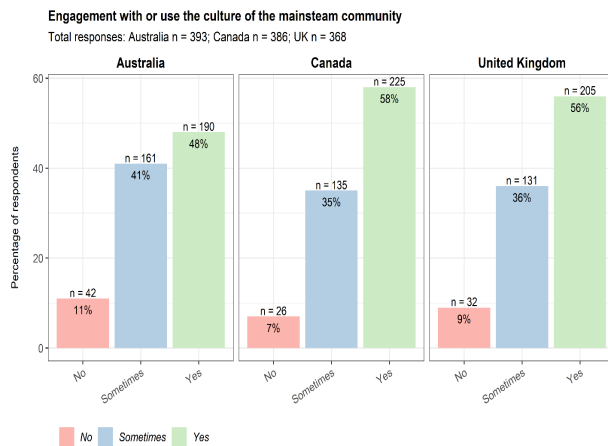
This section presents some of the key themes that emerged from quantitative (surveys) and qualitative (interviews) data analysis. The quantitative analysis measured the structural manifestation, intensity and deployment of transcultural capital by mapping and quantifying (i) the skills, knowledge and networks migrant youth in this study gained by engaging with various cultures and (ii) how these sets of skills, knowledge and networks allowed them to create, negotiate and maintain connections at the local, national and transnational level. These findings were supplemented with in-depth interviews exploring the agentic formation of transcultural capital from the perspective of young people's lived experiences and examining how they developed transcultural capital, made sense of it, and utilised it at different temporal and spatial points in their everyday lives. In what follows, the key themes – supported by survey and interview data from each site – are discussed.



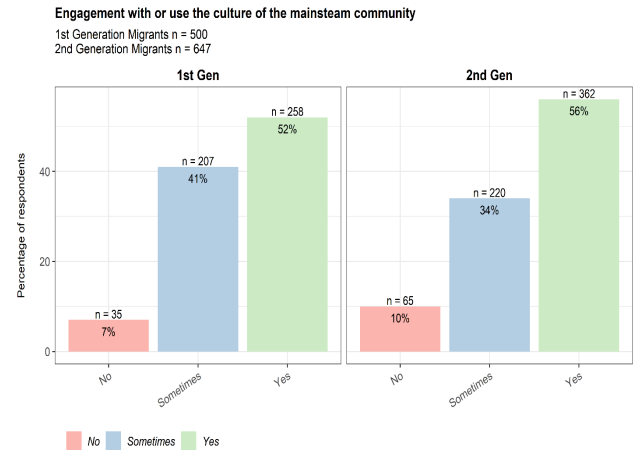
# Manifestation of Transcultural Capital

Survey analysis indicated that participants (both first- and second-generation migrants) across the three sites engaged frequently with both “mainstream” culture (i.e., the dominant culture of Australia, Canada or the UK) and the culture of their country of origin (or their parents’ country of origin for second-generation migrants) (see Figure 15 and Figure 17). The overall patterns of engagement with both cultures were almost consistent across the three sites. In addition, the site differences within each frequency category were statistically non-significant. Furthermore, even though the level of engagement with the “mainstream” culture seemed higher than that of engagement with the culture of their country of origin, differences were not very significant. In addition, the ratings of engagement observed under “no” were, in general, lower than those observed under “sometimes” and “yes”. This indicated a higher level of engagement and access to different cultural repertoires (see Figure 14 and Figure 16).

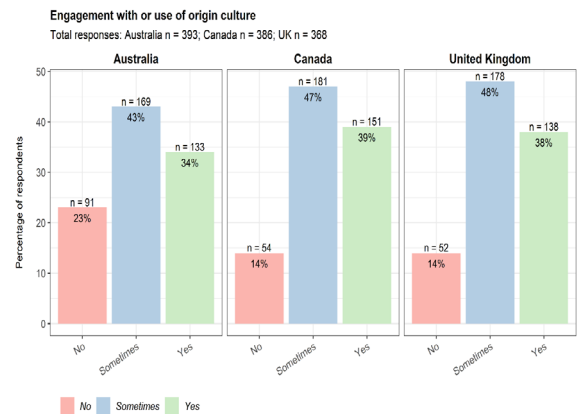
**Figure 14: Engagement with or use of “mainstream” culture (per site)**



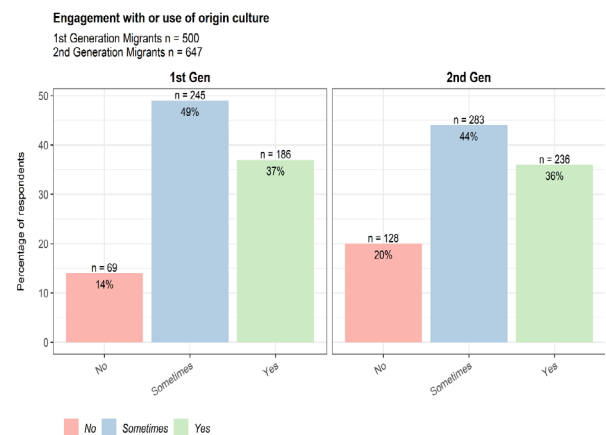
**Figure 15: Engagement with or use of “mainstream” culture (across generations)**



**Figure 16: Engagement with or use of culture from “country of origin” (per site)**



**Figure 17: Engagement with or use of culture from “country of origin” (across generations)**



Interview data also suggested a high level of engagement with the “mainstream” culture across the three sites. As noted by Anh in Toronto:

... some of the Canadian practices, values and beliefs that I would engage with on my everyday life basis is, I guess, probably work schedule is one of them. I know Canadians, a lot of migrants are known for being late. So, as a Canadian, I know our western culture of being on time is very important, so I use that on an everyday life basis, especially when it comes to work. (Anh, 24, female, born in Canada, Toronto)

Likewise, as noted by Sarah in Melbourne:

Like, when you say “engaging with Australian culture”, I guess it’s just something that comes naturally if you sort of grew up here. I don’t really notice as much when I am engaging with Australian culture, it’s sort of just something that I do subconsciously. But yeah, obviously sort of fitting in with people around you, it’s always going to help you succeed in a way. (Sarah, 21, female, born in Australia, Melbourne)

And by Ria in Birmingham:

Okay, so one thing that I’ve noticed is British people are quite polite and courteous, I mean something as basic as when you are getting off public transport you thank the bus driver. So that is something which I think that I can take away and as you observe more and more you come across such things like these which you can incorporate into your personality... (Ria, 23, female, born in India, living in the UK for less than 5 years, Birmingham)

In a similar vein, interview participants reported that they often engaged with the culture of their country of origin (or their parents’ country of origin). This included second-generation migrants such as Nicole:

At home I mostly speak French as my native language and my mum’s very African. The food we eat is African and we’re very immersed in our culture, and we also have a pretty big Congolese community in Ontario, so when we have gathering, parties, funerals, weddings, it’s very traditionally African. (Nicole, 19, female, born in Canada, Toronto)

And Hakim:

... when I go to Afghan events that are held by Afghan societies, I would definitely be more Afghan than I normally am. You know, in the terms of hospitality and in terms of speaking to people, that kind of thing. So yeah, in that case I would use that culture more. Because it’s an expected part of these gatherings. Also, I feel that I go to the mosque to pray over there I would be a lot more culturally aware, you know, greeting people the right way, you know, inviting people back to my house, you know, that kind of hospitality. (Hakim, 23, male, born in Canada, living in the UK for 11+ years, Birmingham)

As well as first-generation migrants such as Ala:

Every day is Samoa day for us. I mean, at home, it’s just ... our parents, our families, they’re all about ... they’re always speaking Samoan. ... We go to a Samoan church, and that’s an everyday thing, because we have ... programs every day of the week... (Ala, 19, female, born in New Zealand, living in Australia between 6–10 years, Melbourne)

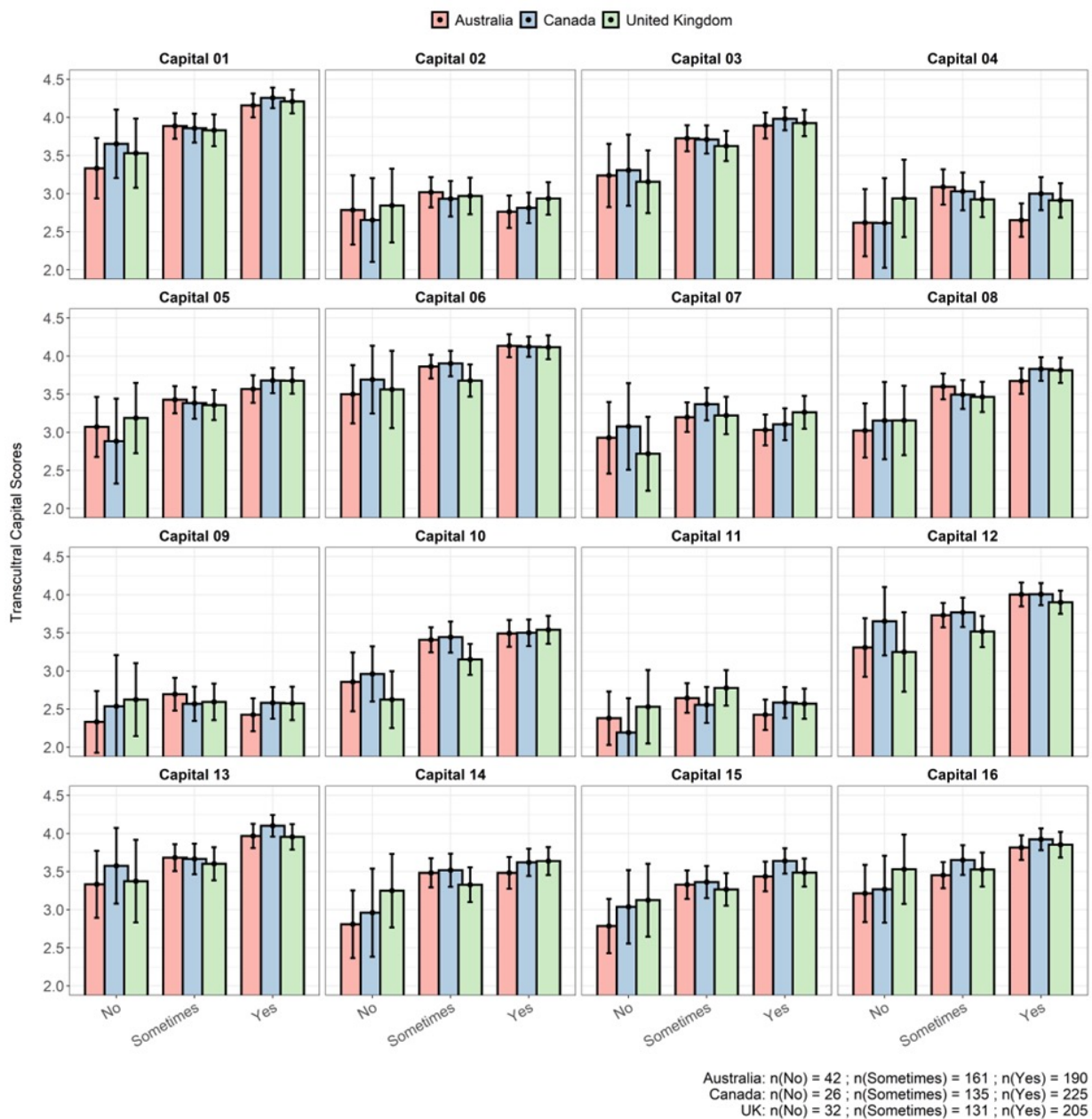
Overall, participants who more frequently engaged with or used the “mainstream” culture tended to benefit more from having access to multiple cultures. The survey data demonstrates a clear positive relationship between frequency of engagement with “mainstream” culture and overall transcultural capital scores as measured by the variables below (see Table 3). The positive impact of engagement frequency is observed only in the positively worded capital items (e.g., “Having access to more than one culture... gives me a strong sense of identity”), and as expected, not in the negative statement (e.g., “Having access to more than one culture... makes me confused about where I belong”).

**Table 3: Population profile of research sites**

VARIABLE	HAVING ACCESS TO MORE THAN ONE CULTURE...
Capital 01	Gives me a stronger sense of identity
Capital 02	Makes me confused about where I belong
Capital 03	Makes me resilient/stronger when facing life’s challenges
Capital 04	Limits my ability to fully participate in Australian/Canadian/British life
Capital 05	Gives me tools to steer away from antisocial behaviour
Capital 06	Allows me to understand other people’s feelings and experiences
Capital 07	Makes me vulnerable to discrimination
Capital 08	Empowers me to assist people in my ethnic community
Capital 09	Isolates me from family and friends
Capital 10	Gives me tools to prevent conflict with people from outside my ethnic community
Capital 11	Makes me lose my heritage
Capital 12	Makes a positive difference to my life
Capital 13	I am creating new ways to belong in Australia/Canada/UK
Capital 14	I am finding new ways to connect with family, friends, or members of my ethnic community in my country of origin (or my parents’ country of origin)
Capital 15	I am developing new strategies to resolve tensions between the majority in Australia/Canada/UK and my ethnic community
Capital 16	I am finding alternatives to succeed in Australia/Canada/UK

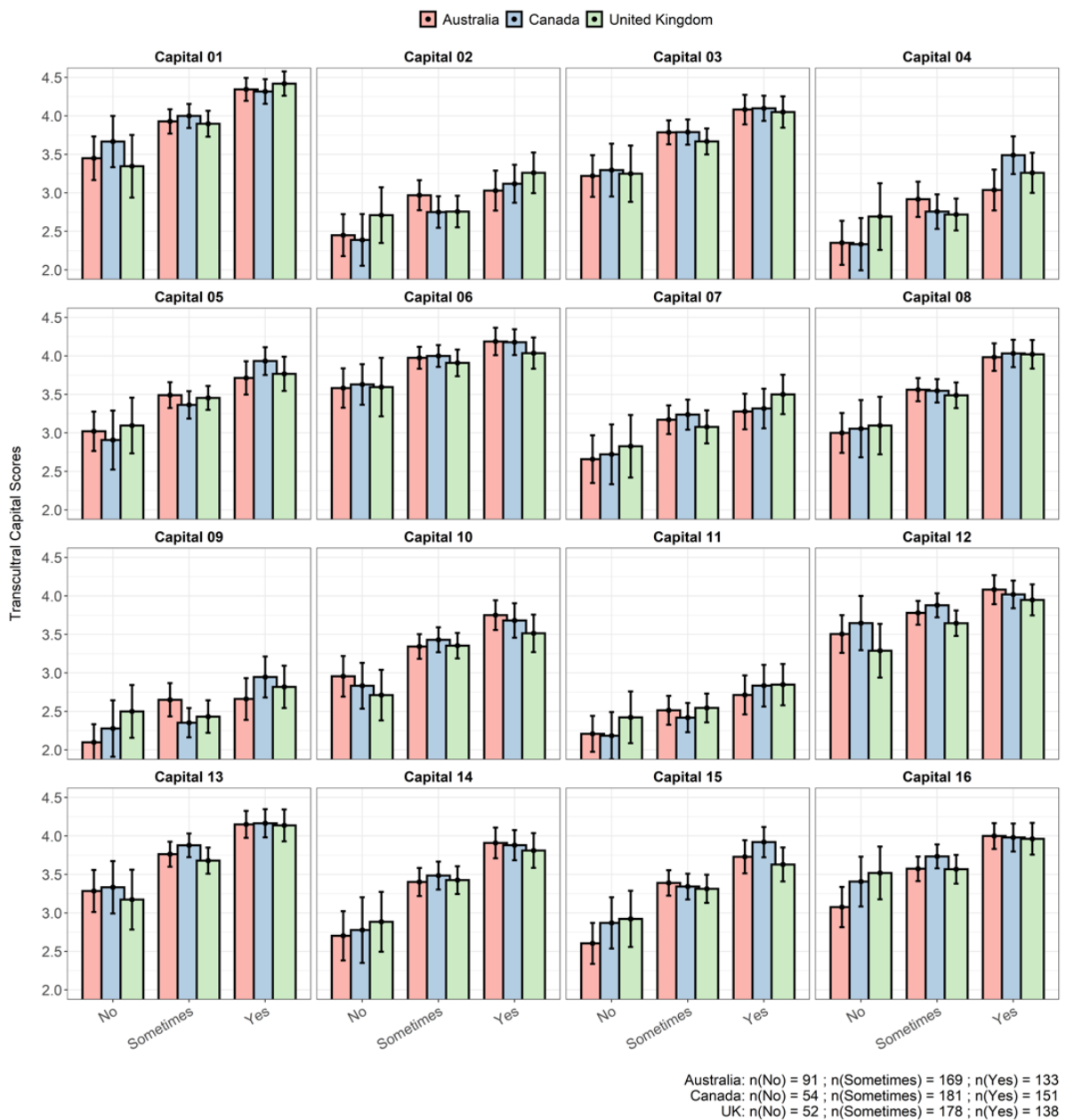
For most transcultural capital items, perceived transcultural capital tended to be of higher statistical significance for respondents who had more opportunities to practice aspects of “mainstream” culture than those who only sometimes, or almost never had the opportunity to practice (see Figure 18)

Figure 18: Perceived transcultural capital across the usage of “mainstream” culture



Likewise, regarding engagement with the culture of the “country of origin”, survey analysis shows that the opportunity to practice aspects of “country of origin” culture played a role in shaping participants’ perceived level of transcultural capital. Once again, the pattern observed for the three sites shared a high level of similarity. The transcultural capital ratings observed in the negative statements were, in general, lower than those observed for their positive counterparts. These results were consistent across the three sites (see Figure 19).

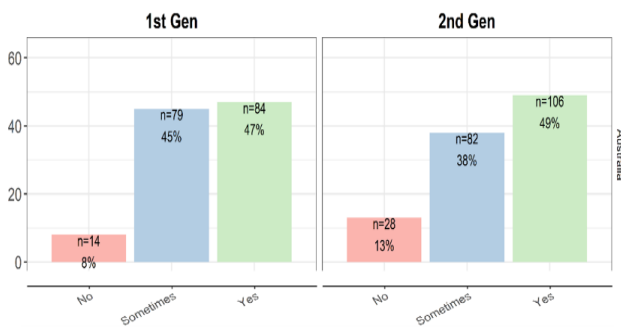
**Figure 19: Perceived transcultural capital across the usage of culture from “country of origin”**



# Melbourne, Australia

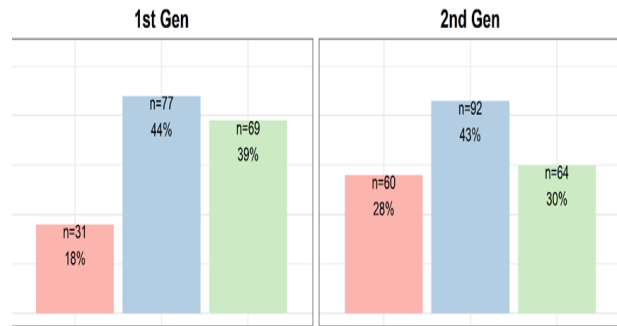
In Melbourne, survey participants reported relatively high levels of engagement with “mainstream” culture compared to culture of their “country of origin”. Both first and second generations showed higher levels of engagement with mainstream culture. Out of the total participants, 84 individuals (47%) answered “yes” to their level of engagement with mainstream culture, while 79 participants (45%) responded with “sometimes”. This trend was consistent with the 2nd generation, where 106 participants (49%) answered “yes” and 82 participants (38%) responded with “sometimes” (see Figure 20).

**Figure 20: Australia – engagement with or use of “mainstream” culture across generations**



However, when it comes to the level of engagement with or utilisation of their country of origin’s culture, 77 participants (44%) responded with “sometimes,” while 69 participants (39%) answered “yes”. This result was also consistent with the 2nd generation participants, with 92 individuals (43%) responding “sometimes” and 64 individuals (30%) answering “yes” to their level of engagement with their country of origin (see Figure 21). These findings highlight the similarities in engagement patterns with mainstream culture between the first- and second-generation participants, as well as the differences they exhibit in engaging with their “country of origin”.

**Figure 21: Australia – engagement with or use of “country of origin” culture across generations**



Growing up and living in two cultural worlds, participants were able to negotiate cultural differences and acquire cultural knowledge and skills that were useful in both settings (see Figure 22 and Figure 23). Interview data analysis suggested that Melbourne’s participants creatively, strategically and actively negotiated the boundaries they were confronted with and could move from one cultural context to another. This clearly indicates the “chameleonic capacity” to culturally adapt to a variety of parameters and draw from an enlarged repertory of codes to strategically rearrange one’s sense of cultural identity “depending on the location, moment or context” (Iyer 2000:18). According to Benessaieh (2010), this fluid and dialogical process of cultural construction has become visible within super-diverse contemporary societies. Participants’ capacity to negotiate difference and move from one world to another is also aligned with research findings on hybrid identities, which run contrary to claims that migrant youth are “caught” or “lost” between two worlds and highlight how migrant youth appropriate elements of both cultures in varying degrees and at different times (see Crul 2016; Harris 2016; Moskal and Sime 2016). As noted by Sofia:

Like I said, the best part about moving from one culture to another is that you get to pick and choose what parts you want to stick. So, you know, keeping all the heritage, and the stories, and the language from there; but also to pick up a bit more of the relaxed, I guess, nature of Australians. (Sofia, 21, female, born in Ukraine, living in Australia for 11+ years, Melbourne)

Similarly, as noted by Mary:

I think with the younger generations, with our cultural identity, we're learning to have to be more bicultural, so bicultural as in we have this culture, that culture, and being able to bring those two together, to be able to have our own unique sense of cultural identity, and confidence and pride in both. (Mary, 20, female, born in Ethiopia, living in Australia for 11+ years, Melbourne)

And by Will:

I think... in terms of self-identity being able to reconcile with the two cultures ... I think the opportunity to actually appreciate both cultures, so whether that's through learning the language and some history around origin, like your background or origin or family history, being able to learn some of that. Is that opportunity what you actually get to navigate both cultures because if you don't ever get that opportunity, you're never going to be able to appreciate it or even understand the kind of person you could have become or the kinds of things that you've missed out on? (Will, 24, male, born in Australia, Melbourne)

The agentic ability to navigate cultural difference and realise that this difference is a source of empowerment was developed over time, as the interview data analysis shows. Participants, particularly the second generation, explained how reaching adulthood often presented an opportunity to reconcile the multiple cultures they belong to, and to value them as well as the changing relationships with their families:

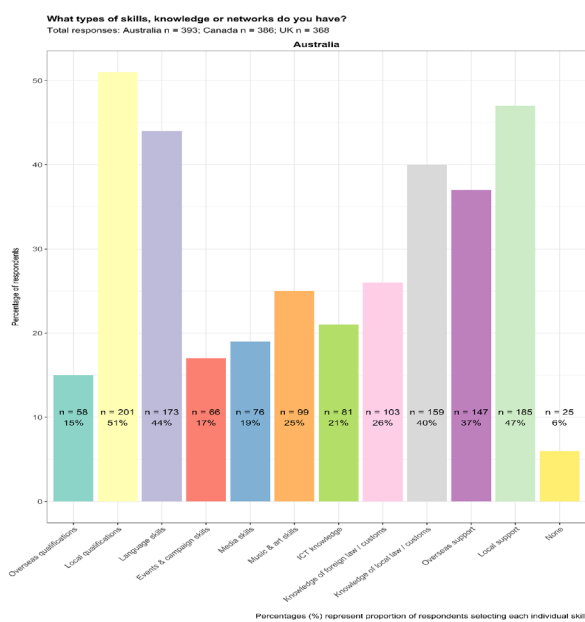
I think growing up, you sort of don't want to confront the differences, and you sort of just want to come across as sort of just the same, so if there is a difference, you sort of hide it, if that makes sense ... So, the differences, and more so, I think, from a faith perspective, and sort of not really being confident in that through school, it meant that you sort of realised that you are your own person, you shouldn't really have to hide a part of your identity to fit in. So, then, in uni, I started wearing the headscarf, and sort of just being more confident with who I was, and I guess that – I think what I went through with working out my identity, and sort of the insecurities with that, then led me to become stronger in my identity, as well. (Dua, 23, female, born in Australia, Melbourne)

As noted by Dua and Mary, this process of reflection and negotiation took time and effort:

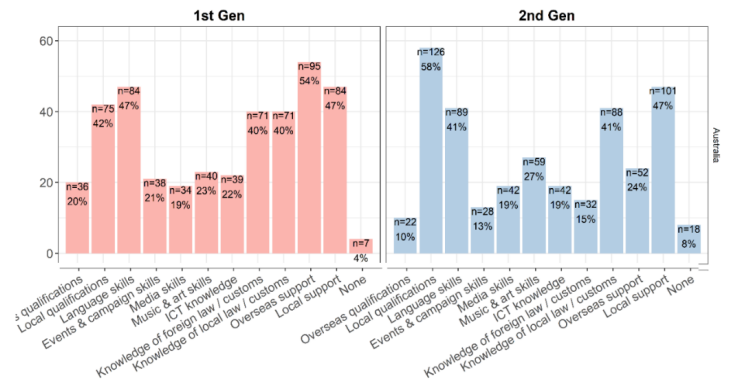
At first, I was very resentful, because of just like the differences. We were so different, it just didn't make sense to me, and I was like, you guys [her parents] do this, I don't want to do that, but then, afterwards, it shaped me in the aspect that, like, even though they still have respect for their traditions and what they believe in, so it's taught me that, you know, I should always, in my belonging and my self-identity, I should always have respect, or a basis of knowledge and understanding, and confidence of who I am as a person ... so those differences, even though they collided us, it always taught me that, under the foundation, that you have to build for yourself and who you are, no matter where you go, where you come about, that foundation – you should have confidence, you should have strength and pride, especially pride in who you are as a person, yeah. (Mary, 20, female, born in Ethiopia, living in Australia for 11+ years, Melbourne)

Participants also reported that they accessed and developed a range of resources including networks, knowledge and skills – including linguistic skills – by engaging with multiple cultural repertoires. As per the survey findings, in Melbourne the three most common skills, knowledges or networks that participants had developed and accessed were: local qualifications (201 participants or 51%), local support (185 participants or 47%) and language skills (173 participants or 44%) (see Figure 22). One of the significant discrepancies between the first generation and second generation was the reported level of overseas support: 95 first-generation participants (54%) reported that they received overseas support in comparison with only 52 second-generation participants (24%). In addition, knowledge of foreign law and customs was highly reported by first-generation participants (71 participants, 40%) compared to 32 second-generation participants (15%) (see Figure 23). This is not surprising given the differences in participants' length of settlement within Australia (see Figure 24). In addition, within the Melbourne sample, there were 78 participants (20%) who migrated to Australia to study. There is a possibility that these participants were international students who would still receive support, in particular financial support, from overseas (see Figure 25).

**Figure 22: Australia – skills, knowledges and networks**

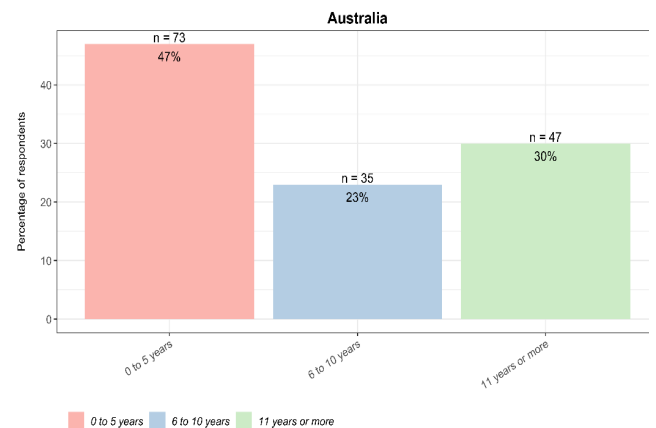


**Figure 23: Australia – skills, knowledges and networks (by generation)**

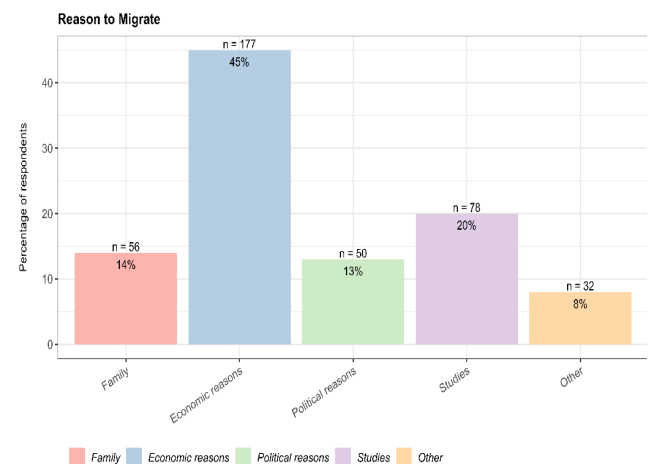


**Figure 24: Australia – length of settlement (participants born overseas)**

**Length of Settlement within each Country of Residence**  
Total responses: Australia n = 155, Canada n = 160, UK n = 151



**Figure 25: Australia – reason to migrate**





On this subject, Melbourne's participants spoke about the multiple forms of support they received from family, friends, neighbours and organisations within and outside their ethnic community (Mansouri and Skrbis 2013). Specifically, first-generation youth reported that networks outside their ethnic communities constituted a resource that they utilised to overcome challenges and achieve goals in the host countries. As noted in previous sections, organisations such as migrant centres, teachers and homework clubs were important networks of support for migrant youth in Melbourne. Mahreen explained how the Homework Support Program (STAR Club) run by Southern Migrant and Refugee Centre (SMRC) had assisted her with her homework and language skills. For her, access to this type of program was an opportunity to overcome difficulty with the curriculum due to language barriers. This exemplifies a form of social capital that can be considered "high volume social capital", as it is used to maximise educational benefits (Ball 2003:83). In turn, it can enhance the overall cultural capital of migrant youth such as Mahreen through knowledge, skills and linguistic competencies:

Yeah, like, it's – it's good we have homework club because, like, we are, like, who is born in Australia they know English more than us, like, they have the language, the English. Then when we are here if it's just the school we can't learn, like, if – when you are coming in homework club and SMRC that's so good because, like, there is more help. Yeah, we can get – there is more help there. In class, like, there is maybe 24, 26 people. This is just two or three teacher who are teaching the, like, in here there is more teacher you can help – you can get help, yeah. (Mahreen, 19, female, born in Pakistan, living in Australia for less than 5 years, Melbourne)

Importantly, these organisations not only provided opportunities in relation to study and language skills, but also for networking and establishing meaningful and supportive relationships with others. Mahreen was also asked: "And do you feel like out of your engagement with different cultures you're developing a new sense of who you are?". In her response she mentioned the support she received from one of her teachers in terms of dealing with challenges as she was settling in Australia.

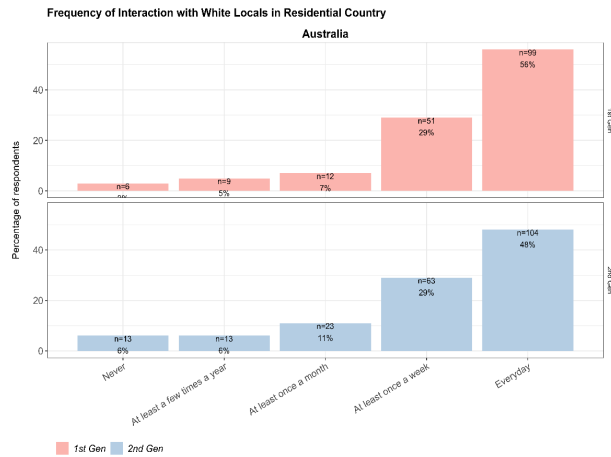
Yeah... In our school I am talking with my one teacher ... Because ... I was small and I don't think that – I didn't know who I am ... I got a lot of ideas of her and that's why I change my life ... Because when I work in Afghan shop I faced a lot of difficulties in Afghan shop because it was my first – it was my first job that I work in Australia. Yeah, it was 14 hours. It is also hard for me; 14 hours, yeah. But in hour – in one hour he gives me \$7, something like that ... My boss is very, like, really strict. I can't say – to him that I – I don't want to work anymore with you, yeah. She, my teacher, support me that how can I go and tell my boss that I don't want to work here. I get a lot of things from my teacher. (Mahreen, 19, female, born in Pakistan, living in Australia for less than 5 years, Melbourne)

Furthermore, and despite the barriers that some participants faced in establishing relationships with "white" (Anglo) Australians, others spoke about their positive relations with neighbours and friends, which facilitated a sense of belonging, in particular for recent migrants:

... I have Australian neighbours and they are like my grandma and grandad. I am very attached to them, yeah ... because when the first day we come I was a little bit scared, a little bit shy, you don't know how will be their rule. But in the street, everyone tell me, "You're like family here, don't be scared, if you need anything just give me a call" ... We help each other when we need help... (Ayesha, 22, female, born in Mauritius, living in Australia for less than 5 years, Melbourne)

Notably, survey data also showed a high level of interaction between participants and "white" Australians (see Figure 26). This was consistent across generations.

**Figure 26: Australia – frequency of interaction with “white” Australians (by generation)**



In addition to these local networks, one of the other highest reported skills was linguistic skills. These skills were either gained through an engagement with formal learning or (in most cases) were transmitted intergenerationally. In Melbourne, 84 first-generation participants (47%) and 89 second-generation participants (41%) reported a level of proficiency in more than one language (see Figure 23). Linguistic competencies constitute cultural resources that can be converted into a transcultural capital, vital for cultural connectivity and transnational mobility in an increasingly interdependent and super-diverse world (Robertson et al. 2018). Interview participants in Melbourne spoke about the myriad benefits accrued from accessing their parents’ language while acknowledging the major role of their families in transmitting this skill.

So, growing up, my mum done really well. She taught us obviously how to speak our language fluently, how to communicate with our people, how to do things traditionally, how to do things culturally. (Franklin, 25, male, born in Sierra Leone, Living in Australia for 11+ years, Melbourne)

Stephani explained how linguistic skills gave her an advantage, particularly in relation to her education and bonding with students from her ethnic community:

... I notice that in my classes there are specific things that, relating to ... my Greek culture that I just, like there are specific concepts that might come up in one of my classes as an art student and that I know that no-one else would know what that means ... but I do, because I did learn Greek ... and I do know a bit of Croatian, those sort of languages come in a lot, even if you weren’t thinking. Or even, when I meet international students, like, I met, like, this Russian girl on campus the other day and I could relate to her through my Croatian side. Like, I was trying to talk in Croatian and she could understand me because she was Russian, but it’s stuff like that, I guess, helps bonding experiences. (Stephani, 20, female, born in Australia, living in Melbourne)

In addition to linguistic skills, cultural knowledge (including cultural values and practices) was beneficial in many ways. Again, participants highlighted the key role of their families in transmitting this knowledge. Joanne spoke about her parents’ role in passing down customs and maintaining a connectedness to the cultural heritage of their ancestors.

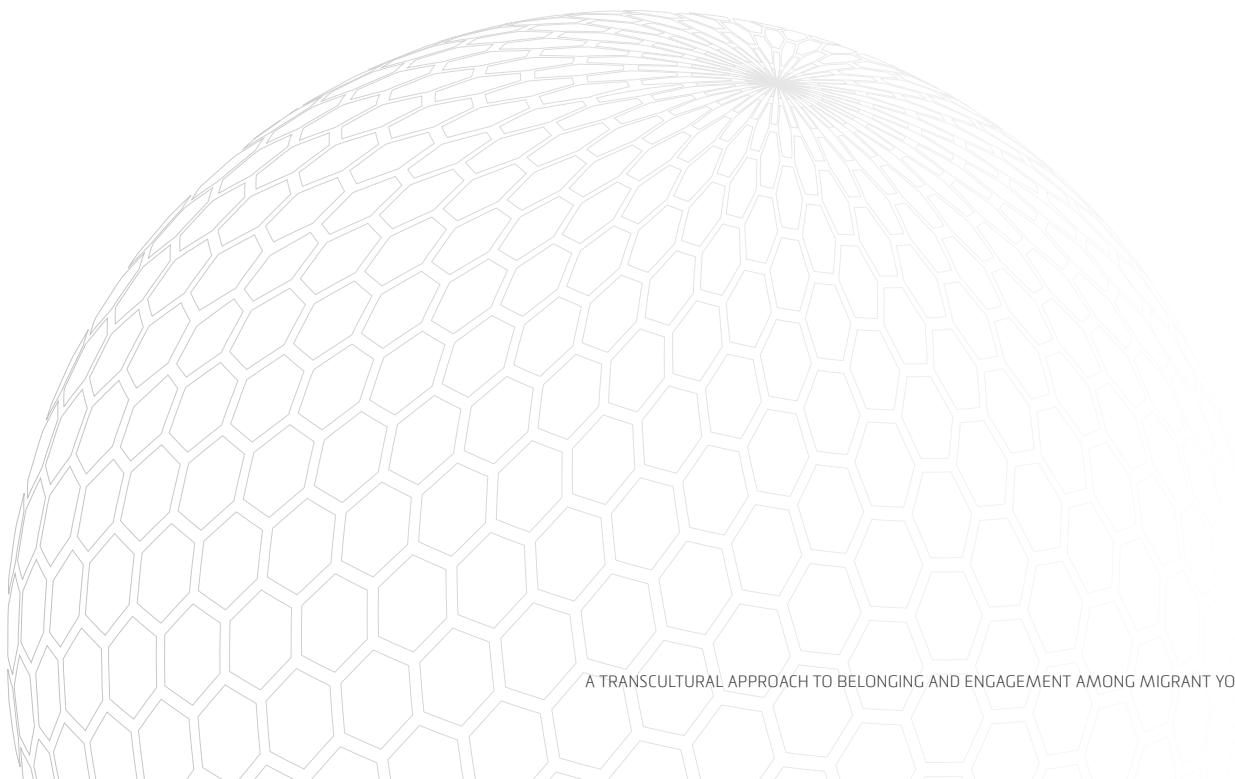
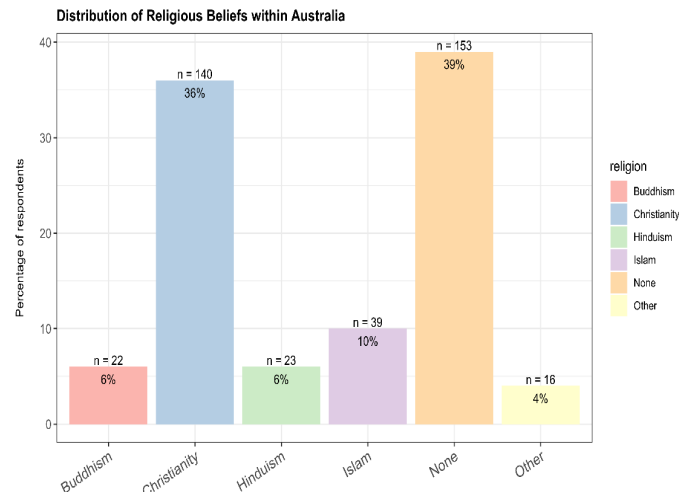
... like funerals, there’s always so much – there’s always secondary things that you have to do after the funeral, just to pay your respects, but if I didn’t – say I didn’t do those dances, and then ... just by learning about the dance, then we learn about other things, and my parents will teach me something else – like, I just realised how different and how intricate the Samoan culture is, and how I need to grasp a bit more of an open mind, because I’m quite, like, oh, we just do all this stuff, but it’s not necessary. Mum’s like, but there are underlying reasons why we do these things. It’s been passed down, we want to keep it alive, because if we lose it, then we’ve lost our understanding, and our identity. (Joanne, 20, female, born in Samoa, living in Australia for 11+ years, Melbourne)

Generational socialisation within the participants' families also included transmission of religious teachings and values. Participants' stories illustrate how religion was sometimes part of the content of intergenerational transmission. In this sense, parents passed on their religious values and practices, which young people internalised at a young age, and which became a source of self-identification and self-empowerment in relation to the ability of adjusting to life stressors and connecting with friends from a similar religious background.

I identify myself with Buddhists, when, say, I hang out with my friends and we have discussions about religions ... my family do practice Buddhism, and my mum is very big in practicing Buddhism ... Like, when you're going through hardships ... it kind of gives you some belief that things are going to get better. My mother is a big believer, and that somehow got translated to me. Like, if I see her going through things in her life ... it's kind of – it influenced my thoughts in Buddhism, and a lot of things they teach are really – it makes sense, it's very practical in life, and it holds on values that I hold, that I can relate myself with. (Hoa, 24, female, born in Vietnam, living in Australia between 6–10 years, Melbourne)

The figure below (Figure 27) shows the distribution of religious beliefs of the survey respondents in Melbourne. It is important to note that while most participants held religious beliefs (240 or 61%), a large share of them (153 or 39%) did not.

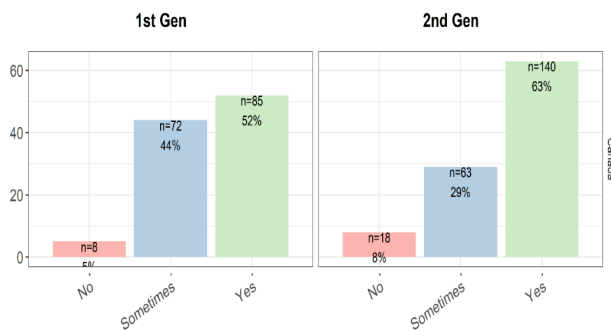
**Figure 27: Australia – distribution of religious beliefs**



# Toronto, Canada

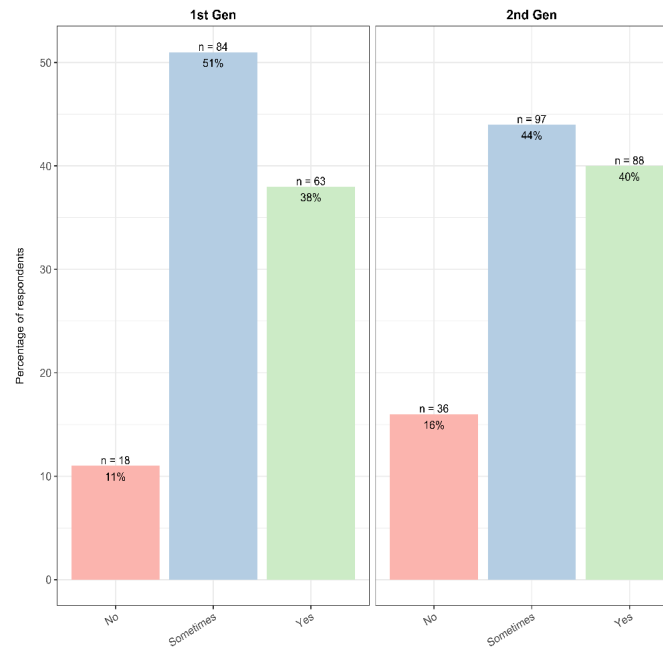
Similar to Melbourne, survey participants in Toronto reported relatively high levels of engagement with “mainstream” culture compared to culture of their “country of origin”. Both first and second generations exhibited higher levels of engagement with mainstream culture. Out of the total participants, 85 individuals (52%) answered “yes” to their level of engagement with mainstream culture, while 72 participants (44%) responded with “sometimes”. This trend was consistent with the 2nd generation, where 140 participants (63%) answered “yes” and 63 participants (29%) responded with “sometimes” (see Figure 28).

**Figure 28: Canada – engagement with or use of “mainstream” culture across generations**



However, when it comes to the level of engagement with or utilisation of their country of origin’s culture, 84 participants (51%) responded with “sometimes”, while 63 participants (38%) answered “yes”. This result was also consistent with second-generation participants, with 97 individuals (44%) responding “sometimes” and 88 individuals (40%) answering “yes” to their level of engagement with their country of origin (see Figure 29). These findings highlight the similarities in engagement patterns with mainstream culture between the first and second generation participants, as well as the differences they exhibit in engaging with their “country of origin”.

**Figure 29: Canada – engagement with or use of culture of “country of origin” across generations**



Interview data analysis suggested that participants had the agentic capacity to move from one cultural world to another and negotiate cultural differences between these worlds. Moving between the two cultures, as the participants explained, enabled them to appropriate elements of both cultures in varying degrees and at different times.

I guess I’m good at, like – I’m not sure what the word is, but sort of switching it on and off, in a weird way. I can adapt between both of the cultures, depending on what scenario I’m in, and it happens fairly quickly, especially since I’m fluent in Tamil. I can even switch between languages a lot more quickly ... So, when I’m in a scenario where I’m interacting with a Canadian group and a Tamil group, I can go back and forth a lot more fluently than some other people can. (Thilini, 25, female, born in Canada, Toronto)

Data also suggests that time was important for how participants, in particular those who were second generation, developed a sense of self, agency and empowerment, and how they engaged with mainstream culture and the culture of their country of origin. Based on their age and developmental stage, they were in an ongoing process of constructing and reconstructing their transcultural identities (Moskal and Sime 2016). This process involved resistance, negotiation and adaptation, but most importantly change, which often led to positive outcomes. This suggests that the temporal dimension is critical to understanding how they negotiated cultural differences and realised them as source of empowerment (a capital) rather than a disadvantage.

I'd say when I was younger, it was always like, I don't want to be different, I want to seem more like white and Canadian. But now when you're growing up, you're like finding out more about where you're coming from. So especially because I never really grew up anywhere and lived anywhere else but here, so I don't know anything different. So it was always like a battle inside, but now I want to know about both. So I'd say it's equal now because I've learnt about both. (Vanessa, 22, female, born in Canada, Toronto)

Likewise, first-generation participants spoke about how, after living in Toronto for some years, they started employing a mix of elements of the Canadian culture and their home culture in their everyday life. As told by Emily:

I think because the Chinese culture is really different from North American culture and by engaging those two cultures, it makes me realise that there's no very distinct border to distinguish two cultures. You can have a mixed culture and if you feel good about it, then it's okay ... in my daily life I would combine those two cultures to deal with every problem. I won't just use one culture, what they taught me to solve problems. (Emily, 21, female, born in China, living in Canada between 6–10 years, Toronto)

In addition to time, space was also important in explaining how some participants negotiated difference and embraced it. Nicole spoke about how moving from one space to another has impacted her cultural identity.

*[Does it vary from place to place?]*

It does, actually. Where I grew up, I was surrounded by Africans like me from the Congo, so I was very in tune with my culture. And then moving to Durham, it was mostly Europeans and Quebecois people. So from being in a space where it was all Africans to being in a space where there were no Africans, it did change my perspective.

*[How did you deal with that? Being in a place with no Africans]*

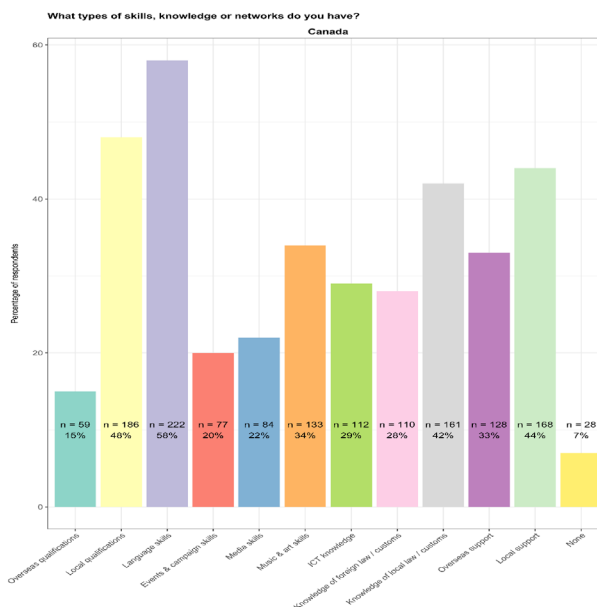
As a child, because I was very young, I did conform to their culture and that was a period of time where I wasn't in tune with my own culture because I was conforming with the others ... with time, I decided that I wanted to be more immersed in my own culture. (Nicole, 19, female, born in Canada, Toronto)

Likewise, Bianca spoke about how moving from school to university has changed her engagement with Italian and Canadian culture:

... So, I went to a Catholic school, but because of the ... there were a lot of Italian people there. Now I'm more in university, I'm seeing the Canadian culture because there's a lot greater mix of different cultures, whereas in Catholic school, they were just mainly Italian and Greek and Russian students who were Catholic ... I think as a child, I was mainly just engaging with Italian culture, but over time, I've been able to learn more about Canadian culture as I've become more independent and gone to university. (Bianca, 18, female, born in Canada, Toronto)

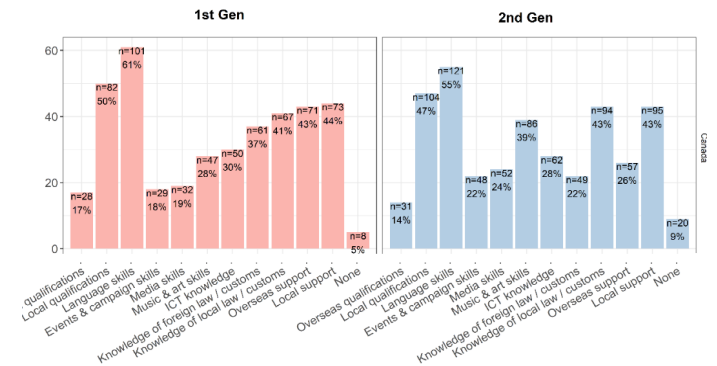
Another overarching theme that emerged from the interview data was that access to multiple cultural repertoires enabled the participants to access, develop and deploy a set of resources like networks, cultural knowledge and skills, including linguistic skills. Among participants in Canada, the highest reported resources that participants had developed and accessed were linguistic skills (222 participants or 58%), followed by local qualifications (186 participants or 48%) and local support (168 participants or 44%) (see Figure 30).

**Figure 30: Canada – skills, knowledges, and networks**

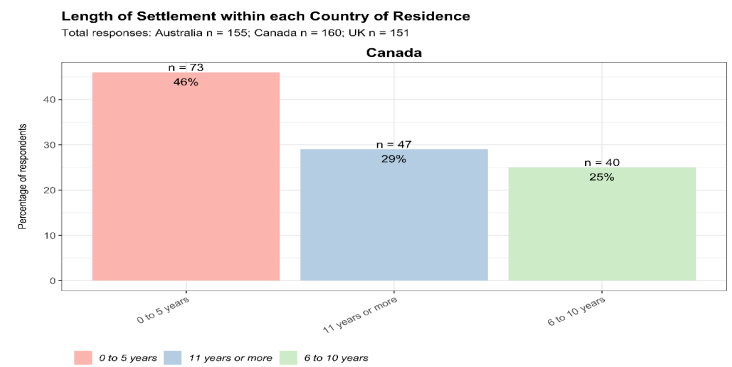


As in Australia, first-generation participants reported higher level of overseas support (71 participants, 43%) than second-generation participants (57 participants, 26%). In addition, knowledge of foreign law and customs was highly reported by first-generation participants (67 participants, 31%) compared to second-generation participants (49 participants, 22%) (see Figure 31). This could be due to the differences in participants' length of settlement within Canada: 71 per cent of the participants have been living in Canada for less than 10 years (see Figure 32). In addition, within the Toronto sample, 99 participants (26%) were international students who may still receive overseas support, in particular financial support (see Figure 33).

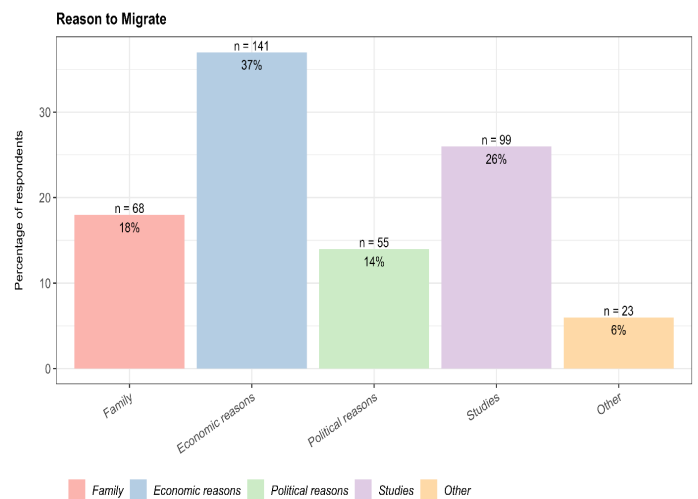
**Figure 31: Canada – skills, knowledges, and networks (by generation)**



**Figure 32: Canada – length of settlement (participants born overseas)**



**Figure 33: Canada – reason to migrate**



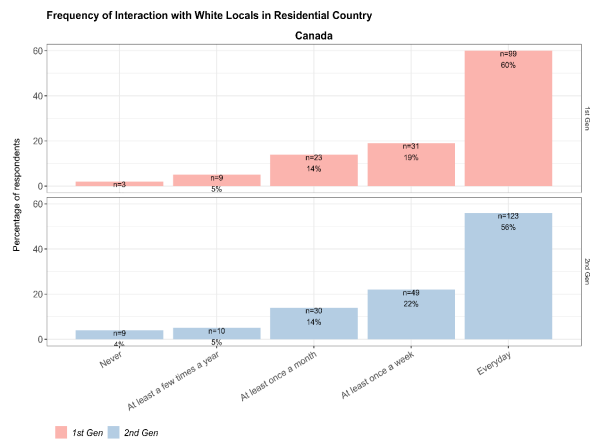
Regarding networks, participants in the interviews mentioned the importance of professionals, colleagues and friends from outside their ethnic community to their everyday lives. This somewhat reflects the survey's findings that most of our participants (across generations) had daily interactions with "white" Canadians (see Figure 34). Natalia, as a new arrival, spoke about the support she was given from her Canadian professors, which could potentially enable her to access future job opportunities.

Well definitely the networks – it's a huge one because when I got here, I had no networks whatsoever and throughout all my journey in the Centennial College I have been creating my own network and I have definitely been using it to succeed. Like, for example, the professors and everything at school they are very connected, and they help you to mould yourself on how the Canadian culinary industry wants you to be. So you kind of mould yourself to that and you utilise that to be able to fit in and hopefully succeed. (Natalia, 25, female, born in Mexico, living in Canada for less than 5 years, Toronto)

Jessica also explained how networking with "white" Canadians could be beneficial, particularly in terms of job opportunities.

... it could help you develop better relationships with people who are non-immigrant. Networking with those types of contacts is actually really helpful whenever you need to find a job or they can endorse you into some job ... by networking with these people you could get better job placements, higher salaries. It could also be more helpful for your family. (Jessica, 19, female, born in Canada, Toronto)

**Figure 34: Canada – frequency of interaction with "white" Canadians (by generation)**



Interview participants also spoke about how access to networks within their ethnic communities represented an asset for social connection, feeling a sense of self and belonging, as well as providing moral and emotional support. Anna explained how her relationship with her community shaped her identity and gave her a strong sense of belonging: "It definitely makes me feel like I'm less, like the country Hungarian and more a part of like the Hungarian diaspora". She also spoke about how participating in events organised by her ethnic community helped her preserve her culture and share it with younger generations.

So I guess by me being there I get to help preserve our culture but also share my culture with new generations, which is I guess, like the purpose of being ... trying to preserve our culture and share it with others. (Anna, 22, female, born in Canada, Toronto)

Angela spoke about her experience of working with staff members who shared a similar ethnic background as hers.

I would say in terms of work, a little bit because when I came to Toronto last year, I worked at a novelty shop where the entire staff was Chinese. I like, that's kind of a common thing that, they weren't, not necessarily looking for but like creates like a togetherness among the staff. It was like something to talk about and a background that everyone was from. (Angela, 19, female, born in Canada, Toronto)

The other skill that participants often spoke about was language skills. According to survey data, "language skills" was one the highest reported skills: 101 (61%) first-generation participants and 121 (55%) second-generation participants reported they possessed proficiency in more than one language (see Figure 31). Linguistic skills represented a form of social and cultural resource which youth migrants mastered through either formal learning or family socialisation and could mobilise effectively to acquire cultural and ethnic membership (Chiu and Choi 2018). Linguistic competence can be an element of cultural capital (Bourdieu 1986) but it is also important to think about it as a form of social capital since it provides membership and social position within a particular context (Nawyn et al. 2012). Jessica explained how linguistic skills gave her an advantage, particularly in terms of feeling integrated into her ethnic community and being valued and welcomed by members of this community:

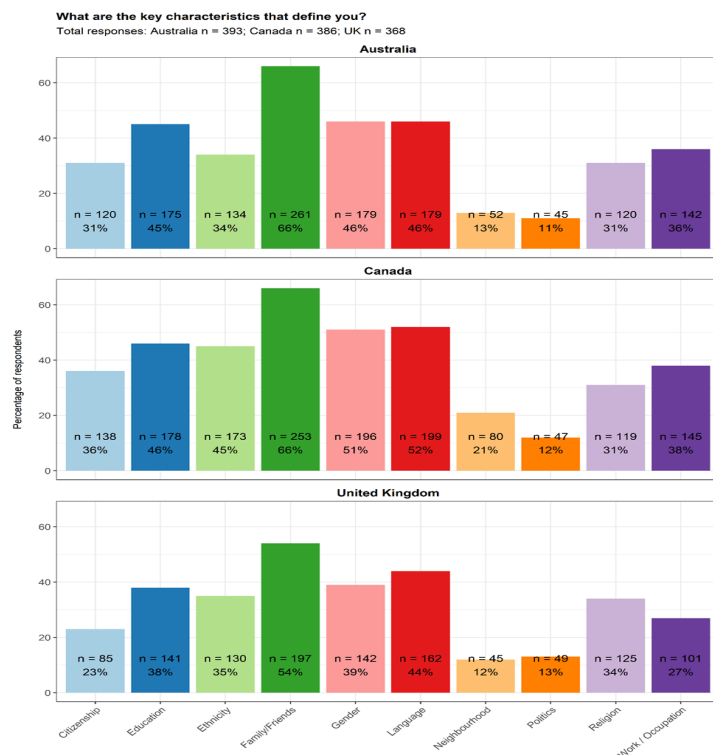
... if you're a Chinese person and you start speaking in Chinese ... they actually treat you differently than when you speak in English ... they will be like, okay she's trying at least, but she's trying to keep her culture, rather than when you're asking ... person who identifies as Chinese, and you're asking them in English they will just sometimes roll their eyes at you just like, how can you be part of a Chinese culture and not speak the language? (Jessica, 19, female, born in Canada, Toronto)

Importantly, interview data suggests that the family was a key site for the transmission of cultural knowledge and skills to the next generation. Thilini spoke about how she was privileged that her parents decided to teach her their language when she was young:

Definitely knowing the language is, I think, really significant. Like, I was lucky that my parents decided to teach me at a young age to speak the language, whereas a lot of other parents, they only spoke English in their home, so their kids could assimilate easier, so those kids are having a lot more struggles now, trying to pick up the language... (Thilini, 25, female, born in Canada, Toronto)

Interviews and survey data analysis showed that Toronto's participants had a strong relationship with their families. In fact, 253 out of 386 participants (66%) answered "family/friends" when asked "What are the characteristics that define you?", followed by "language" (199 participants or 52%) and "gender" (196 participants or 51%). The results seem to be consistent across the three sites (see Figure 35).

Figure 35: Individual characteristics (per site)





When Angela was asked "... what are the key characteristics that define who you are?", she responded:

Probably one major thing would be my family, I also have a younger brother and we grew up as a pretty close family. My parents' values both, both my parents' values kind of guided me a lot because my mum was home a lot with my brother and I when we were growing up. I also, I still like saw my parents as hard-working people who, neither of them finished university but I also saw that as inspiration for education in life. (Angela, 19, female, born in Canada, Toronto)

Similarly, Daniella explained:

A very strong sense of like family, especially like big family. I mean here, the only family that really lives here is like my aunt and my uncle and my cousins, otherwise most of my family still lives like back in Europe. But like especially just the family values and like having a strong sense of like community and like sharing with one another is definitely, I associate that with like my background and it's definitely like part of my life. (Daniella, 19, female, born in Canada, Toronto)

Participants also stressed that through family socialisation, they came to acquire a set of dispositions (cultural values, norms and skills) that played a central role in their sense of self and belonging. In other words, they spoke about how some aspects of their parents' culture were embedded in them and became part of their attitudes, orientations, behaviour and everyday practices.

I've personally taken from the cultural examples that they've [his parents] set is to always be careful ... I view the culture of my country through the lens of my parents, it's a country of people who are cautious and careful and they don't take things for granted. I've adopted that part of what I perceive to be Bengali culture in my own life, and I think that's helped me succeed because it's made me more careful. I try to seize every opportunity, I don't take things for granted even, not even just in work situations or school but also with like friends, you know, like don't take your friends for granted, like value your relationships, value opportunity. (Asir, 22, male, born in Bangladesh, living in Canada for less than 5 years, Toronto)

Likewise, Nicole explained:

Just because I grew up as a black girl. It's hard to really fit in especially when you don't go somewhere where you see people like yourself. And so my mum has always taught us to be firm in the people that we are, because we're not like everyone else. We're Africans, we speak a different language, so we're different, so it was always important to me to identify with that background, because if I lose it, it's not going to continue. (Nicole, 19, female, born in Canada, Toronto)

Participants' accounts also suggested that socialisation within their families included transmission of religious teachings and values, which for some became a source of self-identification and self-empowerment in relation to the ability of adjusting to life stressors as they reached adulthood. It was noticeable that, for some participants, religion formed an important part of their everyday lives:

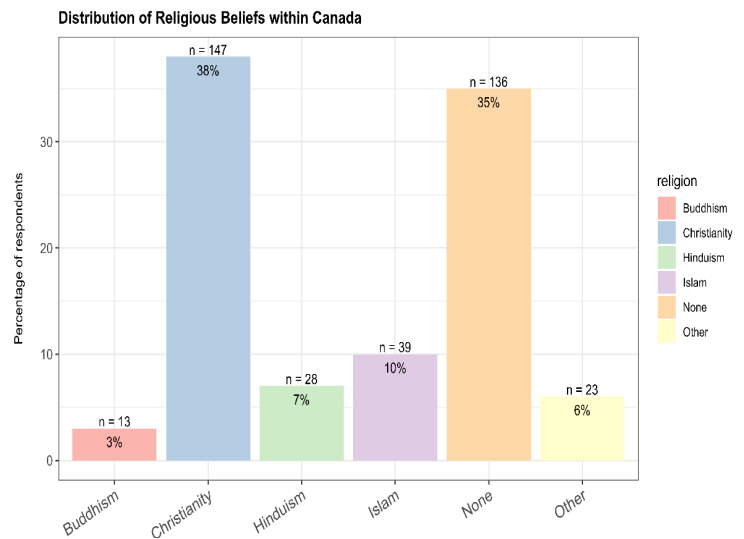
I was born into Christianity. My mum's very practising and so I followed into that and I have found my own path in that. And I decided to pursue it a little more. So Christianity is a part of my life and it's what I believe, it's what I practice. And in terms of values, I think things like family are very important and friendships and honesty, integrity, things like that. (Nicole, 19, female, born in Canada, Toronto)

Similarly, Emma spoke of the importance of religion:

Definitely helped me succeed by going to the temple and stuff, but it brings me a sense of peace and I guess, confidence that empowers me that, you know, things will be sorted out fine, it will be okay, and it can help me build with my mental health. So it's not necessarily succeeding in life, but just like keep me alive. (Emma, 22, female, born in Taiwan, living in Canada between 6–10 years, Toronto)

As in Australia, while most participants held religious beliefs (249 or 64%), a large proportion (or number) of them (136 or 35%) did not (see Figure 36).

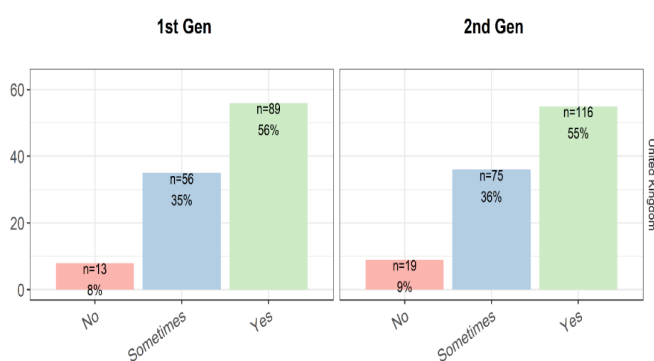
**Figure 36: Canada – distribution of religious beliefs**



# Birmingham, UK

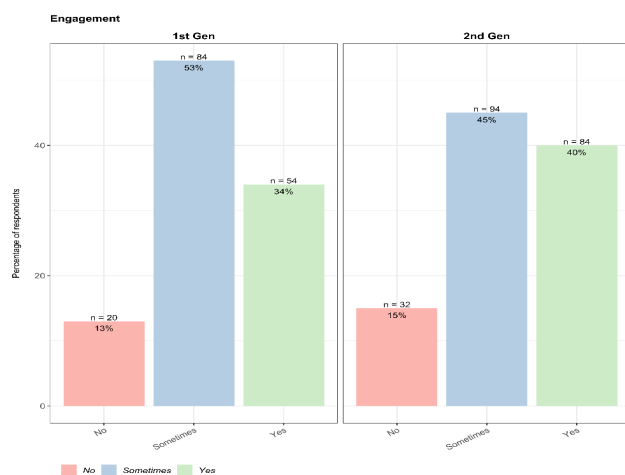
Survey analysis indicates that participants across generations in the UK engaged frequently with “mainstream” culture, as well as with the culture from their “country of origin”. As illustrated in Figure 37, out of the 368 survey participants, 205 (56%) answered “yes” when asked about their engagement with mainstream culture, while 131 (36%) answered “sometimes”.

**Figure 37: UK – engagement with or use of “mainstream” culture across generations**



Regarding their engagement with the culture of their “country of origin” the figures were slightly different. Here, 138 (38%) answered “yes” and 178 (48%) responded with “sometimes” (see Figure 38). These differences in the level of engagement between the “mainstream” culture and the culture of the “country of origin” are similar to the observations made among participants from Melbourne and Toronto.

**Figure 38: UK – engagement with or use of culture of “country of origin” across generations**



As in Melbourne and Toronto, interview participants spoke about their engagement with both cultures in their everyday lives, indicating they were able to negotiate cultural boundaries. Participants such as Noor described themselves as a “a bit of a chameleon.” In her words, “When I’m around people who haven’t got that culture, I’ll blend in, and then when I’m around people who do they will bring it out in me” (Noor, 23, female, born in the UK, Birmingham). Likewise, Arya spoke about how she deliberately and selectively deployed cultural resources in response to the opportunities and challenges she faced:

I’m a medical student, so I work in Warwick Hospital, and a lot of the Warwick demographic ... is white or elderly ... I have to adapt my way of speaking to how they speak ... to get the most information from them ... we get treated a bit better if we do adapt ourselves I would say ... I’ve adapted myself over the years to make sure that I have the same experience of living here as they do. Obviously I still feel Indian and have those Indian roots, but I try to make sure my experience here is not as different as other British white people my age. (Arya, 21, female, born in the UK, Birmingham)

Arya learnt how to adjust to her surroundings and in response to different circumstances while she was encountering multiple social worlds such as her school and workplace. Clearly, she was aware that racial prejudice and discrimination continued to have deep and lasting effects on second-generation migrant youth in the UK (Redclift and Rajina 2019; Hussain 2021c) and, therefore, a strategic use of her knowledge of the British culture might enable her to face challenges. However, this did not diminish her engagement with other cultures:

So my dad is a big organiser of Indian events in Birmingham, so he loves doing Indian events, so I go with him to everything ... like every other weekend I’m somewhere ... I’m dressed up somewhere in Indian clothes, Indian music, Indian people surrounding me, Indian food every day my mum cooks. So I’m more Indian I guess when Indian functions are going on and things like that. (Arya, 21, female, born in the UK, Birmingham)

Similar to participants in Melbourne and Toronto, participants in Birmingham (in particular second-generation migrants), explained how they rejected identifying with, and practicing, their home culture during the period of their late childhood and adolescence. However, over time they developed an agentic capacity to navigate difference and learnt how to adopt, value and reconcile both cultures:

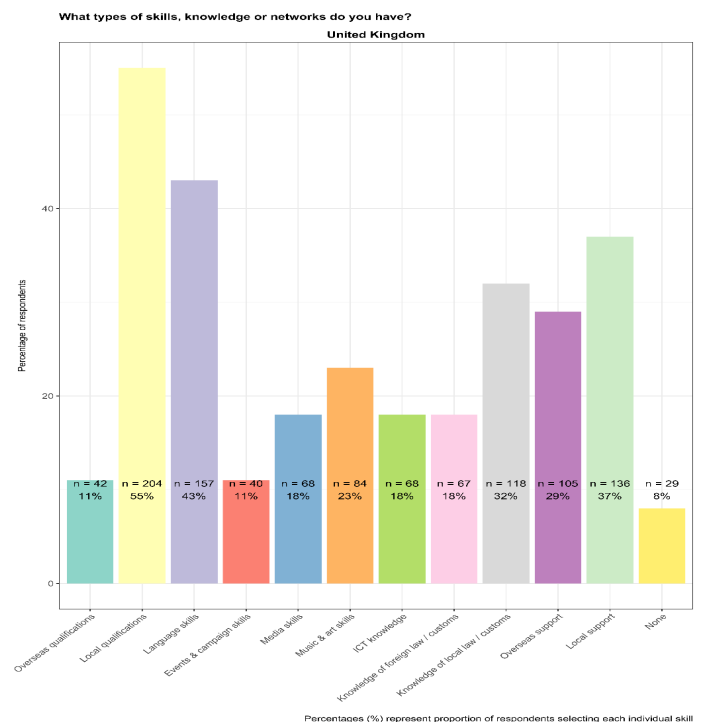
So when I was growing up, when I was younger in school, I used to sort of shun my migrant heritage. And then I think going to ... getting older you sort of get more in touch with your culture and stuff. Because you've realised that as much as you want to be fully British, you're not. Because there are other aspects of yourself that you have to acknowledge ... And then so I think also I work in the creative industries and I've always been a creative person and I felt like you have to be open and honest to your true self. And that's like being able to express both cultures and it presents this really nice duality which other people might not be as fortunate to have. (Surjan, 22, male, born in the UK, Birmingham)

Like in the other cities, the temporal dimension was thus central to the development of transcultural identities and capital. First-generation participants also spoke about how, after living in the UK for some years, they started incorporating aspects of British culture in their everyday lives:

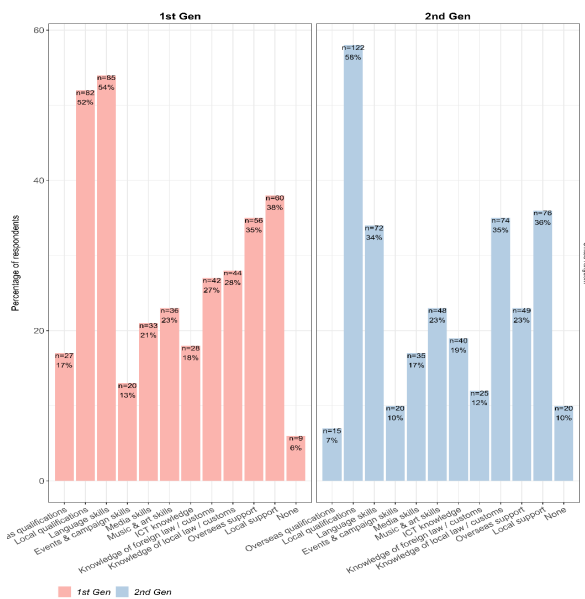
So one thing that I've noticed here is that people, in general, are very respectful towards your views, even if they don't agree to it they'll listen to you. So that's something which is sort of lucky in the places that I come from, so I think this one of the takeaways that I am kind of developing. Apart from that I guess yeah, I mean just be respectful to the people you are talking to and be aware and be... [Sensitive?] sensitive, exactly yeah be sensitive and like compassionate in general. (Ria, 23, female, born in India, living in the UK for less than 5 years, Birmingham)

Having access to multiple cultures thus enabled the participants to develop resources over time. These networks, knowledge and skills could be converted into different forms of capital beneficial in different aspects of their lives. The three highest resources that participants had developed and accessed were local qualifications (204 participants or 55%), language skills (157 participants or 43%) and local support (136 participants or 37%) (see Figure 39). Second-generation participants reported higher level of knowledge of local law/customs (74 participants or 35%) than first-generation participants (44 participants or 28%). However, knowledge of foreign law and customs was highly reported by first-generation participants (42 participants or 27%) compared with what was reported by second-generation migrants (25 participants or 12%). In addition, 35% of first-generation participants reported that they received overseas support, while only 23% of second-generation participants did the same (see Figure 40). This is not surprising given the differences in participants' length of settlement within the UK (see Figure 41) In addition, within the UK sample, there were 79 participants (21%) who migrated to the UK to study. There is a possibility that these participants were international students who would still receive support, in particular financial support, from overseas (see Figure 42)

Figure 39: UK – skills, knowledges, and networks



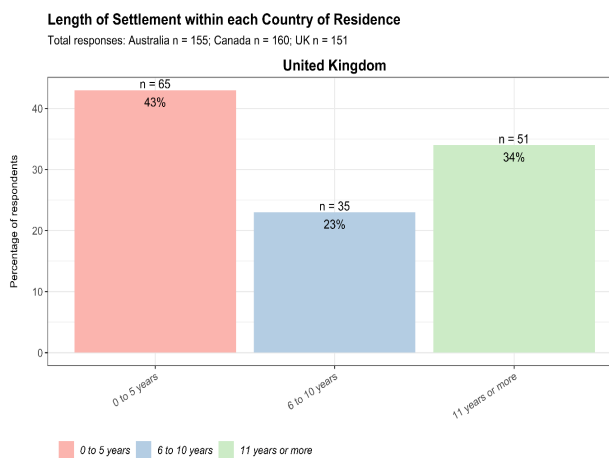
**Figure 40: UK – skills, knowledges, and networks (by generation)**



Regarding local support, many participants spoke of the importance of members of their ethnic communities in supporting them with different aspects of their life, including maintaining their cultural identity. Ethnic communities, as some participants explained, provided an important source of social capital in the form of support, information and community for their members. Participants spoke about their engagement with cultural practices, from religious and ceremonial practices to everyday practices and the use of language:

... the Kurdish community in Birmingham's very, very big. And very welcoming too. Like if you don't know Kurdish well, we have Kurdish schools, we have Kurdish mosques. So they help you in a lot of ways. So I guess I don't think I've ever felt like I'm not Kurdish enough. So during, like, we have a Kurdish New Year, called Nowruz ... the Kurdish community book like venues, halls, they make parties... It's really nice. During Ramadan the, as well, the Kurdish Mosque that we go to, literally every Kurdish person in will come to that mosque, which is really, really nice. Everyone's talking Kurdish, doing things in Kurdish. (Rozhin, 21, female, born in Iraq Kurdistan, living in the UK for 11+ years, Birmingham)

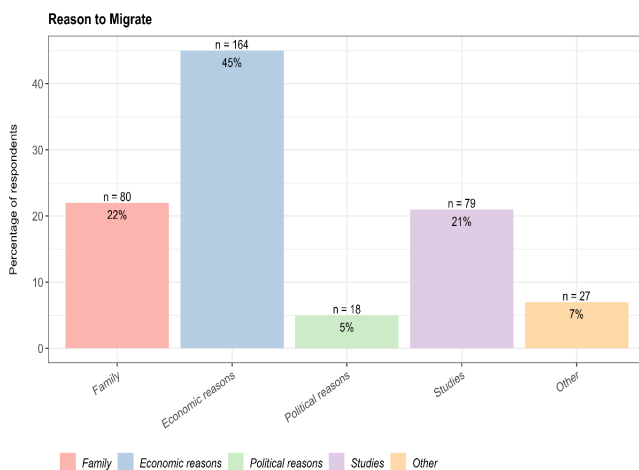
**Figure 41: UK– length of settlement (participants born overseas)**



Likewise, a few participants spoke of their role supporting their friends and members of their community:

I always make an effort especially when I come across, as I've already mentioned, students who are from Pakistan, because I want them to feel welcome in Birmingham. I want them to feel comfortable. So at the moment I've probably helped about five or six students, about two or three of them are still here in the UK at the moment. So I feel like I have to do that quite a bit. Generally in the Birmingham Pakistani community I'm quite involved with a lot of things, so events and stuff; I'm – I'm heavily involved in them. (Shihab, 23, male, born in the UK, Birmingham)

**Figure 42: UK– reason to migrate**



Participants also spoke more about forming friendships with migrant youth from within and outside their ethnic community (mainly from non-white ethnic backgrounds). They reported that they were able to connect easily with other migrant youth, with whom they shared a sense of solidarity or shared experience. These types of networks, as participants reported, facilitated a sense of belonging and better communication. As noted by Yusuf with regard to friendships within his ethnic community:

I would say when I meet my fellow Malaysian friends. Because we're Malaysian, we have our own Malaysian accent, the way we speak and all that. So, I mean I do have some Malaysian friends here. Of course, when I see them, we come back to our own culture, speak in our own accent and all that. I would say accent, humour, Malaysian humour, we talk about politics in Malaysia. (Yusuf, 25, male, born in Malaysia, living in the UK for less than 5 years, Birmingham)

Likewise, as noted by Anisa regarding her relationships and shared experiences with migrant youth outside her ethnic community:

I would say most of my friends are from different backgrounds ... they make up a large part of my friendship group to be honest because I think we share the same bond of being children of immigrants ... I think it's an advantage because even though they're different situations or difficulties that they face, it's similar because you get used to the fact that your parents come over to the UK from a foreign land, they have different cultural aspects and then they have difficulties in assimilating to the culture here. You know dealing with language barriers. It's nearly the same thing. (Anisa, 20, female, born in the UK, Birmingham)

In addition to these networks, most of our participants (across generations) had daily interactions with "white" Britons (see Figure 43). However, their relationships were more complex. Some, as Surjan, spoke positively about his networks, pointing to the friendship and support he gained through these interactions at university:

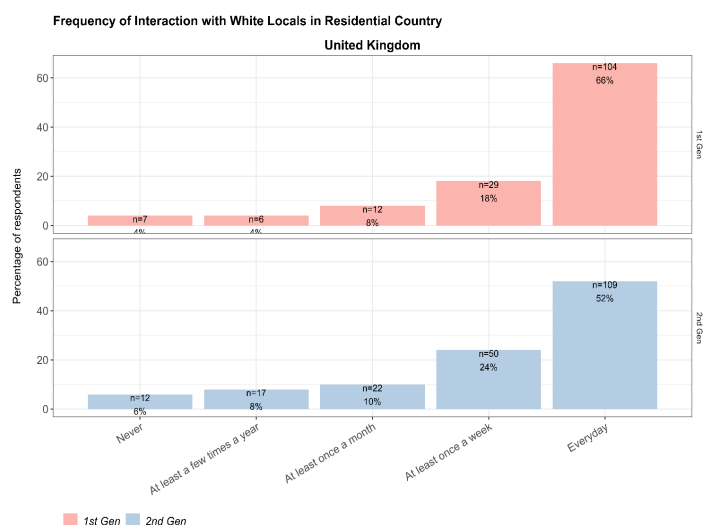
... having spent so much time around people who are white, people who are not white, I feel like I'm the kind of person who will get on with anyone regardless of their skin tone. And so having lived with like, three boys last year, who are all white, I never really saw myself as different ... Even if at one point I did feel that I was different, I've always been made to feel ... like they've always had the initiative to like, point that out and say, "you're not". Like just to make you feel at ease. But maybe that's just because of the circumstances that I was in and the university that I was at. (Surjan, 22, male, born in the UK, Birmingham)

In contrast, others such as Ryan had less positive experiences, which challenged his sense of belonging in the UK and his identity as a Briton:

*[Have you ever been in a situation where you were made to feel like you weren't British enough?]*

Not in Birmingham, I would say. In other places yes ... We had chess competitions in Eton for example or Cambridge, model United Nations as well, and there is a sense maybe a condescending view upon the students there who may be majoritatively [sic] white from a white background, they may look at you different. It could be them, because I have a different skin colour, it could also be because I come from Birmingham. (Ryan, 18, male, born in the UK, Birmingham)

**Figure 43: UK – frequency of interaction with “white” Britons (by generation)**



Beyond these networks, participants in Birmingham described competency in their various languages as a tool of understanding and bonding across culture and difference. This included a proficiency in foreign languages, and also a linguistic and cultural capital – related to their English-speaking skills – that gave them a sense of agency and empowerment in Birmingham:

So I think language is really important in this as well. Just the way that you speak, because I used to be very much like speaking in a lot of like slang, swearing and a lot of stuff like that which is common with young people. But I feel like as a minority, your biggest tool is language. Like, being able to eloquently explain things. It just ... it sort of, it's a shield in a way, I think. And I think I use that to my advantage because I think, it shouldn't be, but it is a marker for intelligence, I think. And if you can go into a situation and especially in work, I feel like you'll be taken a lot more seriously, if you're eloquent. (Surjan, 22, male, born in the UK, Birmingham)

Furthermore, and as noted by Viraj, speaking more than one language allows him to connect with fellow migrants in Birmingham:

... you see other, you know, people from similar backgrounds as you, you can, kind of, talk to them and maybe you can speak, you can kind of switch between both languages, you can speak between Indian or English and I think it's much easier to kind of joke about things because you have, kind of, similar experiences, especially growing up. (Viraj, 21, male, born in the UK, Birmingham)

Importantly, language skills also allowed participants to form, create and maintain connections with people in countries of origin:

I did go back to India in March, and I think being able to speak Punjabi helps me connect with my relatives over there. I know a lot of my friends can't speak Punjabi, when they go to India it's like a big disconnect between their relatives and them. But being able to converse with my relatives, I think that's a way to connect with people. (Chitleen, 19, female, born in the UK, Birmingham)

In addition to networks and linguistic skills, participants also spoke about the importance of understanding the customs and laws of their parents' home culture. In general, they highlighted the key role of their parents and families in facilitating the acquisitions of cultural knowledge, and how this knowledge has benefitted them in many ways.

I'm probably more Pakistani than a lot of British Pakistanis ... in that ... I understand a lot about the culture. I was sort of – in my childhood I was pushed into the culture and told a lot about things which most people wouldn't learn about from their parents ... [they] would explain things to me like the caste system which exists in our part of Kashmir ... the nuances of language. ... the differences in culture across the different regions and provinces of Pakistan. (Shihab, 23, male, born in the UK, Birmingham)

Furthermore, participants indicated that their parents were not the only socialisation agents in their lives. Relationships within the family, especially to grandparents, were more important for transmitting cultural beliefs, values and skills. Some participants mentioned that their grandparents were involved in rearing them as children, which provided an opportunity to learn about their culture.

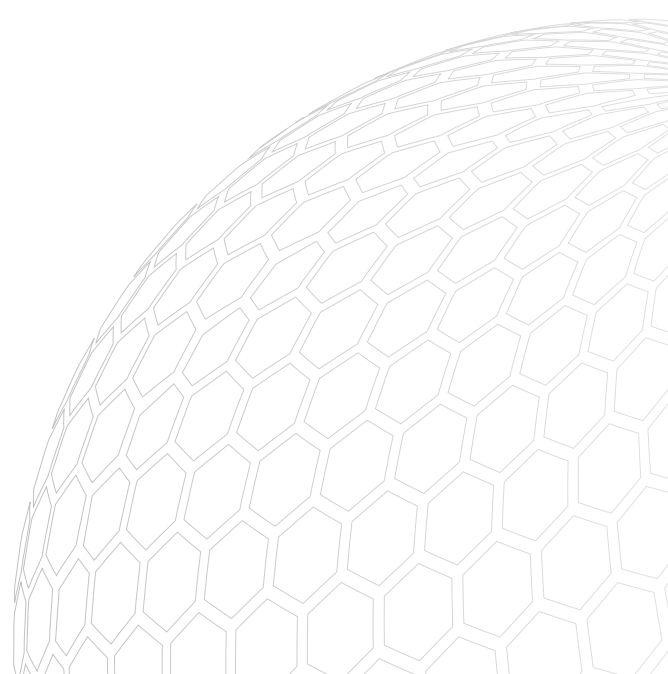
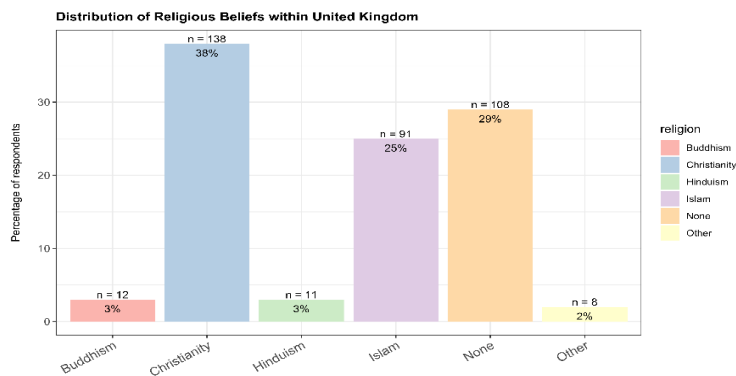
I live with my grandparents, they've kind of shaped the way I've grown up because my parents were both working and my grandparents would raise my brothers and I. So we've learnt Punjabi from them and a lot of Indian traditions we've learnt from them. (Chitleen, 19, female, born in the UK, Birmingham)

As in the other case studies, participants stressed that through family socialisation, they came to acquire religious traditions and values. It was noticeable that, for participants of Muslim background, Islam formed an important part of their identities (La Brooy 2008):

Islam is important to me. My parents are also Muslim as well and I feel like, you know, if I, for example, have children in the future I would want to, you know, want them to also ... practice Islam, be a Muslim, go to the mosque, for example, pray, you know, their prayers five times a day. I would want to do the same as well for them. So religion does play, you know, a factor into who I am. (Basheer, 23, male, born in the UK, Birmingham)

The salience of Islam is to an extent not surprising, given the demographics of Birmingham in general and of our participants in particular. As noted below (see Figure 44 ), 25 per cent of our survey participants in the UK followed Islam (compared to 10 per cent in both Australia and Canada). Notably, as in both the other two case studies, while most participants in the UK held religious beliefs (260 or 71%), a large share of them (108 or 29%) did not.

Figure 44: UK – distribution of religious beliefs

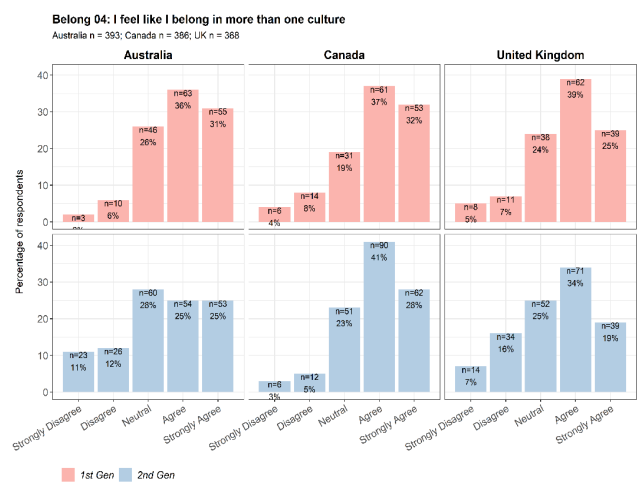




# Transformative Capacities of Transcultural Capital

As previously mentioned, most participants spoke about their ability to access and deploy different cultural repertoires and to successfully navigate difference while living within diverse societies. As noted in Figure 45, a large number of survey participants reported that they perceived themselves as though they belonged to more than one culture, with patterns being consistent across research sites and across generations within each site. As discussed further below, this sense of belonging, and the ability to navigate across these cultures, stands as a transformative asset through which participants were able to instigate, negotiate and maintain valuable socio-cultural connections.

**Figure 45: “I feel like I belong in more than one culture” (per site)**



In this context, exposure to different cultures by living in multicultural societies, for example, is viewed as a resource that can be converted into transcultural capital essential for developing intercultural understanding (Modood 2004). Participants spoke about how living within diverse societies allowed them to build valuable socio-cultural competencies and interpersonal skills, such as nuanced cultural awareness, open-mindedness, empathy towards people of different cultural backgrounds and reflexivity. For instance, when asked about his view on being exposed to different cultures and people, Viraj explained that:

I think it's more of an advantage because it makes you more open minded to different types of cultures. You're not just looking at, you're not thinking of, you know, just how you've been raised – you can see how other people think and how other people maybe want to, you know, interact with you or their own upbringing, you see the differences and you can kind of connect in certain ways and you can, sort of, you know, become a little bit more different to them as well. (Viraj, 21, male, born in the UK, Birmingham)

Likewise, Nasseem explained how exposure to difference has changed his own views on other people and other religions:

When I came to Canada, I wasn't really as open minded as I am right now. I was like, "No, like, this is the way that certain people should believe". But then when I started going into the community and talking to people with other religions and beliefs, I started to become more accepting of them. And it hasn't really changed my view on my own religion. But it certainly has changed my view on other religions. (Naseem, 24, male, born in Iran, living in Canada for less than 5 years, Toronto)

Joanne similarly spoke of a degree of cultural awareness, open-mindedness, reflexivity, and empathy:

I've just become a bit more open-minded. I'm just ... more culturally aware. I'm trying to be more understanding of other people and their situations, and especially less judgemental about the situations that maybe I compare to my own, and I think, oh, well you haven't really struggled that much, but it's not the right way of thinking, because I should be thinking, like, how can I learn from this, to help me identify, to help me belong? Sometimes, I do feel like maybe it is my own fault, because I haven't been as open-minded ... I should just be more open-minded about it, and I'm trying. It's one thing I've learnt a lot from the differences, is that I just need to be a little more empathetic, and definitely – yeah, just less – sometimes I'm just in my own bubble... (Joanne, 20, female, born in Samoa, living in Australia for 11+ years, Melbourne)

Participants also indicated that knowledge of, and interaction with, different cultures constituted a resource that enabled them to feel a sense of belonging and connection to the multiple environments they live in (including "mainstream" society, ethnic communities, and their friendship circles). When reflecting on her engagement with British culture, Chitleen explained that:

I think it helps socially, just like going to the pub after work all together. [To connect more?] Connect more, yes, and people are just a bit more relaxed around you as well. I think that helps when you go back into the workplace the next day, you've got something to talk about and it's like, yes, you just want to feel part of that team, yes. (Chitleen, 19, female, born in the UK, living in Birmingham)

Similarly, when reflecting on her engagement with her "ethnic" culture, Angela argued that:

... when you're in a community with people from my own background, it's like those are the places where you talk about like things like food or things like just that your parents do from your own background. So I think it adds to a sense of belonging within your own community ... I worked at a novelty shop where the entire staff was Chinese ... [it] creates like a togetherness among the staff. It was like something to talk about and a background that everyone was from. (Angela, 19, female, born in Canada, Toronto)

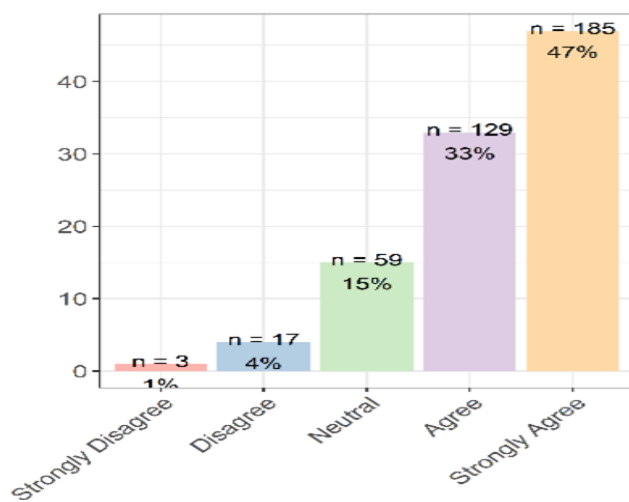
Importantly, most participants demonstrated an ability to move across difference and to engage with multiple cultures in constructive ways:

I think that the more cultures you interact ... The more people from different backgrounds you interact with, you get to hear all the different world views, all of their opinions and feelings on things, and that can help you grow as a person. Because otherwise you can get stuck in your bubble ... But even, you know, just the general knowledge of different religions, the ways different countries work. I feel like if you get into the right kind of group, there's a lot of support for each other, as people who have moved here from somewhere else ... you can connect with them, because they've got a similar background. (Sofia, 21, female, born in Ukraine, living in Australia for 11+ years, Melbourne)

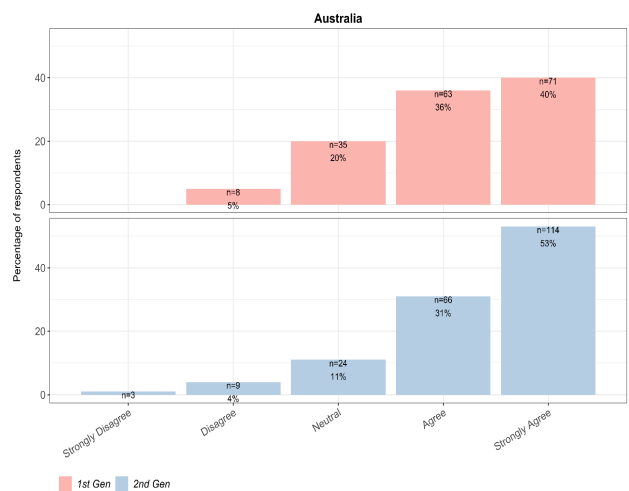
# Melbourne, Australia

In Melbourne, close to half of all survey participants (185 participants, 47%) reported “strongly agree” to feeling a sense of belonging in Australia, and 129 (33%) reported “agree” (see Figure 46). The number of second-generation participants (114 participants, 53%) who reported “strongly agree” was relatively higher than that of the first-generation participants (71 participants, 40%) (see Figure 47).

**Figure 46: Australia – “I feel like I belong in Australia”**



**Figure 47: Australia – “I feel like I belong in Australia” (by generation)**



Almost all participants (first-generation and second-generation) highlighted the advantage of living in a multicultural country like Australia, as the entrenched demographic and cultural diversity helped reinforce a deeper sense of belonging and opportunities to learn about and engage with other cultures. As noted by Sarah:

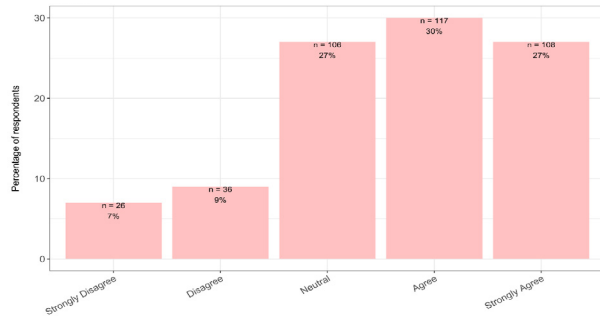
Belonging in Australia, yeah, I think so because we’re a super multi-cultural country in general. Yeah, the more you learn about other cultures the more you sort of ... I guess it increases your belonging because we are so multi-cultural. (Sarah, 21, female, born in Australia, Melbourne)

And Vinh:

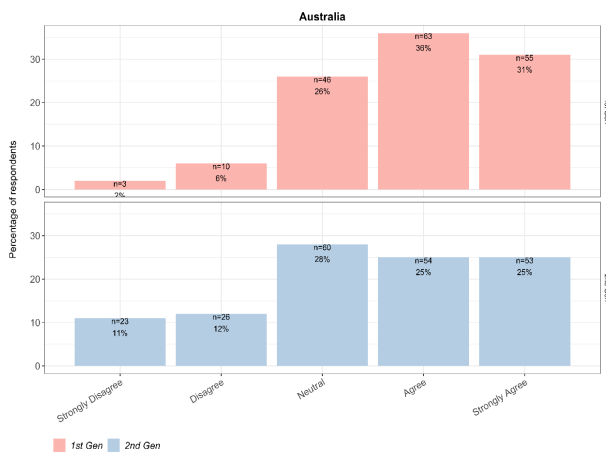
Yeah, because in Australia, multicultural. So that’s really good to learn more about something new ... If you see something very suitable for you, you can learn about it and if you see something that’s not very suitable for you, you don’t need to learn about it. So you just have more choice in your life, more lesson, more culture for you to use in your life. (Vinh, 21, female, born in Vietnam, living in Australia for less than 5 years, Melbourne)

In this context of living in cultural diversity, it was notable that the majority of survey participants expressed the view that they belonged in more than one culture (see Figure 48). While the number of first-generation participants who reported “agree” and “strongly agree” was relatively higher than that of the second-generation participants, at least half of all second-generation participants expressed themselves positively about this multiple sense of belonging (see Figure 49).

**Figure 48: Australia – belonging in more than one culture**



**Figure 49: Australia – belonging in more than one culture (by generation)**



As expressed by participants, this positive experience of living in diverse and multicultural societies was grounded in the specificities of Melbourne. They expressed a positive view of the multicultural character of the city (or at least parts of it). Their account indicates that these migrant youth could be in a position of advantage (Kasinitz et al. 2008), where there were beneficial possibilities to engage with cultures beyond those available to some of their (migrant and non-migrant) contemporaries who live in comparatively mono-cultural environments. As Ahmed explained:

... I grew up in the west side and everyone ... was generally from a migrant or refugee background ... and so kind of that difference was normal to me ... relishing in those differences because they kind of actually made us special and we can connect to each other ... I can see how my values had been different to people who grew up in kind of ... I guess, more monocultural suburbs of Melbourne where they didn't tend to kind of see that diversity. (Ahmed, 21, male, born in Australia, Melbourne)

As explained by Hoa, this exposure to multiple cultures and differences resulted in positive attributes, including her ability to develop empathy and open-mindedness:

... access to different cultures gives you a lot of perspectives, and from that, you build a stronger understanding of things that people share with you, you don't lock yourself into one way of thinking ... I think having the knowledge this is how people do things and that's their culture and I respect that, rather than why they're not doing it the way that I do... (Hoa, 24, female, born in Vietnam, living in Australia between 6–10 years, Melbourne)

In a similar vein, Joanne spoke about how “being exposed to different things here, compared to what my parents were exposed to, or what people in the islands are sort of exposed to” has been an opportunity to “just become a bit more open-minded, more culturally aware ... and especially less judgemental about the situations that maybe [she] compared to [her] own...” (Joanne, 20, female, born in Samoa, living in Australia for 11+ years, Melbourne).

Similarly, Ahmed indicated that engaging with various cultures was beneficial to his life, albeit “indirectly”, as he put it, as it enabled him to view the world through a “unique lens” that allowed him not only to navigate difference at work and in his social life, but also to connect with, and help others:

Maybe not directly, but ... just in of itself, the fact of coming from a different background and being kind of between two cultures. That in and of itself gives me a unique lens when I come to work, or in social life ... allows that ability to empathise with other people. I think that’s always the main by-product ... I think it’s more of the perspective that it gives me, the values that it has provided me in the way I look at the world. (Ahmed, 21, male, born in Australia, Melbourne)

As explored in previous sections, while diversity and difference have been perceived as social and cultural resources to generate capital, many structural challenges continued to negatively shape participants’ identity formation, sense of belonging and opportunities in Melbourne. Will explained how experiences of racism at school challenged his sense of belonging in Australia, and forced him to “hide” from, and “conform” to, the “white” majority:

Part of it is going to a very “white” school in high school and feeling the shame of being from a different background or having different coloured skin and having to adjust to that environment and essentially hide it ... it was very much “You’re different, you’re this chink, you’re this insert racist slur.” So in that sense, yes, the shame meant that I felt more Australian just because I wanted to hide from that experience ... made me feel like I had to conform just to survive... (Will, 24, male, born in Australia, Melbourne)

The views of our participants reflect the findings of recent studies which show that racism remains rampant in Australian schools and that experiences of racism are multiple and complex, ranging from being identified as an “other” to being excluded or bullied based on skin colour or other visible markers (Baak 2019; Elias et al. 2021; Uptin et al. 2013). The narrative described by Will indicates that, due to constant pressure to negotiate identity and adjust to “white” normative cultures, he felt a need to change who he was to fit in.

Importantly, while participants demonstrated a deep understanding of this and other barriers, they also demonstrated an acquired ability to navigate and challenge them. For instance, Will also reflected on how, upon reaching adulthood, he began to realise that his difference was not a disadvantage, but rather a potential source of capital for empowerment and belonging:

I think ... in terms of self-identity being able to reconcile with the two cultures ... I think the opportunity to actually appreciate both cultures, so whether that’s through learning the language and some history ... you actually get to navigate both cultures because if you don’t ever get that opportunity, you’re never going to be able to appreciate it or even understand the kind of person you could have become or the kinds of things that you’ve missed out on. I think a lot of second-generation migrants reject culture and don’t give it enough weight until it’s too late... (Will, 24, male, born in Australia, Melbourne)

Likewise, Mary reflected on how access to opportunities and privileges might be limited for migrant youth, and therefore the only way to achieve social empowerment and political agency is through enhancing her individual personhood.

There's a lot of things that are actually problematic for migrants – you know, education, racism, all of those things, but those things are not going to stop. Racism, we may wish that will stop, but these things are ongoing, they're not going to stop. But all you can do is, what can I do for myself as a person? How can I change my experience, my perspective? ... Because even if you have the supports in place ... you have to be equipped enough to be able to say, okay, you know what, that is there, but I'm going to fight and I'm going to move forward and see what I can do. (Mary, 20, female, born in Ethiopia, living in Australia for 11+ years, Melbourne)

This reflects an awareness of structural inequalities connected to her racialised and ethnicised position and a degree of agency to disrupt and transform these hierarchies.

In this context, participants often reflected on how engaging with cultural values from their (or their parents') "home" culture allowed them to succeed in many aspects of their life, in particular education and career. As explained by Will:

I'm someone who is very proud of my own cultural identity, but I also know that I'm very, very privileged and I've worked very hard to get to where I am, to be someone who's working fulltime at 24 and who's been working fulltime for about four years. So I feel very, very lucky but I also know that I've worked really hard to get there. And the values of hard work and making the most out of every opportunity and trying to make the whole world move for you is something I think it's very ingrained in terms of Chinese values and that sort of diligence and taking opportunities. I really see that in myself in many ways. (Will, 24, male, born in Australia, Melbourne).

Some of these cultural values such as "diligence" and "taking opportunities" constitute a capital that has an exchange value within the migratory context. In other words, these ethno-cultural values transmitted from one generation to another constitute a form of ethnic capital (Zhou 2005) deployed by groups of ethnic minorities to support their educational and economic advancement post-migration. In a similar way, participants also talked about how engaging with aspects of their "home" culture allowed them to succeed in their social life in Melbourne. Hoa explained how she carried the "family-centric" values of Vietnam with her, "so you hold your family very close to your heart":

... I think because having that family-centric and caring part of me, when I hang out with my friends, we've created this very family-like group of friends, that we care for each other, and treat each other as family members, and that's really awesome, because I know that in my hardship, I have somewhere to fall to... (Hoa, 24, female, born in Vietnam, living in Australia between 6–10 years, Melbourne).

In addition to cultural knowledge, participants reported that social networks, within and outside their ethnic communities, constituted a resource that they could utilise to overcome challenges and achieve goals in Australia. Minh spoke about how having access to a network (mainly represented by family members who are already settled in Australia) enabled her to access the labour market and find a job easily within a short period of time:

My aunty friend, she introduced me to the owner. When I was in Vietnam, like I learn a little bit about doing nails ... my aunty friends, she's working at the shop I'm working now, so she pulled me some string and I got the job there. (Minh, 19, female, born in Vietnam, living in Australia for less than 5 years, Melbourne)

Minh could adapt the skills she gained elsewhere to take advantage of job opportunities in a new location and at a specific time. These skills, alongside access to an “ethnic-specific network” (Ryan and Mulholland 2014), show how migrant youth utilise cultural and social resources to build capital in Melbourne. As argued before, ethnic-specific networks may provide accommodation, jobs, information and emotional support, and may eventually facilitate community formation and permanent settlement (Patulny 2015).

Other participants – for instance, Megan – spoke about the importance of developing expansive networks beyond their ethnic communities (Nannestad et al. 2008). Megan explained that through the passage of time, access to networks that consisted of predominantly “white” (Anglo) Australians helped her feel a sense of belonging and overcome social exclusion:

I did the first year in college and all of the Australian kids were in their own gang ... I just remember feeling really excluded. Because even at lunch times, or whatever, you could sit anywhere but I wouldn't feel comfortable sitting with them because I wouldn't know what to talk to them about...

*[What about now?]*

... I have a few Australian friends and I have a boyfriend who is Australian ... I think, that helped a lot and I guess he's taught me – what everything means. Because there is a lot of slang that I just didn't know ... Because when I met all of his friends and they were all very predominantly white and Australian ... With him helping me it was a little bit not too uncomfortable. (Megan, 21, female, born in Malaysia, living in Australia for less than 5 years, Melbourne)

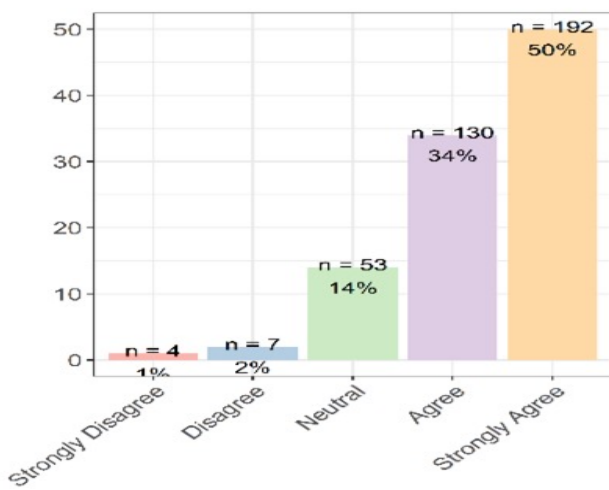
Given the difficulties faced by migrants in establishing relationships with “locals” (Harris et al. 2020), having access to such networks contributed to establishing an effective support system for Megan. She could mobilise this network to gain knowledge about the Australian cultural system, including exposure to and understanding of Australian slang, which could aid with overcoming the feeling of not belonging and create local affinities.



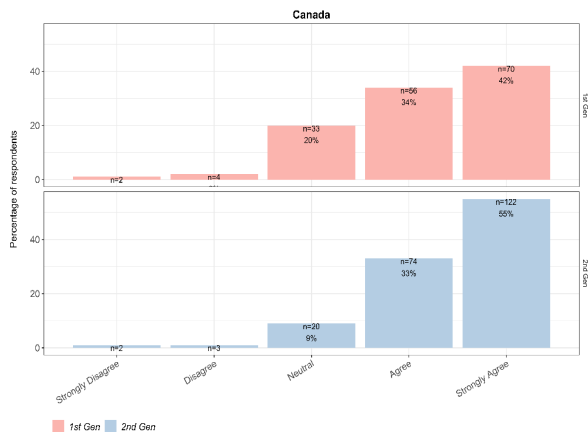
# Toronto, Canada

Regarding a sense of belonging in Canada, half of the survey participants (192, 50%) reported “strongly agree” and 130 participants (34%) reported “agree” (see Figure 50). Like Australia, the combined number of second-generation participants who reported “strongly agree” (122, 55%) and “agree” (74, 33%) to this question about belonging in Canada was higher than the combined number of first-generation participants who reported “strongly agree” (70, 42%) and “agree” (56, 34%) on the same subject (see Figure 51).

**Figure 50: Canada - “I feel like I belong in Canada”**



**Figure 51: Canada - “I feel like I belong in Canada” (by generation)**



In Canada, the legal and policy support for multiculturalism may account for what is seen in the research findings. Aside from the high levels of belonging reported in the survey above, interview participants positively viewed multiculturalism. Participants expressed the positive view that interacting with different cultures reinforced a deeper sense of belonging and provided opportunities for learning about and engaging with others. As argued by Angela:

I think again like I said how in high school I met a lot of people, most of my peers were of some kind of immigrant background, although from completely different places in the world. I think that similarity and like the bonds I built with people based on that has affected my sense of identity and Canadian identity because I think it's really proven to me that multiculturalism does and can work. (Angela, 19, female, born in Canada, Toronto)

Similarly, as argued by Fiona:

... I guess one thing is having, kind of, respect for all kinds of different people ... there's so many different kind of cultures and so many kind of different ethnicity backgrounds, then we also need to learn to, kind of, blend with them and to how to respect them so we can create, like, good community. (Fiona, 20, female, born in China, living in Canada for 11+ years, Toronto)

The majority of survey participants in Canada reported a sense of belonging to more than culture, with 69 per cent combined answering “agree” or “strongly agree” to the question (see Figure 52). This view was shared across generations (see Figure 53) and by interview participants in Toronto. Among others, Fiona explained how living within multicultural spaces provided opportunities for interacting with multiple cultures and learning from them. The excerpt below suggested that Fiona perceived diversity as resource that can be converted into capital essential for identity formation and belonging.



For example, maybe in China ... most people would think in the same way because they're only living among themselves but here, we can meet people from all kinds of backgrounds and cultures, so we can learn a lot from each other.

*[Do you think that by engaging with these different cultures you are developing a new sense of who you are and a new feeling of belonging?]*

Yes. Because of the different cultures they shape me in different ways, since they came from different backgrounds, so, at the same time I think also, since I'm exposed to all these things when I'm growing up, it also shapes how I, kind of, fit in with the people who also share similarities or differences with me, (Fiona, 20, female, born in China, living in Canada for 11+ years, Toronto)

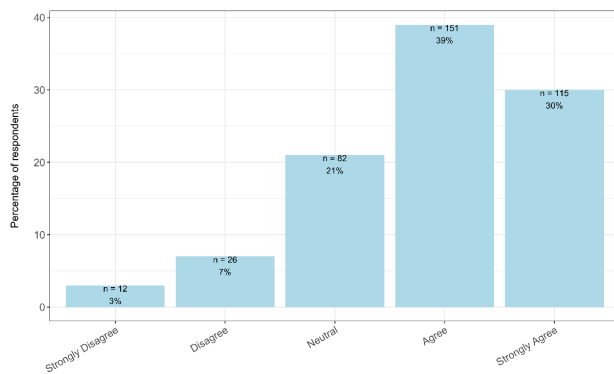
Many participants also spoke about how being exposed to different cultures enabled them to become culturally aware, more empathetic, tolerant, and accepting:

I used to be very aware of those differences, but now I kind of embrace them because people come from different walks of life and they come from different backgrounds and it's important to embrace everyone. So I learned more about those cultures. I learned why they do what they do and I still stand firm in who I am and my culture and how I was raised, but I also like to understand where they come from and why they were raised that way. So it's just a matter of understanding them. (Nicole, 19, female, born in Canada, Toronto)

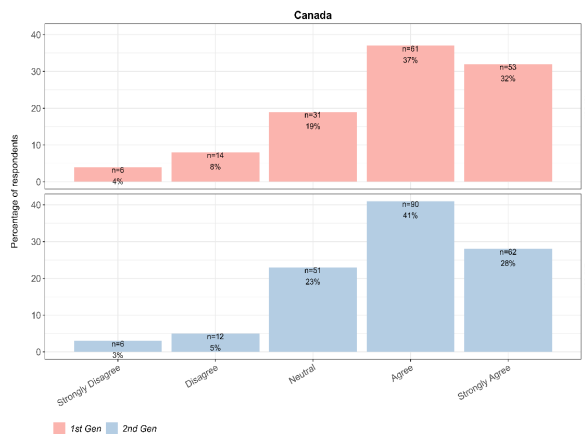
Others, like Farah, spoke about how having access to and knowledge of Canadian culture and their home culture enabled them to develop socio-cultural competencies and interpersonal skills, which are vital in an increasingly interdependent and super-diverse world. Farah explained:

I feel like the fact that I was able to grow up in a Western culture and a Middle Eastern culture, I'm able to look at both aspects and really understand everyone's perspectives. I've met so many different people with so many different beliefs and values that I feel like I'm able to listen to an argument and really take everything in. And I'm not stubborn about my position. I'm able to understand and really think about different perspectives. So that's something I'm really thankful for, in that sense. (Farah, 22, female, born in Pakistan, living in Canada for 11+ years, Toronto)

**Figure 52: Canada – belonging in more than one culture**



**Figure 53: Canada – belonging in more than one culture (by generation)**



In addition, the accounts of many participants suggested that as they were growing into adulthood, they became aware, reflective and conscious of some cultural values internalised during childhood, which enabled, transformed and oriented them to achieve some goals in life, for instance academic success. Zhou (2005:134) suggests that some ethnic minorities possess cultural values, such as reinforcement of the importance of education, which were formed in their home countries "and transplanted with minor modifications by immigrants in the new land and there transmitted and perpetuated from generation to generation". Zhou's argument, that these values constitute a productive resource in a competitive education market, were partly reflected through the experience of participants such as Ashly:

It's very expected to do a million after-school programs. My parents really forced me, well, not forced but supported me academically and I credit that drive from them to Chinese culture and I credit my academic success to that drive. (Ashly, 21, female, born in China, living in Canada for 11+ years, Toronto)

And Tahir:

I think that has helped a lot in terms of, in doing my schoolwork and stuff like that. When giving up is not an option. (Tahir, 20, male, born in Saudi Arabia, living in Canada for 11+ years, Toronto)

In a similar way, participants spoke how engaging with "Canadian" culture helped them in different aspects of their life. As explained by Asir, this included the ability to relate to others in everyday life:

... I think it helps me succeed because I do have, even though I don't have the strongest identification with any one culture, because I have elements of each culture in my personal culture. It helps me succeed because it allows me to relate to other people, non-migrants or migrants, in my personal life. That extends to school and work – it's all about just making relationships with people and just finding common ground with other people. You become friends and through friendship comes other opportunities, maybe jobs, work, study together, things like that. (Asir, 22, male, born in Bangladesh, living in Canada for less than 5 years, Toronto)

Interestingly, participants such as Bianca highlighted values such as "hard work" and "education" as central to Canadian culture, thus somewhat blurring the constructed distinctions between ethnic and "mainstream" cultures:

I think that they have helped me succeed in my personal life, and especially in work, because Canadian culture has taught you that you have to be very hardworking and you have to be very kind in the workplace and you want to be very understanding. The Canadian culture is also very focused on education, so that's also really helped me increase my knowledge. I think there's a lot of benefits to having the Canadian culture because it does give you a lot of education opportunities and it helps you become professional for the workplace. (Bianca, 18, female, born in Canada, Toronto)

Regarding access to networks within their ethnic community, some participants talked about how forming these relationships enables them to gain more knowledge about their "home" culture and gain a broad sense of belonging. As explained by Yasir:

Okay so I do have a network of Somalian friends, so since I have that network it helps me understand the culture back home ... If you have a network of other people in your ethnic community, it helps you understand by piecing together their culture back home and all that, it helps you understand more in depth of your own culture. (Yasir, 18, male, born in Canada, Toronto)

And by Angela:

I think it gives me a sense of belonging in the sense that well maybe in like a larger Canadian context there's not like there's things like certain like cultural things like and like little cultural sayings and stuff that you obviously can't bring up I guess in a larger group. But when you're in a community with people from my own background, it's like those are the places where you talk about like things like food or things like just that your parents do from your own background. So I think it adds to a sense of belonging within your own community... (Angela, 19, female, born in Canada, Toronto)

Likewise, many participants believed that networks within ethnic communities were beneficial in other aspects in their lives, including the job market. For instance, Thilini spoke about the importance of personal and professional relationships as part of an ethnic community.

... a lot of my friends are of the same ethnic background, or the people I know are of the same ethnic background, plus, like I said, there's a lot of groups that are now geared towards – like, there's Canadian Tamil Professionals Association, so there is ethnic groups that are – there are groups being built for ethnic communities, in different disciplines. So, people with the same background, you can kind of engage in different issues of that discipline with people from the same background, so that kind of helps your perspective, so that's definitely helped, I guess, in the professional aspect, as well. (Thilini, 25, female, born in Canada, Toronto)

Likewise, Gasper highlighted the importance of speaking Portuguese to gain employment within Little Portugal:

So actually for my first job, having my Portuguese background actually helped me get that job, because it was in like a Portuguese community, so like Little Portugal, so they wanted somebody that could speak Portuguese because they did have a lot of Portuguese customers that would come in, and they needed somebody that was able to speak Portuguese and English in order to help the Portuguese customers that came in that didn't know English... (Gasper, 24, male, born in Canada, Toronto)

As noted in other sections, the ability to speak more than one language was common among participants. This skill was valued not only because of the opportunities it provided to them as individuals (as in the case of Gasper above), but also because it enabled them to support and assist relatives and members of their ethnic communities:

Yes. I've translated a bunch, that was kind of a big thing, and when in hospitals ... knowing the language really helps for that, because often, a lot of the diseases or illnesses can be linked to your cultural groups, or certain backgrounds, or ethnic backgrounds, at least, so that's kind of good to have. (Thilini, 25, female, born in Canada, Toronto)

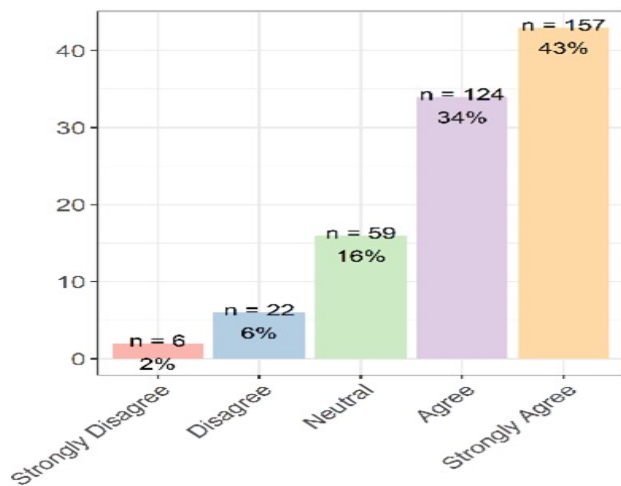
Thilini further spoke about how possessing cultural knowledge and linguistic skills, particularly in relation to situations where she provided support to members of her community (as in the example above), created opportunities for feeling a sense of belonging to both Canadian society and her ethnic community – in other words, for Thilini, belonging in one group was in one way exclusive of belonging in the other:

It's just made me fit in a lot better, because I see, like I said, the Tamils who have been raised in more western areas, they're a bit more disjointed from the community. I am grateful for being able to relate to the Canadian side of myself, and the Tamil side, yeah. (Thilini, 25, female, born in Canada, Toronto)

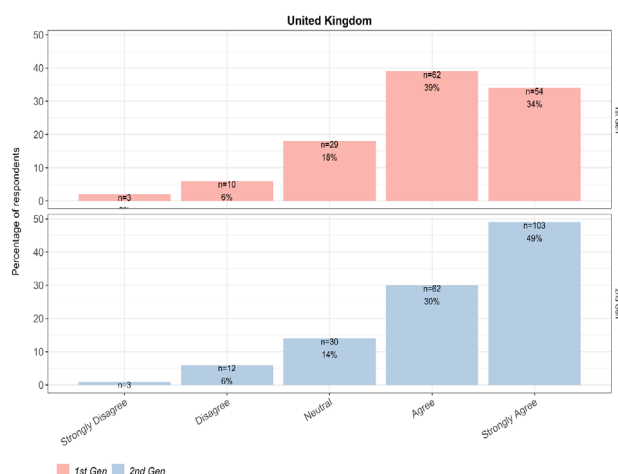
# Birmingham, UK

In the UK, 43 per cent of survey participants (157) reported “strongly agree” and 34 per cent (124) reported “agree” to feeling a sense of belonging in the country (see Figure 54). Like Australia and Canada, the number of first-generation participants who reported “strongly agree” (54, 34%) was lower than amongst second-generation participants (103, 49%). However, the number of participants who reported “agree” on the same subject was consistent across generations (see Figure 55).

**Figure 46: Australia – “I feel like I belong in the UK”**



**Figure 55: UK – “I feel like I belong in the UK” (by generation)**



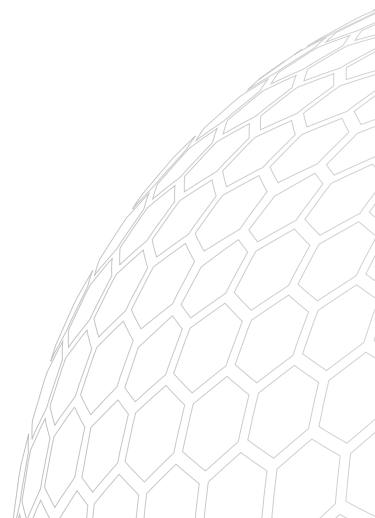
Regarding this feeling of belonging, participants in Birmingham – both first- and second-generation migrants – explained their sense of belonging in the context of diversity in the UK. As explained by Arya:

... in Birmingham, in London and in Manchester, all of the big cities, it's thriving and it's making us feel more at home, because we have made our own little communities here, our own little cultural gatherings. When my parents first came here, they wouldn't have had this. My parents would have felt completely out of place, but we're really actually quite lucky, and the identity crisis I think is getting better by surrounding ourselves with our culture here. (Arya, 21, female, born in the UK, Birmingham)

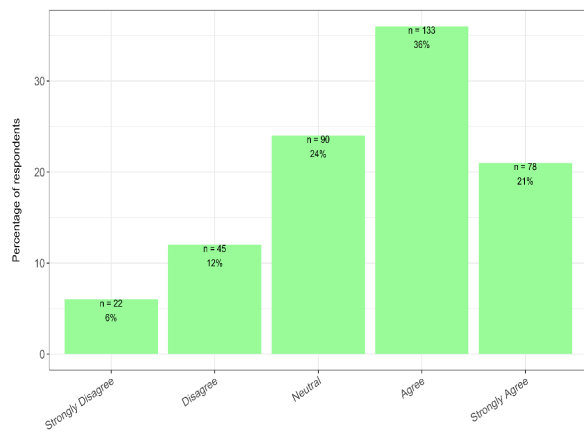
And by Chitleen:

I think because Britain is like quite multicultural, quite diverse, I feel like I'm just a part of that diversity. So I feel more British than Indian. I would say, as I grew up, going through secondary school, I think I felt more British. Just because I went to quite a diverse secondary school and so I felt quite at home with the people I was with. I just felt quite a part of British culture (Chitleen, 19, female, born in the UK, Birmingham).

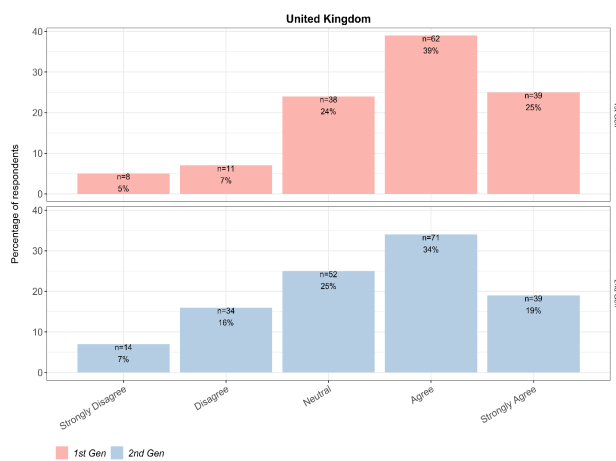
In this context, and like Australia and Canada, it is not surprising that a majority of survey participants expressed the view that they belonged in more than one culture (see Figure 56). While the number of first-generation participants who reported “agree” and “strongly agree” was relatively higher than that of the second-generation participants, more than half of all second-generation participants expressed themselves positively about this multiple sense of belonging (see Figure 57).



**Figure 56: UK – belonging in more than one culture**



**Figure 57: UK – belonging in more than one culture (by generation)**



While there were fewer interview references to “multiculturalism” compared with Melbourne and Toronto, participants in Birmingham perceived the city as “home” or a “safe haven” in comparison with “less” diverse cities in the UK. In short, religious and cultural diversity within Birmingham – as many participants reported – reinforced a stronger sense of belonging and identity. Moving out of the city was challenging: almost all participants mentioned their experiences of racial and ethnic/religious discrimination (including Islamophobia) while living or even travelling in these spaces:

I wouldn’t say in Birmingham. I would say you can find like those racist people in Birmingham, like from time to time, but in Birmingham, because there’s a lot of diversity, especially there’s a lot of Muslims here, so you kind of feel a little bit at home at the same time. (Viyan, 22, female, born in Iraq Kurdistan, living in the UK for 11+ years, Birmingham)

Arya compared her experiences living in majority “white” places with that of living in Birmingham:

So when I was little I grew up in Redditch, which is like Worcestershire, and it’s very white dominated. Not many Indians there at all. And so, I remember feeling very out of place. Yeah, I definitely felt like I wasn’t British enough.

When she was asked if she found living in a city like Birmingham was an advantage, she replied:

Oh yeah, because Birmingham’s so multicultural, as you know, it’s full of Indians and full of people from all kinds of places around the world. Recently I’ve not felt out of place ... because everywhere you go you see people your skin colour, your own culture, it’s great being here in Birmingham. (Arya, 21, female, born in the UK, Birmingham)

Participants also spoke about how interacting with multiple cultures in their everyday lives is advantageous in terms of developing socio-cultural competencies and skills:

I think it's more of an advantage because it makes you more open minded to different types of cultures. You're not just looking at ... just how you've been raised, you can see how other people think and how other people maybe want to, you know, interact with you or their own upbringing, you see the differences and you can kind of connect in certain ways and you can, sort of, you know, become a little bit more different to them as well. (Viraj, 21, male, born in the UK, Birmingham)

As such, participants spoke about the beneficial possibilities of living in diverse societies, particularly in terms of developing sociocultural competencies and interpersonal skills like open-mindedness and empathy. Mary explained:

I'm glad that people like Birmingham is very, div- I don't know how to say the word. Diverse. Yeah, it is more so like - I could never - even if I was born in Jamaica let's just say, right? There's not a lot of diversity and that. It would probably lead to like a closed mind person. I probably could still be open minded but I'll probably be more close minded I mean. So it has kind of like opened my mind and like opened my perspective to different things and different people and now I have so many friends, I can't count because of that. With different views, and that's helped me in my life. (Jennifer, 19, female, born in the UK, Birmingham)

Importantly, many participants positively perceived mingling with other cultures since they believed that learning about other cultures would provide opportunities to combat stereotyping and facilitate building connections. This resonates with recent research which has found that youth's engagement with their own and other cultures can create opportunities for connections across difference (Harris 2016; Levitt 2009; Robertson et al. 2018):

I think so, yeah, definitely, because ignorance kind of breeds hate and hostility and a lack of tolerance, whereas when you meet people from different backgrounds, you make friends with people from different backgrounds, it's easier for you to be more tolerant or more understanding of a particular culture. Because at the end of the day, you'll know more about the culture and people are more likely to be apprehensive to things that they don't know. Whereas like when you actually put yourself out there and learn new things, it's quite interesting. (Rose, 22, female, born in Kenya, living in the UK for less than 5 years, Birmingham)

As explained further by Yasmeen:

Definitely I think for me one of the most important things I say to other people is learning about new cultures and different religions especially is really important to just open your eyes to the world and make you more accepting of different things. I think ignorance is a massive reason why we have a lot of the problems we do today. Like with terrorism and things like that. If you really understand a religion and you know its core values and beliefs, it's easier for you to kind of speak to people and integrate with them about it. (Yasmeen, 21, female, born in the UK, Birmingham).

Some participants viewed their difference as a form of capital that opens opportunities for better communication with other ethnic minorities, particularly in workplaces. Amira explained:

I think with work, with my placement and coming across patients who are also ethnic minority, I think that definitely has helped because I think – have you heard of similarity attraction, that theory? So naturally often I find patients will warm to me more just because they'll feel more comfortable. It's not necessarily a good thing because it's unfair to my colleagues who can't help their appearance, but because of my appearance, being clearly an ethnic minority, they can sometimes feel more comfortable and relaxed with me when they see me as a student talking to them. (Amira, 23, female, born in the UK, Birmingham)

Furthermore, she explained how knowledge of her home culture transmitted through family socialisation – especially through her relationship with her grandparents – could be utilised as capital to discuss some sensitive health issues with her patients while making them feel more comfortable. This indicates that the cultural knowledge the migrant youth accessed and developed was an asset not only to them, but also to others:

So in that sense it's helped. I think I do understand the culture a lot because my gran ... are very traditional. So I understand kind of sometimes the more shyness and the embarrassment about certain health conditions or humility. My gran's quite humble and private. So I kind of respect how to approach those patients more, how to be just a bit more sensitive about certain issues and asking certain questions whereas things like even just asking some patients about drinking and smoking to them is offensive... (Amira, 23, female, born in the UK, Birmingham)

Regarding their engagement with the "British" culture, participants spoke descriptively about sport and alcohol consumption (in a similar way to participants in Melbourne). More fundamentally though, they also spoke about how using and understanding British slang and cultural codes is advantageous in terms of membership and mobility:

... I think language is really important in this as well. Just the way that you speak, because I used to be very much like speaking in a lot of like slang, swearing and a lot of stuff like that which is common with young people. But I feel like as a minority, your biggest tool is language. Like being able to eloquently explain things. It just ... it sort of, it's a shield in a way, I think. And I think I use that to my advantage because I think, it shouldn't be, but it is a marker for intelligence, I think. And if you can go into a situation and especially in work, I feel like you'll be taken a lot more seriously, if you're eloquent. (Surjan, 22, male, born in the UK, Birmingham)

High proficiency in the mainstream language is beneficial in many ways. Yet, as Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992) suggest, it constitutes linguistic capital only when it gives the speaker a sense of agency and empowerment. Bourdieu proposes that linguistic utterances are always produced in particular contexts, and the properties of these contexts endow linguistic products with a certain value. Different speakers possess different linguistic capital, and so have different purchasing power in the field. Therefore, Surjan was aware that as an ethnic minority, possessing linguistic capital gave him a sense of entitlement and legitimacy to be heard by others in the dominant field. As explained further by him:

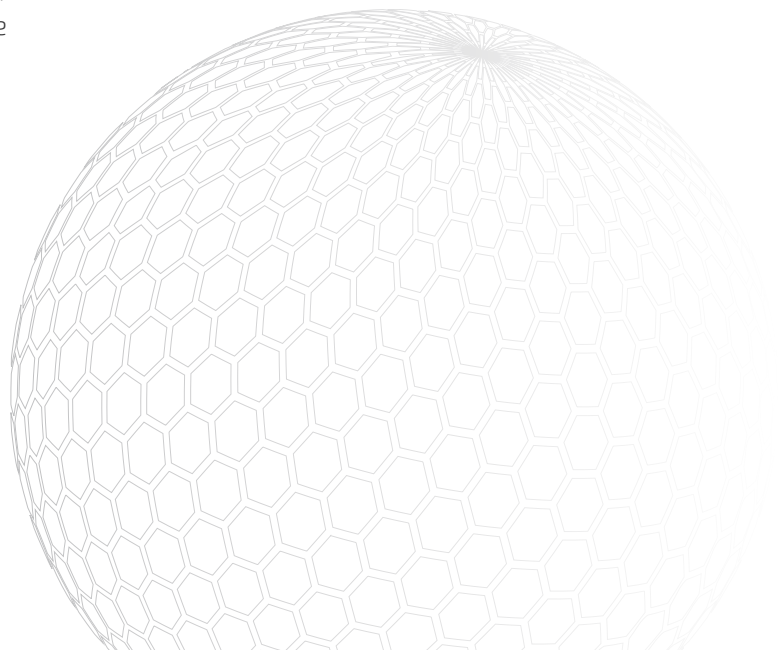
... the reality of the situation is that we exist in England so we have to play by their rules to start off with and then, through getting to know people... I mean it shouldn't be that way, people should just accept you for who you are straight off the bat, but that's not how it works. You have to be able to navigate situations. And I feel like people who are born here and who are from migrant families, they sort of understand that. It like an unwritten thing. We all sort of understand how to navigate situations where you have to be British, I think. (Surjan, 22, male, born in the UK, Birmingham).

Many participants spoke about developing a sense of belonging in the UK in relation to the passage of time and their ability to navigate some of the challenges and barriers. Arya for instance spoke about how she felt "out of place" when she was young but as she reached adulthood she was able to learn how to navigate difference and negotiate different aspects of her identity, albeit with challenges:

And I only know this now in hindsight. I wouldn't know it at the time. So when I was little I grew up in Redditch ... and it's very white dominated. Not many Indians there at all ... I remember feeling very out of place ... Yeah, I definitely felt like I wasn't British enough, because my parents weren't doing the same things as all of the other parents in school were. They weren't acting the same way. I didn't understand why I felt out of place, but I understand now that it's because I was made to not feel British enough ... I probably feel more like them [now], because I've adapted myself over the years to make sure that I have the same experience of living here as they do. Obviously, I still feel Indian and have those Indian roots, but I try to make sure my experience here is not as different as other British white people my age. (Arya, 21, female, born in the UK, Birmingham)

Likewise, Surjan – among others – spoke about this process of reconciling differences as he became an adult:

So when I was growing up, when I was younger in school, I used to sort of shun my migrant heritage. And then I think going to ... getting older you sort of get more in touch with your culture and stuff. Because you've realised that as much as you want to be fully British, you're not. Because there are other aspects of yourself that you have to acknowledge... And then so I think also I work in the creative industries and I've always been a creative person and I felt like you have to be open and honest to your true self. And that's like being able to express both cultures and it presents this really nice duality which other people might not be as fortunate to have. (Surjan, 22, male, born in the UK, Birmingham)





# Multi-Level Connection: Local, National and Transnational

Across the three sites, participants reported that access to multiple cultural repertoires in the context of living with diversity facilitated intracultural, cross-cultural and transnational connections. It was in their everyday practices of mobilising their cultural heritage and critically engaging with and learning about their own and other cultures, that multiple opportunities for connections across difference were created. These types of engagement are essential to cultural connectivity in the context of an increasingly interconnected and diverse world (Harris 2016; Levitt 2009; Robertson et al. 2018). Participants' stories suggest that their agentic capacity of mobilising resources – such as cultural knowledge, skills and networks – allow them to connect rather than divide across cultural, national and ethnic lines. From this transcultural perspective, the very notion of being a “migrant” – of being raised in transnational social fields – has the potential to be transformed from a disadvantage to an asset (Guerra 2008; Triandafyllidou 2009) as it allows them to “cross differences and identities, to be able to sail round the multifaceted and interconnected world without being shipwrecked” (Colombo 2010:467).

The great majority felt they frequently interacted with friends and members of other ethnicities in their countries of residence. Interactions, according to the participants, took place in different settings such as educational institutions, work or even public places. These types of interactions, as was mentioned previously, constituted a source of transcultural capital beneficial to social empowerment, intercultural engagement and belonging. As told by Eralia in Birmingham:

I'd say, well growing up in school, in college, like the white people that I grew up with around the same age as me, the thing is I grew up in like a multicultural environment, so the school that I went to is very multicultural and so was the university as well. So white people, we're on the same level. We didn't really see ourselves different. I feel like it's only perhaps those that live in the majority white areas that would see us as outsiders. I think if you live in areas that are quite mixed, it's something that you get used to and you wouldn't necessarily consider to be different. (Eralia, 22, female, born in Jamaica, living in the UK for 11+ years, Birmingham)

Similarly, as told by Samia in Toronto:

... I actually went to two high schools. The first high school was very diverse, so it was Asians or white people, so it was fun being the only Muslim, but going to my second high school, since everyone was brown, we could relate instantly ... Maybe not necessarily belonging because for example, at my first high school there were not necessarily a lot of Muslims, but it was very diverse, so obviously I'm not going to feel belonging in the sense that there's not many Muslims there, so I don't. But at the same time, people there were very accepting. They were willing to learn and willing to understand... (Samia, 18, female, born in the United Arab Emirates, living in Canada for 11+ years, Toronto)

In this context, participants in Melbourne, Toronto and Birmingham highlighted their intercultural skills and their ability to connect with others. The usefulness of these skills was illustrated by Mustafa's account of training to become doctor and his understanding of the importance of recognising and negotiating difference in everyday life:

... since I want to become a doctor, work in the NHS, it's a very diverse place. The patients who come in are going to be from all different types of backgrounds, beliefs, religions, and also the people who work there, so doctors, nurses, whoever's working there, they're going to be from different religions, cultures. So, I think one of the most fundamentally important things for me would be to be able to talk to all kinds of different people, races, religions, cultures and to be able to connect with them easy and to be able to communicate with them efficiently and effectively. Because for me, that's going to improve the way I act as a doctor, hopefully, and treat patients and be able to integrate within the NHS environment (Mustafa, 24, male, born in the UK, Birmingham)

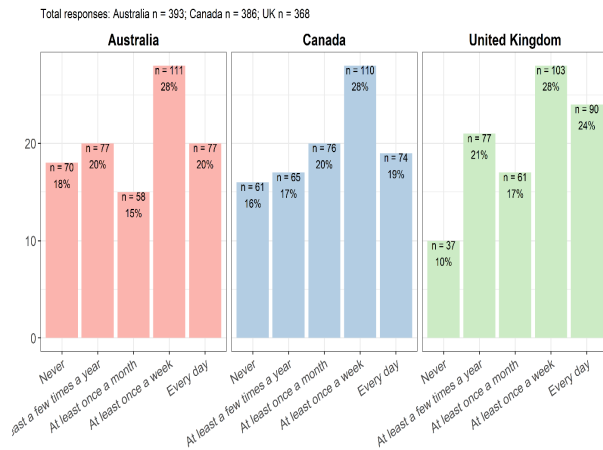
Reflecting on his own process of becoming more open-minded and open to diversity, he acknowledged potential benefits and opportunities:

Because when patients come into hospitals, they may have a different way of phrasing how they feel. So, if you'd only understand their sort of touch to communication, then you might be quite confused of what they're trying to say. But if you've already had that exposure with different people, you can get a better understanding of what they're trying to say. It makes things much more easier when it comes to communication. (Mustafa, 24, male, born in the UK, Birmingham)

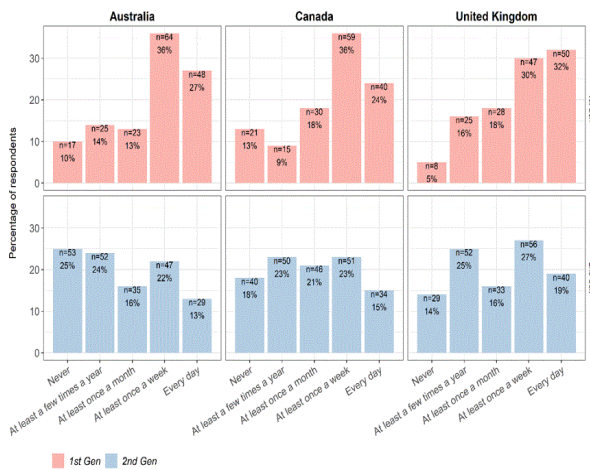
Possession of cultural knowledge, beliefs and values not only provided opportunities for connection and belonging locally and nationally, but also transnationally. The majority of survey participants maintained regular contact with family, friends or community overseas: indeed, at least a quarter of participants in Australia, Canada and the UK had contact "at least once a week" with those overseas, while a significant minority (ranging from 19% in Canada to 24% in the UK) had contact "everyday" (see Figure 58). As one would expect, the frequency of contact was higher amongst first-generation migrants (see Figure 59). This distinction was also noted in the interviews: while many second-generation participants spoke about how being socialised to the norms, values and practices of their families' home cultures served as a bridge to connect to these places, some also spoke about a sense of difference and disconnect. As summed up by Ala in Melbourne:

It's really different when you're there... we are like too white for them, if that makes sense. It's like... when we're here, it's like we're just too Samoan for people ... Like, when we go to Samoa, and then we're here, we feel more Samoan here, and then we get there, and there's no... We can't compare ourselves to the others who live there, especially when they speak to us. We have to try to understand, because we don't know what they're saying, half the time; so we're just like, "What are they saying?" And when they're speaking Samoan, and we're just staring at them, they think we don't know, so they start speaking in Samoan, and they start to say, "Oh, they don't understand", but we do understand, half the time. (Ala, 19, female, born in New Zealand, living in Australia between 6–10 years, Melbourne)

**Figure 58: frequency of contact with family, friends, or ethnic community overseas (per site)**



**Figure 59: Frequency of contact with family, friends, or ethnic community overseas (by generation)**



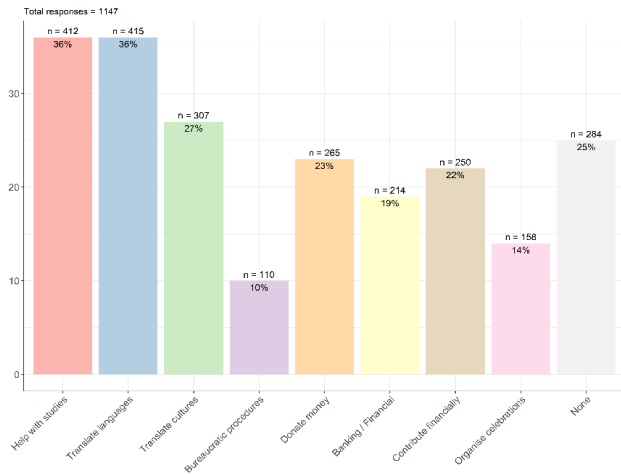
Despite this difference, many participants spoke about how access to social and cultural resources including knowledge, skills and networks enabled them to offer assistance to their communities in Melbourne, Toronto and Birmingham and abroad. As per the survey results, the most common types of assistance offered to family, friends or ethnic community in Australia, Canada and the UK were “help with studies” (36%), “translate between languages” (36%) and “translate cultures” (27%) (see Figure 60). These forms of assistance were also spoken about in the interviews. For instance, Adila spoke about her work in schools supporting parents who cannot speak English:

... if English is not their first language and it's like their second language, they need my help. I'm an ES, like Education Support. I work there every Friday in Dandenong West. A few of the parents can't speak English so they need my help ... I help them all the time. (Adila, 19, female, born in Afghanistan, living in Australia between 6–10 years, Melbourne)

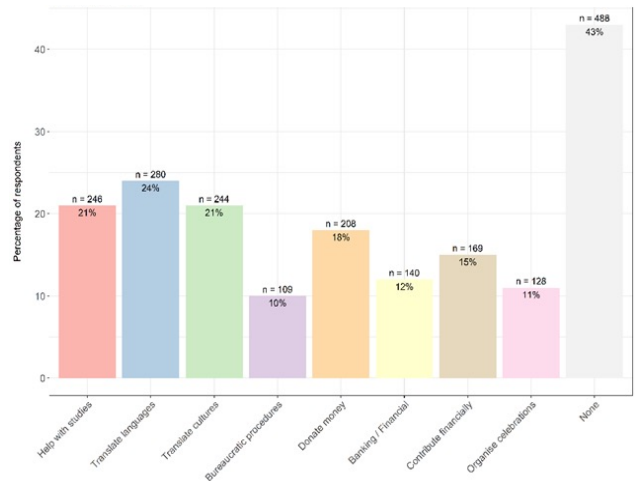
While Shihab spoke about his involvement in supporting international students:

I always make an effort especially when I come across... students who are from Pakistan, because I want them to feel welcome in Birmingham. I want them to feel comfortable. So at the moment I've probably helped about five or six students, about two or three of them are still here in the UK at the moment ... Generally in the Birmingham Pakistani community I'm quite involved with a lot of things, so events and stuff... (Shihab, 23, male, born in the UK, Birmingham)

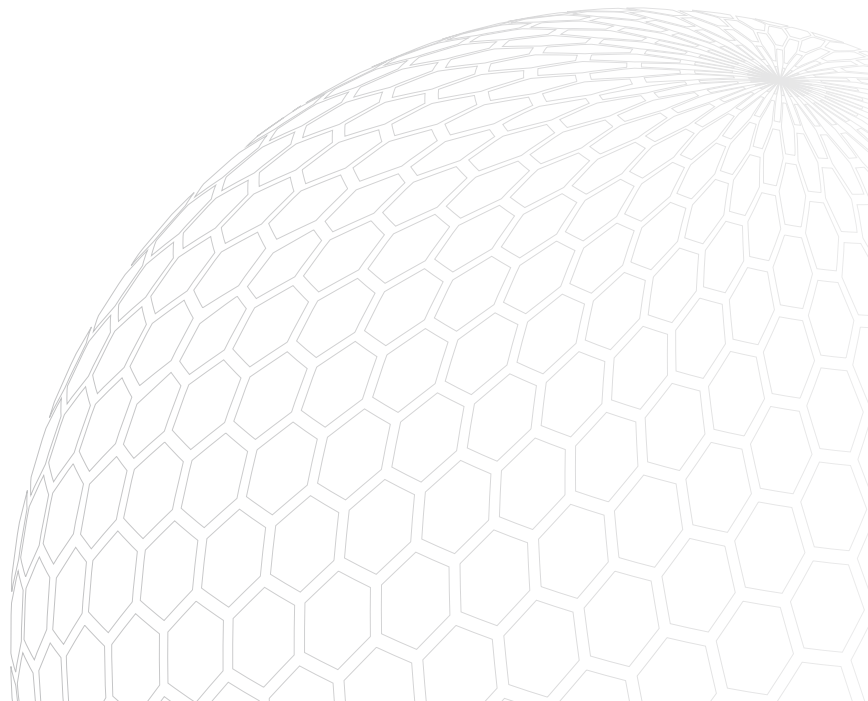
**Figure 60: Types of assistance to family, friends or ethnic community in country of residence (per site)**



**Figure 61: Types of assistance to family, friends or ethnic community in country of origin (per site)**



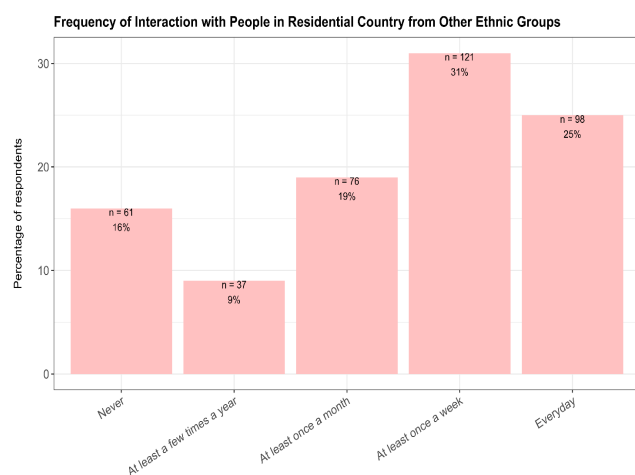
Likewise, and although less often reported, the most common types of assistance offered to family, friends or ethnic community in “countries of origin” were to “translate between languages” (24%), “help with studies” (21%) and “translate cultures” (21%) (see Figure 61). As expected, there was significant difference between generations – while 68 per cent of participants amongst the first-generation provided some type of assistance to those in their countries of “origin”, only 50 per cent of second-generation migrants provided any form of assistance. This reflects the broader findings in the literature, which suggest that transnational social relations and practices may wane and adopt different qualities among members of the second and subsequent generations (Klok et al. 2020).



# Melbourne, Australia

In addition to the above-described relationships to the members of their ethnic communities in Australia and overseas, our participants reported a high level of interaction with other social groups. As noted previously, survey data showed frequent interaction between participants and “white” Australians (see Figure 26 above). Similarly, the number of survey participants who reported interaction with people from ethnic communities other than theirs was higher than that of no interaction. There were 98 participants (25%) who reported “everyday”, 121 participants (31%) who reported “at least once a week”, 76 participants (19%) who reported “at least once a month” and 37 participants (9%) who reported “at least a few times a year”. The total number of those participants who reported some sort of interaction with members of other ethnic communities was 332, whereas only 61 reported “never” (see Figure 62). There were a few discrepancies between generations, but they were not significant.

**Figure 62: Australia – frequency of contact with people from other ethnic groups**



Interview participants reported that they often mingled and built friendships with members of other ethnic communities in Melbourne. As explained by Mary, connecting with people from different cultural backgrounds provided opportunities to feel a sense of self and belonging.

I think I’ve developed a new sense of, like, who I am as a person, in regards to just not having any perceived perception of who people are, and how they are. You just learn new things in life... it makes you have understanding of who you are, because it might trigger something, or you know, you might think, oh, I believe in that, and that person believes in that, too, and it just gives me a better sense of belonging, because you’re connected to all these groups and all these people, so you feel like you can belong here, you can belong there... all these different people that you meet, then also shape who you are as a person, and your wellbeing and belonging as a person... (Mary, 20, female, born in Ethiopia, living in Australia for 11+ years, Melbourne)

Some participants explained why they often connected more with other migrant youth (irrespective of their ethnic backgrounds). They believed that, regardless of differences in cultural traditions and values, they shared similarities and experiences in terms of being a migrant in Melbourne. This indicated that migrant youth come cross difference in everyday life, by connecting across cultural, national and ethnic lines. As explained by Sofia:

... The more people from different backgrounds you interact with, you get to hear all the different world views, all of their opinions and feelings on things, and that can help you grow as a person. Because otherwise you can get stuck in your bubble... But even, you know, just the general knowledge of different religions, the ways different countries work. I feel like if you get into the right kind of group, there’s a lot of support for each other, as people who have moved here from somewhere else... you can connect with them, because they’ve got a similar background... it might be a completely different culture, but they still had to move to Australia, learn, and have similar struggles. It’s nice to know that you’re not alone in it, and just be able to chat about it. (Sofia, 21, female, born in Ukraine, living in Australia for 11+ years, Melbourne)

And by Chimlin:

... in our class, many countries... And we are all migrants. We're still the same backgrounds, maybe, even if we come from different countries... It's really important, because it's hard to find somebody who understands your situation, your life, your position now ... We feel more easier to talk to each other, to sharing, to do everything together. (Chimlin, 25, female, born in Thailand, living in Australia for less than 5 years, Melbourne)

Participants also spoke about how they formally or informally engaged in community building or volunteering to help other young people of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. This was an important example of how our participants utilise their cultural knowledge and experiences of living as migrants to the benefit of others. As in the case of Joanne, this includes formal involvement with migrant organisations:

I'm currently a youth facilitator for the Centre for Multicultural Youth, and I've been with them for six years now... I think it's just spreading the word about multiculturalism, and racism, especially. Like, I try not to go into the ideal that we can eradicate racism, but I think it's more so if we can find that there are solutions or steps towards becoming a bit more harmonious in society, or social cohesion, then that's great. I love community work, it's fun working with the youth. I'm currently in schools, the program is called Aspire To Lead, and we help disengaged youth within the school sector, either if they don't want to stay in school, then helping them find a pathway to something else, to a TAFE course or to full-time work, or just finding the underlying factors that's making them disengaged, because we found that schools predominantly think that it's just the students not understanding or not wanting to listen, but it could be, like, family things or financial issues, or things that we just don't necessarily think about. (Joanne, 20, female, born in Samoa, living in Australia for 11+ years, Melbourne)

As well as other forms of informal engagement:

I think by accessing different cultures we're creating solutions to issues that we face as a community as well as – by looking at examples where communities have always fixed them, if that makes any sense. So recently for one of my Master's projects I was looking at mental health within the Sikh community. And was looking at different health promotional programs that we can do in that to specifically target different levels... But basically the examples I was using were different cross cultural approaches to create community sustainable programs. So within different areas of the world. So I think you can use examples like that to create areas of support and access. And remind people that you are not alone. It's not just our community, it's other communities that are facing that. (Meera, 22, female, born in India, living in Australia for 11+ years, Melbourne)

In terms of connections to their country of origin, there was a clear difference between first and second-generation migrants. Most first-generation migrants, in particular newly arrivals, felt a strong sense of belonging and identity in their countries of "origin". After living in Australia for several years, Ayesha still felt strongly connected with her family and friends in Mauritius:

I feel I'm proud to be Mauritian too because I was born there and I went to school, I've got a lot of friends there too... I talk with my cousin with my friends there on the weekend... On WhatsApp, on Instagram, yeah... I'm very attached to my family there. My mum's mum is still there, my grandma from my mother's side is still there and my granddad too. (Ayesha, 22, female, born in Mauritius, living in Australia for less than 5 years, Melbourne)

Notably, there were variations within each generation, as some participants – particularly refugees and asylum seekers – had a more tenuous relationship to their country of “origin”. For instance, participants such as Nadir explained that “no one can forget his country, no one can forget his tradition, culture. Sometimes we miss our country, we miss the way we were living, but we have to move on” (Nadir, 23, male, born in Iraq, living in Australia for less than 5 years, Melbourne). In comparison to this attachment, second-generation migrants explained that, although they had a connection to their parents’ homeland, they felt they were not as strongly connected to it as their parents and grandparents were. Participants such as Stephani spoke of having “a natural affinity towards the countries... but I don’t have a strong connection” (Stephani, 20, female, born in Australia, Melbourne).

Nonetheless, other participants felt a sense of belonging to both Australia and to their country of origin. This was well represented in the ways they negotiated their identities beyond binaries and in ways that reflected their experiences of mobility and diversity. Franklin, for instance, identified himself as “African Australian” but he also described his pan-African identity beyond the strict boundaries of a country of origin:

*[Do you identify yourself as Australian?]*

... yes because this is the country I’ve grown up in and this is the country who gave me the opportunity and you know, not made me who I am today but sort of along those lines, as in made me educated, made me able to work, made me able to communicate and all that sort of stuff. But I still really define myself as an African. I would say I’m an African Australian because regardless of anything, that is my roots and that’s where I was born. So you know, I cannot particularly say that I am an Australian because technically, I am a West African... African Australian. Put it that way. Yes. Yeah. I’m not going to be particular about any countries or anything so let’s just put it – yeah, as an African Australian... Probably not really more based on countries because I mean at the end of the day, like as you were saying, like whether you are – you can’t just particularly label yourself as a – let’s say for example as a Ghanaian Australian because Africa as a whole, we are a continent. Regardless of where we’re from, we are all one. (Franklin, 25, male, born in Sierra Leone, living in Australia for 11+ years, Melbourne)

Aside from these pan-ethnic identities, other participants also identified themselves simply as a “person” or a “human being” – away from ethnic and national labels. As explained by Bora:

*[Do you feel you are defined at all by your ethnic background?]*

In terms of my name and what I look like, sure. In terms of my, like, different little values, like in terms of maybe like, you know, personal hygiene, cleanliness you know, how I eat, stuff like that, sure, absolutely. But overall I would say I am my own person based not on my own background but based on my own experiences. How I’ve chosen to interpret those experiences and apply them in my everyday life. (Bora, 24, male, born in Australia, Melbourne)

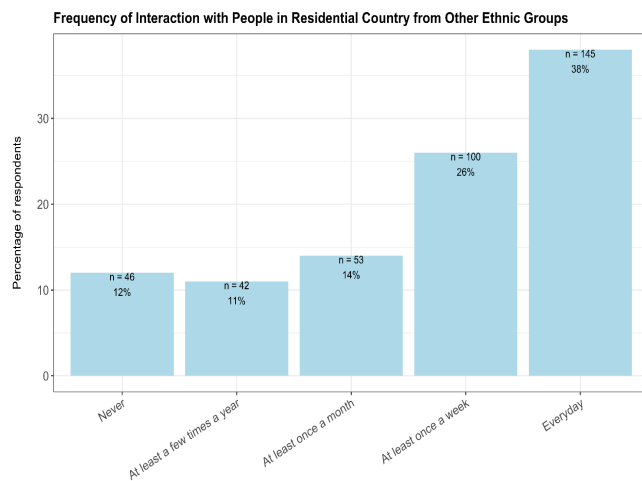
And by Mitchell:

I feel like my sense of identity is sort of constantly in a state of flux or has in the past been like that I think. That’s sort of a natural process a lot of people go through. Just trying to find your place... I don’t think I’m alone in this, I think sort of certain social... the propagation of certain ideas and social realities, like the internet being an obvious example, have sort of led a lot of people to start to de-emphasise their group identity in favour of a more... individual identity that’s tied to sort of just the understanding that people around the world are not fundamentally different. I know it sounds like a bit of a hippy point to say but wherever you go, people are almost universally the same in certain ways, I find. (Mitchell, 22, male, born in the US, living in Australia for 11+ years, Melbourne)

# Toronto, Canada

In Canada, too, our participants reported a high level of interaction with other social groups. Survey data showed frequent interaction between participants and “white” Canadians (see Figure 34 above) and the total number of survey participants who reported interaction with members of other ethnic communities was much higher than those who reported “never” (see Figure 63). There were 145 participants (38%) who reported “everyday”, 100 participants (26%) who reported “at least once a week”, 53 participants (14%) who reported “at least once a month” and 42 participants (11%) who reported “at least a few times a year”. Again, there were a few discrepancies between generations, but they were not significant.

**Figure 63: Canada – frequency of contact with people from other ethnic groups**



Importantly, most of our participants in Toronto felt at ease navigating multiple social worlds. Participants such as Thilini, who had frequent contact with members of her ethnic community, explained the importance of this network to her life personally and professionally:

... definitely my personal life, because a lot of my friends are of the same ethnic background, or the people I know are of the same ethnic background, plus, like I said, there's a lot of groups that are now geared towards – like, there's Canadian Tamil Professionals Association – there are groups being built for ethnic communities, in different disciplines. So... you can kind of engage in different issues of that discipline with people from the same background, so that kind of helps your perspective, so that's definitely helped, I guess, in the professional aspect, as well. (Thilini, 25, female, born in Canada, Toronto)

At the same time, participants such as Paola spoke of the importance of building relationships and connections with others. These networks, and the possible gain of cultural knowledge, constitute a capital beneficial for belonging, empowerment and opportunities:

Well, for starters, I've been living here for a while. I lived a lot of my formative years, like adolescence, here, so that's when you're developing your identity, and growing up, I don't remember a lot of it from Mexico either, from my first four years. Also, because I don't interact with Latinos all that much, even here in Canada. A lot of my friends seem to be from other ethnic backgrounds, besides mine. I like to think – oh, that's one of my beliefs – with immigration, I'm very strong in the belief that yes, you should be tolerant of other cultures, but also, as an immigrant, your responsibility to – not necessarily fully assimilate, if you don't want to, but also make the effort to learn the country you immigrated to – their culture, their values. (Paola, 24, female, born in Mexico, living in Canada for 11+ years, Toronto)



As mentioned previously, the multicultural nature of Toronto facilitated building close relationships across difference and developing a sense of belonging:

I don't really have an issue with managing differences here, 'cause everyone is so welcoming and like I said, it's a multicultural community or nation, so yeah, I always find myself being able to be friends with people from different cultures, so there is not really big issues there ... I feel like there isn't really a mainstream culture of values in Canada, because there are so many different people from different countries and from backgrounds. So I feel that there is no really mainstream value, other than being respectful, accepting, polite and not to be racist pretty much. (Emma, 22, female, born in Taiwan, living in Canada between 6–10 years, Toronto)

As in other aspects of the acquisition and development of transcultural capital, the development of these forms of networks had a temporal dimension. In particular, first-generation migrants spoke about how they expanded their friendship circles to include friends from outside their ethnic community over time. Annie, for instance believed that it was important to connect with "Asian" friends, yet she also explained that mixing with friends and classmates from other backgrounds was an opportunity to learn about other cultures:

I think it's important to have a healthy mix of both. I think you need something that you can have in common ... But it's also very important to be different because I definitely have learned a lot from my friends who, you know, came from different backgrounds... I think for me... university was a step outside of my comfort zone but I would say, okay I am well versed in being in... an Asian Canadian community and at university I can just step out of that and, or I don't like, became friends with, with intention that, oh you have to be from a migrant background, it just happened that I got to make certain friends from different backgrounds and got to learn and try their food all sorts of things... (Annie, 20, female, born in Taiwan, living in Canada between 6–10 years, Toronto)

As in Melbourne and Birmingham, some participants were actively involved in formal events and activities organised by their ethnic communities:

So, in my community I am able to help my ethnic community by going to their events and participating in sharing our culture with the rest of the community. So we have different like dance events, and church lunches and community fundraisers, and I guess there you see different generations. So I guess by me being there I get to help preserve our culture but also share my culture with new generations, which is I guess, like the purpose of being, trying to preserve our culture and share it with others. (Anna, 22, female, born in Canada, Toronto)

Many other participants interacted informally with their ethnic community, often providing assistance to elders or recent arrivals by acting as translators and interpreters in a wide array of settings:

Like, my parents' English isn't that good, so when they need to do stuff for like their jobs, or let's say, doing stuff online for them, I'll help them. Sometimes I'll have to translate English to Portuguese for them so they can understand... And like that's pretty common. Another thing would be I did help someone, a Portuguese friend, get a job at like a grocery store, and I did help them out with the interview, because he had just arrived, and so I would help them do the interview and translate it. (Gasper, 24, male, born in Canada, Toronto)

Participants reported that they had a fluid relationship to these countries, which was determined by their length of settlement, the degree of family networks and their exposure to culture and place. As told by Natalia:

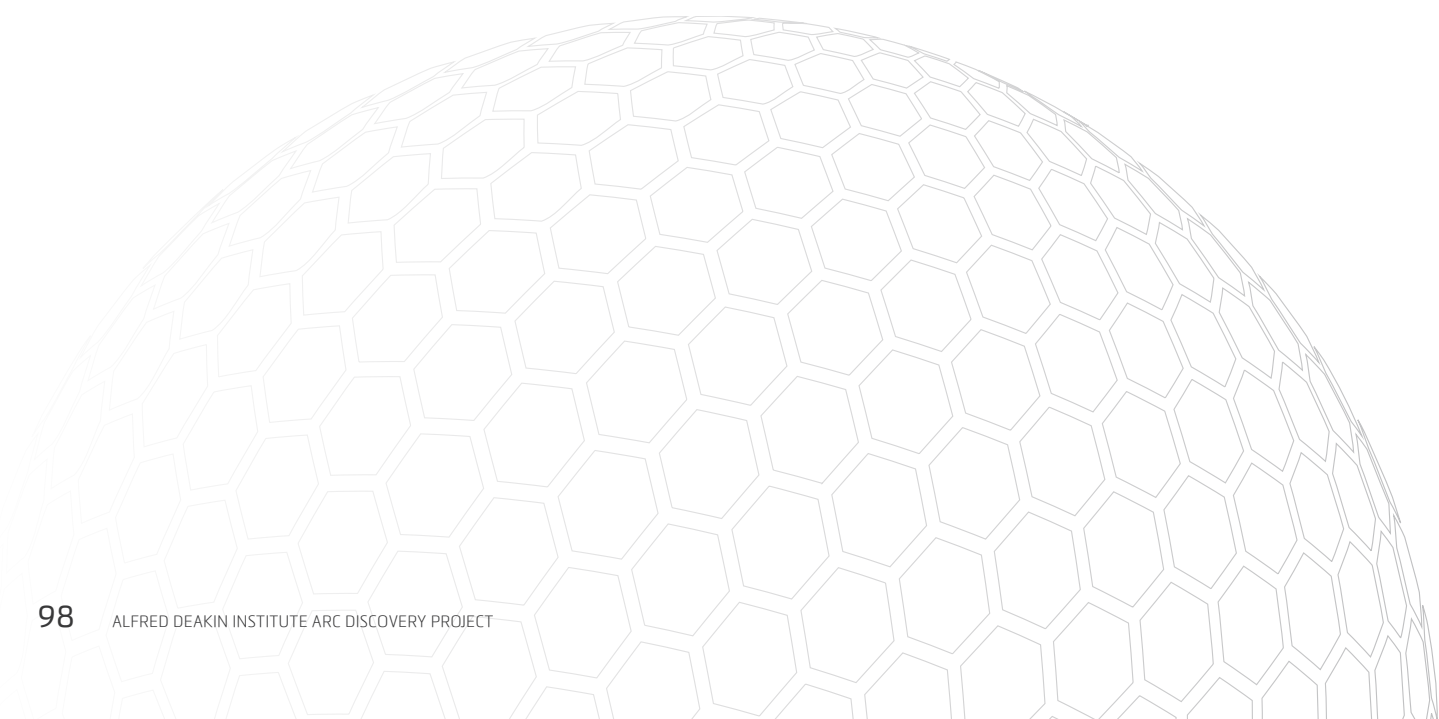
... I think I've gone back to Mexico and I still feel that strong attachment... I think the fact that I'm like always in touch with – because I have – you know Mexican families are very big, so a lot of my family is still in Mexico. And well it's not like I lost my sense of identity by coming to another country. I feel like I'm still very attached to it. And yeah, definitely the similarities make me feel more attached to my country. (Natalia, 25, female, born in Mexico, living in Canada for less than 5 years, Toronto)

And by Anh:

... some things I have in common with them would be language, religion, family – because family can always find a way to relate, because we have, like, similar relatives, and we discuss our aunt or uncle, so we relate through family. I've been back home once, as well, when I was in grade five, so I do have an idea of what it's like back there. So, sometimes, when we talk to family back home, we talk of the times that we had there, and how things have changed from that point to now... (Anh, 24, female, born in Canada, Toronto)

In this context, and in a similar way to their Australian counterparts, second-generation migrants were particularly conscious of how similarities and differences between them and their relatives and friends in these countries impacted their identities and sense of belonging. As told by Bianca:

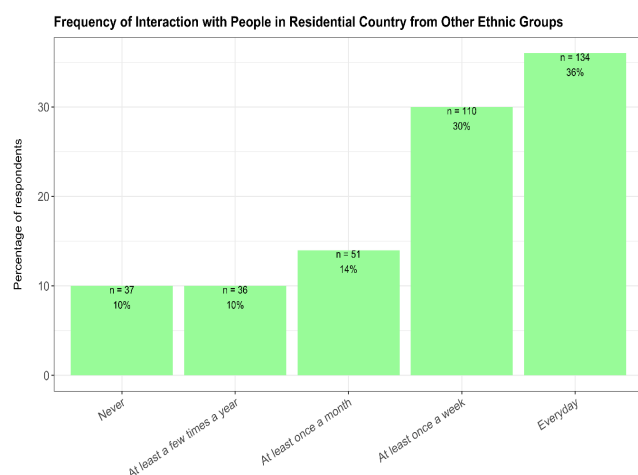
So when I am with my Italian cousins, I definitely do note that I'm not as Italian as them, because I don't have such a large connection to the culture. So, I guess just knowing that and being able to understand that; even though we do have differences, I'm able to also recognise the similarities we have, which reinforces my identity ... noticing the similarities of our culture and traditions... they confirm my sense of identity. (Bianca, 18, female, born in Canada, Toronto)



# Birmingham, UK

In Birmingham, too, participants reported a high level of interaction with other social groups. Survey data showed frequent interaction between participants and “white” Britons (see Figure 43 above). The total number of those participants who reported interaction with members of other ethnic communities (331 participants) was much higher than those who reported “never” (37 participants, 10%) (see Figure 64). There were 134 participants (36%) who reported “everyday”, 110 participants (30%) who reported “at least once a week”, 51 participants (14%) who reported “at least once a month” and 36 participants (10%) who reported “at least a few times a year”. Again, there were a few discrepancies between generations, but they were not significant.

**Figure 64: UK – frequency of contact with people from other ethnic groups**



Like participants in Melbourne and Toronto, participants in Birmingham also reported that they frequently interacted with members of other ethnic communities whether at work, at university or in everyday life, in particular within friendship circles. Alessandra explained why she preferred to socialise with people from outside the Italian community. As a recent migrant, she valued the opportunity of interacting with members of other ethnicities as beneficial to her everyday experience of living in the UK:

I don't really go out with the Italian community ... Every time that I meet someone they are like, yeah, you should go to this party, you know, where there are Italian people, no thank you... sometimes they are like "Why are you trying to, you know, not to amalgamate with people of your country" and I'm like "It's not that", but I'm here because I want to know other people from other countries, otherwise I would have stayed in Italy, you know. (Alessandra, 25, female, born in Italy, living in the UK for less than 5 years, Birmingham)

Some participants, in particular first-generation migrants, spoke positively of this type of interaction, perceiving it as an opportunity to develop intercultural skills:

I'd say I have more foreign friends than Indian friends here. Yeah and I think even in work perspectives, when I know the culture and how things are going on and how people are it feels like even I have an opportunity. (Shravya, female, born in India, living in the UK for less than 5 years, Birmingham)

Other participants, like Rozhin, explained how connecting across difference created opportunities for developing a sense of belonging:

I've always lived in Birmingham... I've never come across a situation where I felt like I'm not British enough for that person or that group. I don't know, I've always mixed with different cultures in my friendship group, in my working group. So I don't feel like I've had to change myself to fit it. (Rozhin, 21, female, born in Iraq Kurdistan, living in the UK for 11+ years, Birmingham)

As mentioned before, some participants had more tenuous relationships with “white” Britons. While barriers were not unique to the UK, and while some spoke positively about these relationships, participants in Birmingham in general spoke more often of experiences of racism and “otherness”. Anisa for instance spoke about how the lack of diversity within workplaces hinders the development of inclusive environments:

... I started working just last year as part of my gap year. And I was put into an office where there were barely any people from particular, let’s say, foreign countries. So there wasn’t enough diversity and it was just all white British colleagues of mine. And sometimes there’s a gap in particular humour or understanding or sarcasm that I couldn’t get. Or particular interest clashed and I didn’t feel the same way and so I didn’t [feel British enough] – just because the company was always a typically a... [Dominantly British?] ... Dominantly British as well. (Anisa, 20, female, born in the UK, Birmingham)

Likewise, Hamza spoke about the challenges he faced in connecting with “white” students at school due to cultural differences which often resulted in bullying:

... if you see an Asian person in a white school they’re mostly, like, are going to get bullied because they, because the white people see them as different and they don’t, like, I don’t know ... they don’t understand the differences and they lash out, you know. I think a lot of people do suffer from the fact that they might not be British enough or might not be perceived as British enough by the British public. (Hamza, 21, male, born in Pakistan, living in the UK for 11+ years, Birmingham)

However, others – like Eralia – explained that they did not feel different to their “white” peers who lived in diverse spaces. These youth, as her account (below) illustrates, were more accepting of racial and ethnic diversity than “white” youth who lived in predominantly “white” areas.

I’d say, well growing up in school, in college, like the white people that I grew up with around the same age as me, the thing is I grew up in like a multicultural environment, so the school that I went to is very multicultural and so was the university as well. So white people, we’re on the same level. We didn’t really see ourselves different. I feel like it’s only perhaps those that live in the majority of white areas that would see us as outsiders. I think if you live in areas that are quite mixed, it’s something that you get used to and you wouldn’t necessarily consider to be different. (Eralia, 22, female, born in Jamaica, living in the UK for 11+ years, Birmingham)

This excerpt could also indicate that contemporary youth, regardless of their ethnic background, are more tolerant, open minded and inclusive if they grew up within super-diverse societies. This would resonate with recent studies that have found that young people are more tolerant of racial and ethnic diversity than the previous generations (Janmaat and Keating 2019).

In terms of connection with ethnic communities, and as was mentioned earlier, many participants were active in events organised by their ethnic communities. Some participants like Dhara said that they invited their friends to their festivals to give them the opportunity to learn about their culture:

More about festival celebration, that's where you usually get along the community, maybe the value or something, which is one of the major big festivals of India where you usually tend to mix around with people. And I also invited my other European people to come and join me in the festival. So that was nice to give a cultural experience to one another. (Dhara, 25, female, living in the UK for less than 5 years, Birmingham)

Anisa explained how attending such events made her feel a sense of belonging in her community:

I think there's a point where you feel a sense of – in our community events I think. Where you see other Indonesians who are living in the UK who have maybe experienced the same things as you. And that's when your identity really comes out, I think. Because you have a shared or similar background, I would say. You know, if their parents were Indonesians or when they came over to study and then they have the same difficulties or backgrounds but it's a shared sense of experience, I think, for that and that's, I think, when you can actually bond over, you know, how do I get the cultural aspect for that. (Anisa, 20, female, born in the UK, Birmingham)

Regarding connecting with countries of origin, many participants stated that they felt a sense of belonging to these places, particularly during their family visits. They believed that knowledge of the norms, values and practices of their families' home cultures served as a bridge to enable feelings of belonging and connection to the place. As explained by Chitleen:

I did go back to India in March and I think being able to speak Punjabi helps me connect with my relatives over there. I know a lot of my friends can't speak Punjabi, when they go to India it's like a big disconnect between their relatives and them. But being able to converse with my relatives, I think that's a way to connect with people. (Chitleen, 19, female, born in the UK, Birmingham)

This is further explicated by Shihab:

... My personal experience has been that in my family me and my siblings are generally quite – we feel a strong sense of attachment to that place. More so than my cousin, perhaps because we went a lot as children; almost every year we would go as children, or every two years. Now I try to go and I go probably every two or three years to Pakistan. (Shihab, 23, male, born in the UK, Birmingham)

As in Melbourne and Toronto, this connection and feeling of belonging was determined by various factors such as participant's length of settlement, the degree of family networks and their exposure to culture and place.



# Conclusion

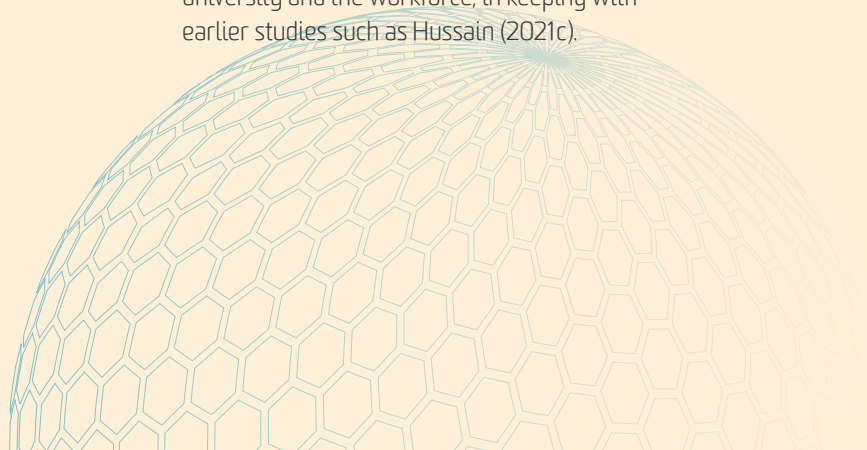
This project provided important insight into the lives and experiences of first- and second-generation migrant youth in three diverse cities in three countries with high rates of immigration. As explored throughout this report, for the youth participating in this study diversity and difference are enablers for productive transcultural capital. Data shows that the transcultural capital (skills, networks and knowledge) migrant youth access, develop and deploy by engaging with multiple cultures at different temporal and spatial points in their everyday lives has:

- enabled them to recognise and navigate cross-cultural differences and similarities and, over time, embrace these as agentic capabilities
- become essential in building socio-cultural competencies and interpersonal skills (such as empathy, respect and tolerance) vital to belonging and social connectivity in an increasingly interdependent and super-diverse world
- become a positive and bridging asset for them, and for the local communities and societies within which they belong.

As explored in this report, most of the participants expressed an understanding of the potential of their ability to engage with and draw from multiple cultural repertoires. They spoke of their ability to “move from one culture to the other”, and to “be able to bring two [cultures] together, to be able to have our own unique sense of cultural identity, and confidence and pride in both”. In many ways, this understanding of transcultural capital is related to their positive experiences of local diversity and their view of Australia (Melbourne), Canada (Toronto) and the UK (Birmingham) as multicultural societies. However, this ability to access, develop and creatively deploy different cultural repertoires should not be taken for granted – indeed, our research shows that these skills, networks and knowledges take time, and effort, to master.

Furthermore, the agentic capacity of migrant youth to develop transcultural identities and competencies, to navigate difference and cross boundaries can be both enabled and thus undeniably limited and undermined by structural factors. Thus, while the lived multicultural of Melbourne, Toronto and Birmingham is conducive to the development of transcultural capital, broader asymmetries of power also dictate the various contexts and possibilities available to our participants and other migrant youth.

In this context, it is crucial to recognise the importance of networks – i.e. families, friends and ethnic communities – in supporting migrant youth with different aspects of their lives. Across the three sites, data shows commonalities regarding the ways the migrant youth describe their relationship with their families: they stress that their upbringing has shaped their personal, cultural and religious identities. Through family, they have been socialised into a system of values, norms and beliefs that have contributed largely to the formation of their identity. Concerning friendship, data reveals that migrant youth prefer to be in inter-ethnic and cross ethnic friendships circles. Those types of friendships, from the participants’ point of view, are based on shared solidarity and experiences and help facilitate better communication, understanding and a sense of belonging. In contrast, forming friendship relations with “white” (Anglo) youth was perceived as challenging by some of our participants. This was due not only to differences between cultures, but also to differences in their lived experiences of growing up as racialised or classed minorities in school, university and the workforce, in keeping with earlier studies such as Hussain (2021c).



It is thus important to acknowledge the complexity of participants' relationships, identities and belonging without falling into binaries. To be sure, there is a degree of conflict or strain, but often there is also a strong degree of accommodation and solidarity. This is not only visible in participants' relationships with members of the "white" majorities, but also in their relationships with their parents and elders and their local, national and transnational communities. Data not only shows a strong recognition of the challenges faced by previous generations of migrants (such as racial and ethnic discrimination, language barriers, separation, loss of status, etc.), but also a demonstrated ability to negotiate difference in their families and in their social lives in ways that often connect and build understanding. Furthermore, and while many of our participants did not engage in the traditional transnational practices of previous generations, a new form of transnationalism is valued among youth from a cultural and social perspective. Here, being raised and exposed to the cultural knowledge, skills and networks of a country of "origin" (or their parents' country of origin) did not diminish – but rather enhanced – the ability or willingness of our participants to actively engage with the social, cultural or political life of multicultural Melbourne, Toronto and Birmingham.

This reflects another common finding of our research: the fluid ways in which identity is negotiated by participants. There were frequent mentions of the fact that their identities are ever changing, multifaceted, and multi-scaled. Generally, participants described their identity in terms of their families and friends, their countries of origin and/or ethnic communities, their religion, the music they listen to, and their education. In other words, their identities are context specific and based on their relationships to others. For some of our participants, the multi-faceted nature of their identities poses a challenge to their sense of belonging in Australia, Canada and the UK. In this context, participants emphasised the importance of time in affecting this sense of belonging, as coming of age or reaching adulthood often presented an opportunity to reconcile the multiple cultures they belong to and to take pride in them. Yet, participants – particularly second-generation migrants – also spoke of the mismatch between the way they see themselves and the way others see them, while others questioned what it means to be "Australian", "Canadian" or "British" and expressed hope for a more inclusive future.

A key finding of this project points to the importance of time and space: the ability of migrant youth to mobilise different cultural repertoires to build intercultural capital is place and time dependent. In other words, participants believe that living in a specific place at a particular time provides opportunities for building transcultural capital. As noted above, almost all participants highlighted the advantage of living in multicultural cities such as Melbourne Toronto and Birmingham as the entrenched demographic and cultural diversity help reinforce a deeper sense of belonging and opportunity. In addition, data shows that time is also significant in building transcultural capital. Over time, many of the participants developed cultural navigation skills that enabled them to negotiate between different cultural worlds. This temporal dimension was particularly important in the case of second-generation migrants, who most often described how their identity developed and their perceptions of their parents' culture changed positively over time. This captures a key realisation, that their ethnic and cultural difference is not a disadvantage, but rather a potential source of capital for themselves and broader society.

The fundamental question that emerges from our research is, how can we ensure that more young migrants could access, develop and deploy this and other forms of transcultural capital? In the context of our increasingly diverse societies and unequal world, there is an even greater need for research and policy agendas to recognise migrant youth's efforts to engage productively with difference, to highlight the skills, networks and knowledges they draw from to embrace the fluidity of their identities and belongings, and to explore their ability to cross boundaries and to cope with the complexity and variability of difference in everyday life. At the same time, we cannot lose sight of the need for broader change among dominant social institutions and structures whereupon diversity and difference are re-conceptualised as an asset for the individual and for the multiple communities in which they belong.

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# Appendices

**Table 4: Melbourne – interview participants (selected demographics)**

PSEUDONYM	AGE	GENDER	COUNTRY OF BIRTH	LENGTH OF SETTLEMENT	REASON TO MIGRATE	RELIGION
Harni	18	Female	Afghanistan	0-5 years	Political/Asylum	Islam
Banin	18	Female	Afghanistan	0-5 years	Political/Asylum	Islam
Fathima	18	Female	Afghanistan	0-5 years	Study	Islam
Minh	19	Female	Vietnam	0-5 years	Family	No Religion
Ala	19	Female	New Zealand	6-10 years	Other	Christianity
Darya	19	Female	Afghanistan	6-10 years	Political/Asylum	Islam
Mahreen	19	Female	Pakistan	0-5 years	Political/Asylum	Islam
Adila	19	Female	Afghanistan	6-10 years	Family	Islam
Joanne	20	Female	Samoa	11+ years	Unassigned	Christianity
Stephani	20	Female	Australia	Born here	Economic/Work	Christianity
Mary	20	Female	Ethiopia	11+ years	Political/Asylum	Christianity
Parisa	21	Female	Jordan	0-5 years	Family	Islam
Megan	21	Female	Malaysia	0-5 years	Study	No Religion
Sofia	21	Female	Ukraine	11+ years	Unassigned	No Religion
Sarah	21	Female	Australia	Born here	Family	Other
Vinh	21	Female	Vietnam	0-5 years	Family	Christianity
Elsa	22	Female	India	11+ years	Unassigned	Other
Surya	22	Female	Indonesia	0-5 years	Unassigned	Islam
Ayesha	22	Female	Mauritius	0-5 years	Other	Islam
Dua	23	Female	Australia	Born here	Economic/Work	Islam
Sally	23	Female	USA	11+ years	Unassigned	No Religion
Hoa	24	Female	Vietnam	6-10 years	Study	Buddhism
Chimlin	25	Female	Thailand	0-5 years	Economic/Work	Buddhism
Jamie	25	Female	Australia	Born here	Political/Asylum	Christianity
Scott	18	Male	Nigeria	11+ years	Economic/Work	Christianity
Lucas	21	Male	Finland	11+ years	Economic/Work	Christianity
Ahmed	21	Male	Australia	Born here	Political/Asylum	Islam
Daren	21	Male	Australia	Born here	Economic/Work	Christianity
Shahram	22	Male	Iran	0-5 years	Other	Other
Nick	22	Male	Australia	Born here	Economic/Work	Christianity

PSEUDONYM	AGE	GENDER	COUNTRY OF BIRTH	LENGTH OF SETTLEMENT	REASON TO MIGRATE	RELIGION
Mitchell	22	Male	USA	11+ years	Family	No Religion
Darsh	23	Male	India	0-5 years	Study	Hinduism
Muhammad	23	Male	Indonesia	6-10 years	Study	Islam
Nadir	23	Male	Iraq	0-5 years	Political/Asylum	Christianity
Jerry	24	Male	China	0-5 years	Study	Islam
Mathew	24	Male	Australia	Born here	Economic/Work	No Religion
Will	24	Male	Australia	Born here	Economic/Work	No Religion
Bora	24	Male	Australia	Born here	Study	Islam
Franklin	25	Male	Sierra Leone	11+ years	Political/Asylum	Islam

**Table 5: Toronto – interview participants (selected demographics)**

PSEUDONYM	AGE	GENDER	COUNTRY OF BIRTH	LENGTH OF SETTLEMENT	REASON TO MIGRATE	RELIGION
Bianca	18	Female	Canada	Born here	Economic/Work	Christianity
Angela	18	Female	Canada	Born here	Economic/Work	No Religion
Samia	18	Female	UAE	11+ years	Political/Asylum	Islam
Jessica	19	Female	Canada	Born here	Economic/Work	No Religion
Daniella	19	Female	Canada	Born here	Economic/Work	Christianity
Nicole	19	Female	Canada	Born here	Study	Christianity
Fiona	20	Female	China	11+ years	Economic/Work	Christianity
Annie	20	Female	Taiwan	6-10 years	Economic/Work	Christianity
Emily	21	Female	China	6-10 years	Study	No Religion
Renata	21	Female	Peru	6-10 years	Political/Asylum	No Religion
Ashly	21	Female	China	11+ years	Economic/Work	No Religion
Anastasia	21	Female	Ukraine	11+ years	Economic/Work	No Religion
Loretta	21	Female	Canada	Born here	Political/Asylum	Buddhism
Deepa	22	Female	India	0-5 years	Study	Hinduism
Anna	22	Female	Canada	Born here	Political/Asylum	Christianity
Vanessa	22	Female	Canada	Born here	Economic/Work	No Religion
Farah	22	Female	Pakistan	11+ years	Economic/Work	Islam
Emma	22	Female	Taiwan	6-10 years	Economic/Work	Buddhism
Malik	23	Female	Pakistan	11+ years	Economic/Work	Islam
Anh	24	Female	Canada	Born here	Other	Buddhism



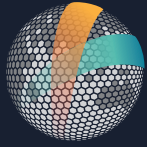
PSEUDONYM	AGE	GENDER	COUNTRY OF BIRTH	LENGTH OF SETTLEMENT	REASON TO MIGRATE	RELIGION
Paola	24	Female	Mexico	11+ years	Other	No Religion
Aashi	24	Female	Bangladesh	0-5 years	Study	Islam
Natalia	25	Female	Mexico	0-5 years	Economic/Work	No Religion
Thilini	25	Female	Canada	Born here	Political/Asylum	Hinduism
Yasir	18	Male	Canada	Born here	Political/Asylum	Islam
Robert	18	Male	Canada	Born here	Economic/Work	Christianity
Justin	18	Male	Philippines	6-10 years	Economic/Work	No Religion
Matteo	19	Male	Italy	0-5 years	Other	No Religion
Nasir	19	Male	Pakistan	0-5 years	Study	Other
Patricio	20	Male	Argentina	0-5 years	Economic/Work	Christianity
Ameen	20	Male	Canada	Born here	Economic/Work	Islam
Tahir	20	Male	Saudi Arabia	11+ years	Economic/Work	Islam
Asir	22	Male	Bangladesh	0-5 years	Economic/Work	No Religion
Thomas	22	Male	France	0-5 years	Study	No Religion
Bill	23	Male	Canada	Born here	Economic/Work	No Religion
Adrian	23	Male	Singapore	11+ years	Economic/Work	No Religion
Bruno	23	Male	Canada	Born here	Political/Asylum	No Religion
Iraj	24	Male	Iran	0-5 years	Study	Islam
Gaspar	24	Male	Canada	Born here	Economic/Work	Christianity
Krish	25	Male	India	6-10 years	Study	Hinduism

**Table 6: UK – interview participants (selected demographics)**

PSEUDONYM	AGE	GENDER	COUNTRY OF BIRTH	LENGTH OF SETTLEMENT	REASON TO MIGRATE	RELIGION
Chitleen	19	Female	UK	Born here	Economic/Work	Other
Jennifer	19	Female	UK	Born here	Economic/Work	No Religion
Jaida	19	Female	Thailand	0-5 years	Study	Buddhism
Anisa	20	Female	UK	Born here	Study	Islam
Pamela	21	Female	Canada	0-5 years	Study	Other
Shree	21	Female	India	0-5 years	Study	Hinduism
Arya	21	Female	UK	Born here	Economic/Work	No Religion
Yasmeen	21	Female	UK	Born here	Economic/Work	Islam

PSEUDONYM	AGE	GENDER	COUNTRY OF BIRTH	LENGTH OF SETTLEMENT	REASON TO MIGRATE	RELIGION
Elena	21	Female	UK	Born here	Economic/Work	No Religion
Anneke	21	Female	Netherlands	0-5 years	Study	No Religion
Rozhin	21	Female	Kurdistan	11+ years	Political/Asylum	Islam
Eralia	22	Female	Jamaica	11+ years	Economic/Work	No Religion
Viyan	22	Female	Iraq	11+ years	Political/Asylum	Islam
Amal	22	Female	Saudi Arabia	11+ years	Economic/Work	Islam
Shravya	22	Female	India	0-5 years	Study	Hinduism
Rose	22	Female	Kenya	0-5 years	Study	Christianity
Ria	23	Female	India	0-5 years	Study	Hinduism
Damini	23	Female	India	0-5 years	Economic/Work	No Religion
Amira	23	Female	UK	Born here	Economic/Work	Islam
Kath	24	Female	UK	Born here	Economic/Work	Islam
Aanya	25	Female	India	0-5 years	Study	Hinduism
Nadia	25	Female	Italy	0-5 years	Economic/Work	Islam
Alessandra	25	Female	Italy	0-5 years	Study	No Religion
Ryan	18	Male	UK	Born here	Economic/Work	No Religion
Harith	19	Male	UK	Born here	Study	Islam
Ali	19	Male	Pakistan	0-5 years	Study	Islam
Hamza	21	Male	Pakistan	11+ years	Economic/Work	Islam
Hassan	21	Male	UK	Born here	Study	Islam
Viraj	21	Male	UK	Born here	Economic/Work	No Religion
Ash	21	Male	Nigeria	6-10 years	Economic/Work	Christianity
Paul	22	Male	UK	Born here	Economic/Work	Islam
Surjan	22	Male	UK	Born here	Political/Asylum	Other
Shihab	23	Male	UK	Born here	Economic/Work	Islam
Hakim	23	Male	Afghanistan	11+ years	Political/Asylum	Islam
Talha	23	Male	UK	Born here	Economic/Work	No Religion
Basheer	23	Male	UK	Born here	Economic/Work	Islam
Mustafa	24	Male	UK	Born here	Economic/Work	Islam
Yusuf	25	Male	Malaysia	0-5 years	Study	Islam
Kevin	25	Male	Taiwan	0-5 years	Study	No Religion
Constantin	25	Male	Romania	6-10 years	Study	No Religion





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