1 Families, values and change: setting the scene
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Australia has a unique history, important elements of which are an indigenous population, a British colonial past and recent extensive immigration of people from many different countries and cultures. This has resulted in one of the most ethnically diverse populations in the world, with over 100 birthplace groups identified in the 1991 census. Each of these 'birthplace groups' has its own considerable cultural diversity as a result of history, regional differences and internal and external population movements, as well as variations related to key factors such as class, gender and urban and rural environments.

Cultural diversity, including the resurgence of a strong Aboriginal presence and identity, presents challenging issues for Australia: what it means to be an Australian; the relationship between national and personal identities; identifying and working in both the cohesive and divisive forces in a multicultural society; and the form and flavour of a future republic. None of these issues is new, yet all are of immediate concern, and the symbolic importance of the approach of the twenty-first century invests them with particular meaning.

Despite demographic changes, the major institutions in Australia and the political, legal, administrative and communication systems remain predominantly Anglo-Celtic. Families and family life are therefore important arenas for the expression of cultural diversity. The purpose of this book is to give a picture of the diversity of families and family values in Australia. The overall emphasis is on continuity and change and on present and future

issues for families. Included are chapters on Aboriginal families, families formed by people who have emigrated to Australia in the past and in relatively recent times, and Australian families in general. In this chapter and those which follow, it will become evident that simple categories such as these are merely starting points for describing the rich, diverse, multifaceted and interacting pattern of family values in Australia.

The task of describing families and cultural diversity raises complex issues which will remain the subject of continuing debate. Some of these issues are concerned with the institution of the family—relationships between the state and the family and between social change and family change, the impact of the feminist movement on families and society, and links between religion and family values, structure and functioning.

Others are concerned with culture and ethnicity. How valid is it to talk about 'Greek families' or 'Vietnamese families' in Australia? What is implied by the terms 'Chinese-Australian' families or 'Italian-Australian' families? Can discussion be usefully organised around such notions when individual experiences and values vary significantly according to class and gender and a multitude of other factors? What constitutes ethnic identification? Are there specific meanings attached to the term in Australia? Of relevance also are concepts of westernisation and globalisation. What impact is widespread immigration and intermixing of cultures having on families in Australia? How can we adequately convey the commonalities shared by families from different cultural backgrounds, as well as their uniqueness?

This chapter outlines key concepts in the framework for the book, discusses aspects of the relationship between families, society and migration, and identifies common themes and differences drawn from the chapters which follow.

Culture and ethnicity

The organisation of the book assumes that it is both legitimate and meaningful to talk about the cultural values underlying, for example, Filipino families, Chinese families, Aboriginal families and Latin American families in Australia, despite the diversity within these cultures.

Culture includes institutions, manners, habits of thought, intentions and ways of life (Williams 1960). It encompasses the complex web of meanings which underlie everyday life and behaviour—the understandings and expectations which guide our actions and interactions with others. The aspects of culture which are

taken for granted are especially relevant in exploring family life and relationships. The familiar 'everyday' nature of much of family life makes it particularly likely that it is seen as 'given', rather than resulting from a set of cultural meanings. For example, definitions of and expectations about age-related stages of life, such as adolescence, adulthood and middle age, are culturally determined and surrounded by a set of beliefs, attitudes and practices which, like so many aspects of culture, are often largely unexamined and taken for granted by people until they are confronted by something different. Even the meanings attached to play in childhood are culturally determined and contribute to the ways in which parents interact with children. Since culture is concerned with meaning, there is of course a very close relationship between culture and language, through which kin relationships, obligations and duties are expressed and appropriate behaviour defined.

Two main strands of thought exist in discussions concerning ethnicity in Australia (Wong 1992). One highlights descent, or common origin, as a potentially binding force for people. The other regards ethnicity as a social construction which can be expected to vary over time and according to circumstances, and is epitomised by Martin's (1978) view of ethnicity as 'interest groups' rather than as an aspect of culture. A major concern expressed by a number of writers is that the focus on ethnic groups and ethnicity in Australia has masked class interests and structural inequalities (see for example Bottomley and de Lepervanche 1984). Ethnicity has become associated in Australia with immigrants from a non-Anglo background, with 'difference' from the mainstream and with inequality. Nevertheless, ethnicity may often be a strong element of self-identification. Georgina Tsolidis in Chapter 6 suggests also that a 'sense of difference' has potentially positive connotations of resistance and agency.

The ways in which people identify themselves at different times and in different environments may not always be consistent. The focus for a sense of belonging may be on common physical characteristics, the possession of a distinct language or dialect, a particular religion, a sense of geographical and historical continuity through living in a particular place, or a distinct lifestyle (Price 1988). To this list we could add a common written or oral tradition.

Sometimes, one or other of these factors predominates; sometimes the factors coalesce to form a shared cultural background for large numbers of people. Country of birth is significant because it quite often coincides with some or all of the factors mentioned but this clearly need not be the case. People may be born outside

a country or a nation-state yet still identify with it; boundaries and borders change. The world history of migration and the general movement of peoples have made any simple approach to culture and to ethnic identification not possible or viable. Individuals identify multiple ancestries, as evidenced by responses to the 'ancestry' question included in the 1986 national census; the 'cultural background' of many people is diverse. To take one example, there are people in Australia who were born in Eastern Europe, emigrated with their families to Central America when they were children, and then emigrated to Australia as adults with children of their own.

A book of this nature cannot hope to capture all of the complexities of the relationship between culture and families, or the full extent of family diversity in Australia. However, the framework used provides an opportunity to illustrate both diversity within and commonalities across communities, and to avoid overgeneralisation. Differences which are important to people's identity and sense of cultural history are able to be recognised.

All the contributors were relatively at ease with the task of describing family values from the perspective of a particular culture, although capturing the unique elements as well as the variety and richness is not always easy. There was some lively discussion among contributors about the most appropriate way to title the chapters in this book. There are subtle nuances of meaning between, for example, 'Lebanese-Australian', 'Lebanese in Australia', 'Australian-Lebanese', 'Australian of Lebanese background', 'third-generation Lebanese-Australian' and, simply, 'Australian'; and preference is often a matter of individual interpretation.

Describing families

We turn now to families, the focus of this book. Patterns of parenting, marriage, kin relationships and responsibilities vary across cultures and societies, as does the nature of family life, child rearing and care of the aged. Historically, there have been considerable and continuing changes in each of these areas; whatever shifts in family formation and family life we can identify at present in Australia, and world-wide, are part of an ongoing process.

Just as there is no universal and enduring form of the family, there is no single way of defining family. Rather, there are perspectives related to different disciplines of thought: for example, in broad terms sociologists see families as primary agencies for

socialisation, social control and transmission of cultural values; economists see families (partly) as units of consumption; and psychologists see families as primary units in which children are reared and individual personalities develop. Nevertheless, families in all societies are commonly expected to care for and nurture children, to provide financially for their members and to transmit cultural and moral traditions and values.

In describing and defining their own families, people use a variety of criteria for different purposes, including cultural norms, personal circumstances, co-residence, the nature and closeness of relationships, a sense of obligation, and occasion (McDonald 1995). People from different cultural backgrounds may include a different range of people when describing their families, according to the range of relationships which are defined as important. However, within any cultural group, individual circumstances such as births, deaths and repartnerings in the family change the potential list of people who may be included. Sometimes non-kin are included, either on the basis of a well-defined social relationship such as godparent, or because they are perceived as close and caring and 'like family'. The extent to which individuals are able to 'construct' their own families is greater in societies where kin relationships and obligations are less tightly structured and more open to individual choice.

Families respond to and reflect general social change. They are often the site of change—the arena in which shifts occur through changes in the behaviour of individuals, particularly in the area of intimate relationships between family members. The composition of families is subject to constant change through events which mark transitions in individual lives—births, partnering, divorce, repartnering, death—and less predictable events such as migration, wars, political upheaval and general geographic mobility, which are part of the experience of many of the families discussed in this book. Family mobility has a central place in world history. Settles (1993) suggests that while there is a tendency to emphasise stability as a 'moral good and characteristic of family life in general' the reality is that movement (within and outside national boundaries) and change in family life is more the typical experience than the exception.

The boundaries for describing families are, therefore, varied and flexible. Yet because individual experiences of family are so fundamental in fashioning people's lives, it is often difficult to see beyond our own notions of what family is and should be. Both lack of awareness and ethnocentrism—the tendency to believe that one's own group is superior to others—tend to cloud our view of families other than our own. So too do stereotypes about gender

roles—fixed notions about the roles of females and males. One of the underlying aims of this book is to contribute to a better understanding of both the diversity of family values in Australia and the commonalities among families from different backgrounds.

Families and the state

Families are located across both the so-called 'private' and 'public' realms of life. The emphasis on personal autonomy in Australian society perhaps helps to create an illusion of personal choice in relation to family matters and in particular, the nature of intimate relationships. In reality, it is difficult to think of an area of government legislation or regulation which does not affect families and family life. Laws which govern marriage and divorce have a direct impact on families. So too does Australia's signing of international convention statements—for example, those setting out children's rights and the rights of workers with family responsibilities and a range of legislation which supports greater equality for women and the extension of their roles beyond the family. In Chapter 2, Peter McDonald lists many of these provisions. In addition, taxation law, environmental control, economic policies, social welfare policies and the provision of local government services are some of the many other areas which affect the day-to-day life of families. Nor does a deliberate policy of non-intervention necessarily mean that an area of behaviour is uncontrolled.

Within this picture of state intervention and regulation, however, there is scope for considerable diversity. For example, although Australia has a single legal system of marriage and divorce, in reality systems of marriage and divorce include those 'sanctioned or authorised by the formal legal system, those in accordance with religious laws or customary laws and also informal marriage-like relationships which are recognised by the law for certain purposes, for example in regard to parental rights, for immigration, and in some States for property division' (Evatt 1993).

The Law Reform Commission in Australia has tackled the question of how a single legal system can make appropriate accommodation for different cultural values related to family law, including Aboriginal customary law (Law Reform Commission 1992). In areas where there are clear cultural and value divisions, Australia's signing of various international conventions which outline individual rights has guided some of its recommendations.

All societies have assumptions about 'private' matters within the family which should not be subject to state control or intervention. Relationships between men and women, the rights and responsibilities of parents and children and the issue of sexuality are often highly contested areas. As a result of the feminist movement and the greater focus on the rights of individuals in Australia, violence in families—predominantly male violence against women and children—has become much more a 'public' issue and a matter where the state intervenes.

The impact of government policies has been particularly strong and very direct for many of the families who are the focus of this book; the state has been crucial in the migration experience and in the experience of Aboriginal families. The structure and composition of immigrant families are determined to a significant extent by regulations governing entry into Australia—initial entry of individuals and family units and then entry of other family members. Assistance with settlement, including the provision of English language classes, regulation of employment and access to and appropriateness of services are also crucial in determining the experience of families.

Bottomley's (1991) analysis of the intersection of gender, ethnicity and class in Australia illustrates some of the interconnections. Writing specifically of Greek-Australians, she describes how opportunities have been structured by the economic situation, the working conditions, and the location of employment in Australia at the time of immigration, with direct impacts on health, happiness and the structure of family life. Her comments are reflected in many of the chapters in this book. Indeed, the structure and conditions of employment loom large as critical factors fashioning experiences and affecting values.

The effect of direct state intervention is strikingly evident in relation to Aboriginal families. In Chapter 3, Eleanor and Colin Bourke explain the many ways in which previous family structures and lifestyles in Aboriginal society have been disrupted and in some cases destroyed by past government policies.

Religion and families

At a structural level, there are strong connections between religious institutions and family life. All religions include and incorporate a set of beliefs which have direct relevance for family life and relationships between family members. Religion operates to validate general notions of good and evil, the roles of men and women, and concepts of morality which impinge directly on family

structures and experience. The patriarchal nature of most religions has served to justify and support, in particular, traditional roles for men and women. Furthermore, religious affiliation is a strong factor in definitions of 'in group' and 'out group' for marriage purposes and may override cultural background in determining who is an acceptable marriage partner.

Religions span national, geographic, cultural and ethnic boundaries and may be the focus of individual (and family) identification. Participation in familiar religious observances and rituals in a new country may operate as an integrating and connecting force, even when the rituals are practised differently and the language used is unfamiliar. Onley (1990) found that women of Lebanese background in Australia identified as Catholic in a culturally diverse community, even though they were very aware of the cultural differences.

In some immigrant communities, religious institutions have played a very important role in catering not only for people's spiritual needs but also for their social, psychological and cultural needs.

Religions vary in the extent to which they accept behaviour which is contrary to moral tradition, and so too does the strength with which people hold religious views. Where the family system is strongly reinforced by religious morality, the degree of variation or deviation from the ideal is not likely to be great. For example, only a small proportion of those identifying with the Greek Orthodox, Muslim and Jewish faiths in Australia are involved in de facto relationships (Gariano 1994). In the Australian population in general, commitment to religious views tends to be associated with other views which bear directly on family life. Those who hold strong religious views are less likely to engage in premarital sex or de facto relationships, or to divorce (Glezer, Edgar and Prolisko 1992). There is, however, evidence that attitudes within religious sub-groups tend to shift over time in the same direction as attitudes across society as a whole, although not to the same degree (Glezer 1993c).

Values and families

The broad focus of the book is values which impact on families, family life and family relationships. Despite the various meanings which the term 'values' has in the social sciences, there is general agreement that it refers to beliefs which are enduring, which transcend specific objects and situations (and are therefore much broader than attitudes), and which are common to a group of

people. Values are seen as a major source of control over social conduct, although there are often great discrepancies between the verbal expression of a value and actual behaviour.

McDonald (1994) suggests that an 'idealised family morality' is a fundamental component of all societies, and the degree to which deviation from the ideal is permissible varies. Where the family system is reinforced by the morality of society, there will be little variation from the ideal; variation will be illegal, anti-social or contrary to the teachings of the prevailing religion and this will be policed by the strong, formal institutions of the society.

Values can be discussed at different levels. The broadest level includes statements like those made by Doherty (1992) in tracing the recent history of American families. He has identified a change from the institutional family, whose chief and defining value was responsibility, to the psychological family, whose chief value was satisfaction, to the new post-modern family whose chief value is flexibility. McDonald in Chapter 2 discusses some values in Australian society at this level of abstraction.

However, most chapters focus on issues related to 'middle-level' values: what constitutes a 'family matter' as opposed to a government, community or public matter; how families are defined (nuclear, extended, narrowly, broadly); how the roles of women and men (wives and husbands, daughters and sons) are viewed; and family obligations within and beyond the nuclear family. Also discussed are values surrounding child rearing, young people leaving home, settlement of disputes in marriage, the place of older people in families, and the interrelationship of family, work and education.

A 'life course' approach

Families include people of all ages—the young, the old and all those in between. Any discussion of family values needs to encompass different age groups. Key points of the family life cycle are therefore included in the framework. However, we cannot say that family life-cycle stages are universal or that families and individuals go through stages in a particular sequence. They clearly do not. Concepts of adolescence, youth, marriage, motherhood, fatherhood and old age are all dynamic and subject to readjustment and reinterpretation as social and cultural circumstances alter. Nevertheless, the following age-related stages provide a useful starting point around which to organise a discussion of values: birth; childhood and child-rearing practices; the adolescent/teenage years and socialisation into adult roles; forming a family—including marriage and cohabitation, marital relationships

and attitudes towards divorce and remarriage; middle age—
including intergenerational obligations, expectations and relationships;
and old age, death and bereavement.

Migration and families

The majority of chapters in this book are concerned with families,
most of which (but not all) comprise people who have emigrated
to Australia since the Second World War, or who are their descen-
dants. Major factors which contribute to the impact of migration
on families and family values are: the complex set of values,
attitudes, behaviours and life experiences which people bring with
them (their 'cultural background'); the circumstances of migration;
the impact of migration itself, which involves leaving behind an
environment that is familiar and usually integral to how people
define themselves; and Australian social and economic conditions
on and following arrival. Cultural background, migration, settle-
ment and adjustment from various perspectives are discussed in
some detail in many of the following chapters. This section
provides a context for those discussions by outlining recent demo-
graphic trends in Australia and briefly tracing the development of
immigration and settlement policies, together with the broad
implications for families.
    Three elements of recent immigration history and settlement
policies have particular relevance for the overall picture of family
values in Australia. They are the source countries from which
settlers have come, the circumstances under which they arrived
and the impact of settlement policies on ethnic identity. In addi-
tion, economic circumstances in Australia are a major determinant
of immigration policies and have been crucial to the experience
of families on their arrival.
    Until the large-scale immigration programs following the
Second World War, Australia was to a large extent socially and
culturally homogeneous. There were settlers from other than
Anglo-Celtic backgrounds, but in such small numbers that
immediately after the war only 3 per cent of Australia's population
had been born in places other than Britain or Ireland (Storer
1985). Australia's indigenous people were not officially included
in the Australian population until the 1971 census (the first since
the 1967 referendum to include Aboriginal people in population
counts). The Commonwealth *Immigration Restriction Act* of 1901
and the language test which supported it severely restricted settlers
from Asia until the 'White Australia Policy' was removed in 1973,

although significant moves to modify the policy began in the 1960s.

Between 1947 and 1991 the overseas-born population in Australia increased from 10 per cent to 23 per cent, with the largest increase occurring during the early post-war period. During the 1950s and 1960s large numbers of settlers arrived from the United Kingdom, Ireland and continental Europe, particularly Greece, Italy, Germany and Holland. Immigration was the 'motor of post-war expansion' (Castles 1988) and recruitment of labour was the predominant concern from the end of the Second World War until the beginning of the recession period in the 1970s.

In the immediate post-war years, the rationale for intakes of immigrant families had much more to do with increasing the pool of workers and consumers than in promoting family life. Although there was considerable rhetoric in the 1950s and 1960s about the desirability of family migration to Australia, racial preferences determined immigration policies and resulted in British and Northern European migrants being favoured over Southern Europeans. It was only when British migrants were not available in sufficient numbers that unassisted young non-Anglo-Saxon males were allowed to enter Australia (Storer 1985). After a period of work, they were able to sponsor other family members but not always under conditions of equality with British migrants. Kunek (1993) has outlined the conditions of the Dependants' Nomination Scheme which were much more restrictive for women from Greece and Italy than for those from Northern European countries. When large groups of single men began to be seen as a 'problem', immigration of single females from Southern Europe was promoted. The fact that the situation had been created by a specific policy of gender and race selection was not often acknowledged.

During this period both immigration policies and administrative procedures reflected quite different views of male and female immigrants. Males were fit, able-bodied workers; women were 'married', 'single', 'divorced' or 'unaccompanied'—categories which clearly defined them in relation to their marital status and relationship to a male immigrant (Fincher, Foster and Wilmot 1994). The assumption was that women would be dependent. In fact, many entered the workforce and contributed greatly to household income.

Many settlers who arrived during the first decades after the Second World War are now part of third and sometimes fourth generation families in Australia. Their family and individual experiences have begun to be recorded in literature as well as in non-fictional accounts of the post-war years and in academic research. They arrived in Australia in the era of 'familism',

described by McDonald in Chapter 2 as characterised by a strong emphasis on the nuclear family, which consisted of a breadwinner husband, a wife who was not employed and whose life was ordered around home and family, and their children. Settlement policy was based on assimilation; it was assumed that new settlers would eventually adopt Australian ways and that their separate ethnic identities would not persist for long (Castles 1988).

Complete cultural assimilation did not take place. However, the predominance of Anglo-Celtic values, in all Australian institutions but particularly in the workplace and the schools, often placed great pressures on immigrant families, created conflict between family members and sometimes threatened positive identification with their own cultures. It was not until the 1970s that any significant change occurred in official policies although the pressure for change was apparent earlier. The failure of cultural assimilation, the threat to Australian living standards with the onset of the recession and world economic restructuring, and social segmentation linked to gender, ethnicity and race led to a new national approach to diversity and to the development of policies based on the principle of multiculturalism (Castles 1988). Multiculturalism as a national ideology, and multicultural policies which promoted the maintenance of ethnic identity and cultural integrity, in many ways provided a quite different environment for immigrant families than that which the immediate post-war settlers encountered.

The 1980s saw a major change in the composition of Australia's immigrant population with the rapid increase in numbers of arrivals from Asia and Africa, particularly from China, Hong Kong and Korea, the Philippines, Indonesia, Cambodia, Vietnam, Sri Lanka and Afghanistan. Between 1981 and 1991 most birthplace groups from Asia, and those from Africa and Central and South America, showed increases of more than 30 per cent. In contrast, there was a decline or very little change in the number of new settlers born in Europe, except for Portugal and the countries which made up the former Republic of Yugoslavia (Shu, Khoo, Struik and McKenzie 1994).

The political basis of immigration, with its associated eligibility categories for admission, determines the composition of the immigrant population and has an impact on family structure and functioning. During the 1970s and early 1980s, the earlier emphasis on labour recruitment shifted to a much greater consideration of humanitarian and family reunion factors, although economic factors remained important. In 1979 a numerical assessment was introduced, whereby immigrants were selected on the basis of weightings which reflected economic and settlement factors. With

economic recession in the early 1980s, there were cutbacks in the number of skilled workers admitted. Family immigration regulations have been modified several times and at present include 'preferential' and 'concessional' categories which are largely consistent with Anglo-Saxon notions of important relationships beyond the immediate family. In recent years, family reunion has been the largest immigration category in each year's intake as far as the number of visas issued is concerned (BIPR 1994f).

Women and men are not evenly distributed across the four major categories of eligibility (family, skill, humanitarian and special). For example, in 1989–90, female settlers were more likely to come under family immigration arrangements than under other categories; more men than women arrived under the skill category and more women than men under the family immigration category; and men were more likely than women to arrive under the humanitarian category, consistent with the vanguard of male refugees from certain countries arriving before females. As in earlier times, women are frequently defined in terms of someone else rather than according to their own skills and capabilities because they are much less likely than men to be the 'principal applicant' in a family or group on whom eligibility is determined (Madden and Young 1993).

There are some strong relationships between country of birth, decade(s) of arrival and eligibility category (consistent with the notion that there are 'waves' of immigration at certain times), and such associations have major implications for families. However, it is important not to generalise too much from these associations. Individuals and families from most countries have arrived over extended periods of time; the experience of early arrivals is often quite different from that of later arrivals, who come to an established community. People arriving at different times confront very different economic conditions, and changing settlement and 'ethnic affairs' policies have provided for different experiences of cultural validation. The experiences of refugees and voluntary immigrants from the same area are very different, although broad family values are likely to be similar.

Composition of the Australian population

Census information about birthplace, language spoken at home and religion provides an overall, but incomplete, picture of cultural diversity in Australia. In 1991, 76 per cent of the population was born in Australia, and 22 per cent overseas (2 per cent did not state country of birth). The largest overseas-born group was

from the United Kingdom (7 per cent); those born in Europe made up 6 per cent and those born in Asia were 4 per cent (BIPR 1993a). Those identifying as Aboriginal made up 1.6 per cent of the total population (ABS 1993a).

When we include Australian-born residents whose parents were born overseas, with those who were born overseas, we get a better idea of ethnic origin, although only of first and second generation settlers. Since one-quarter of all Australian-born people at the 1991 census had one or both parents born overseas, the proportion of the total population who were either first or second generation immigrants was 41 per cent, an increase of 2 per cent since the 1986 census (Shu, Khoo, Struik and McKenzie 1994).

By far the largest group within the 41 per cent of the population who are first and second generation settlers comes from the United Kingdom. The largest groups with non-English-speaking background come from Italy, Greece, the countries of the former Republic of Yugoslavia, Vietnam, Germany, The Netherlands and Lebanon. Within each of these groups the proportion of people born overseas, and those born in Australia with parents born overseas, varies according to the pattern of migration. For example, the Greek-Australian and Italian-Australian populations have large proportions of both second and first generation residents, as do some other Southern European groups, Poles, the Lebanese and the Dutch, because a substantial part of immigration from these countries took place in the 1950s and 1960s and the rate has declined in recent years. By contrast, more recent arrivals, for example settlers from the Philippines, Malaysia and Hong Kong, are predominantly first generation (that is, born overseas) with a relatively small proportion of Australian-born children (second generation) (Shu, Khoo, Struik and McKenzie 1994).

Families in Australia

Variation in profiles of Australian families is associated with cultural background; however, although some differences are no doubt related to cultural and family values, arrival patterns of immigrants and age distributions of populations also have a significant effect. For example, recent immigrant groups with a younger age structure are more likely than older immigrant populations to have a larger proportion of families with young, dependent children. Care must also be taken in comparing populations: for example, marriage and divorce patterns are determined to some extent by the proportion of males and females of marriageable age in each population.

Nevertheless, census statistics indicate some differences among

cultural groups; the values underlying these differences are apparent in the chapters which follow. Family households with a reference person (person 1 on the census form) of non-English-speaking background tend to have more people on average than those where the reference person is of English-speaking background; Lebanese, Cambodian, Vietnamese and Laotian families have the highest proportion of families with six or more people. A larger family household may include more children and/or more other relatives. Families with parents born in Lebanon, Indo-China and El Salvador have a larger number of dependent and non-dependent offspring living with them than other families (BIPR 1994f).

In Australia the overwhelming majority of family households consist of only one family, although the proportion of multi-family households to all households is significantly higher for those born in Cambodia, Laos, Lebanon, Turkey, Vietnam and the Philippines (BIPR 1994f), and for Aboriginal people (ABS 1993a). Families whose reference person was born in Indo-China or the Philippines are much more likely than other families to have a parent, brother, sister or other relative living with them. The proportion of one-parent families tends to be lower among many immigrant groups than the Australian-born. This is not the case for family households with reference persons born in Cambodia, Vietnam, El Salvador, the Philippines and Taiwan (BIPR 1994f).

Changing families, changing values

A strong sense of change and movement is apparent in the chapters in this book. This section briefly discusses three factors which contribute to change in all families to varying degrees—values associated with westernisation, generational shifts and intermarriage.

Westernisation

In Chapter 2, McDonald traces the influence on families of westernisation and the impact of its associated values of autonomy, intimacy, aspiration and acceptance. Overall, family trends in Australia mirror those found in other industrialised nations—later age at first marriage, a higher percentage who do not marry at all, first births at later ages, a drop in total fertility rates, increased rates of divorce, and an increase in the percentage of people who 'cohabit' or are in de facto relationships (McDonald 1995). Australia is about in the middle of a large number of

western countries as far as indices of such shifts are concerned. McDonald suggests that gender relationships, the rights of children and attitudes towards marriage are at present in a state of transition.

Clearly, there is no homogeneity of values in regard to aspects of family and family life in Australia, even among the numerically dominant 'mainstream', which has its origins in Britain and the countries of Western and Northern Europe. Class, gender, levels of education, religious and ideological differences and rural and urban environments make for some tensions. While there have been quite significant shifts in values, such as greater acceptance of young people cohabiting before marriage and greater recognition of women's roles beyond the family, other issues such as abortion, homosexuality and, indeed, many areas associated with gender roles are still the subject of sometimes hotly contested views. Despite the changes, some values associated with families and family life endure. The majority of people still marry; the majority of children are valued and loved; and families are expected to be the chief nurturing and socialising influences for children, the site for satisfying and intimate relationships for adults and children, and a major support network throughout life.

While there is no doubt that westernisation and western values have had an impact, the relationship between family structure and industrialisation is complex and there is considerable variation in contemporary family forms. Tepperman and Wilson (1993) conclude that there is no evidence of a single evolutionary path in family life, and that no simple conclusions can be drawn about 'family life and its relationship to major forces of social change like industrialisation, urbanisation, and even education' (p. 27).

Further, the spread of western values may not be the only initiator of family change. For example, the 'demographic transition' in a number of countries in Asia, characterised by falling birthrates (and related to factors such as better health care and greater emphasis on education), is associated with changes in family relationships, including the roles of women and of young people. The extension of education contributes to the extension of socially defined periods of youth and dependency, a trend we are familiar with in Australia. Poverty too plays a part and often forces adaptation and modification of traditional family patterns and forms.

Generational change

The situation of children and young people is critical in family change. They are the carriers of both continuities and discontinuit-

ies in society; they are often the focus of contrasting forces for change and stability. Young people grow up in a world which to a greater or lesser extent is different from that of their parents, so they face and therefore have to respond to a different set of circumstances. They accept some of their parents' (and society's) values, and often challenge or reject others. This does not have to be a conscious act of 'rebellion' or confrontation with parental values (although it may be). Sometimes it is merely because, as society changes, the general nature and context of growing up is different for each generation. Change of some sort is almost inevitable, but it is greatly exacerbated for young people in families which migrate.

A substantial proportion of longer settled immigrant groups in Australia are second and third generation. They are an important focus of this book, particularly in the discussion of Greek-Australian, Lebanese-Australian and Italian-Australian families. Vasta (1994) discusses the difficulties of defining the term 'second generation' and analyses the complex interactions between age, age on arrival in Australia, immigrant status and ethnic identity. She distinguishes between a statistical definition of the second generation as the Australian-born children of overseas-born parents and a socio-political definition which includes, in addition, children of overseas-born parents who arrive in infancy or childhood. Most authors in this volume adopt the second definition. Second-generation issues are, of course, not necessarily those concerned with young people; in the longer established immigrant groups, the second generation are people in their early and mid adulthood who have already formed new families of their own.

Intermarriage

Intermarriage has an especially important place in the pattern of value shifts in Australia. New forms of family patterns, child rearing and other practices are likely to result from intermarriage, to a greater or lesser degree. 'Intermarriage' may refer to unions which cross barriers of class, language and caste, but, in general, partners differ according to race, religion, nationality or ethnicity (Cahill 1990, p. 4). To some extent, what constitutes intermarriage for those involved is determined by the socially meaningful commonalities and differences which they perceive.

Price (1993) predicts that by the turn of the century well over 40 per cent of Australia's population will be ethnically 'mixed'. 'Outmarriage' (marrying outside one's group) tends to occur less in some cultural groups than others—for example, half or more of second-generation brides of Greek, Italian, Lebanese and

Turkish origin were, in the period 1987–90, marrying within their own ethnic community, compared with less than 10 per cent of brides of Western European origin and about one-quarter of those of Chinese and Maltese origin (Price 1993).

The fact of intermixing tells us little about the adaptation and adjustments which couples and their children are required to make and the processes which occur when values are in conflict. More research is needed in the area of intermarriage and intercultural parenting. Bourke and Bourke in Chapter 3 remark on the relative ease with which some Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal couples adjust, partly because of the strength of Aboriginal family ties. Grace Soriano discusses the research on intermarriages between Filipino women and non-Filipino men in Chapter 5.

Methodology

A major aim of the book is to reflect the rich cultural diversity of Australia's population. As noted earlier, chapters describe Aboriginal families, immigrant families from most of the main geographical source areas, and the general amalgam which can only be described as 'Australian families'. Cultural difference, or perceived difference, from the mainstream is reflected.

Because variations in the migration experience itself affect values, directly and indirectly, different group patterns of settlement are represented. Long established and more recently arrived groups are included, as well as communities with substantial numbers in the second and third generations, and those which are predominantly first generation. Consideration is also given to immigrant populations of varying size, different demographic profiles and different motivations for settling in Australia.

Within the broad guidelines set, a good case could well be made for a different selection of chapters, and readers are bound to have varying reactions to the decisions made. It is important to emphasise that no group included is representative of any other cultural, religious or ethnic group and should not be regarded as such. For example, religion is a powerful and cohesive force, making for some similarities across different countries, but the particular historical, political, cultural and social circumstances of individual countries cannot be ignored. Countries may share a common religion but there are significant differences in the way in which religion manifests itself in different societies, and in its implications for family life and family relationships, because of diverse cultural underpinnings and political realities.

Each of the chapters is written by an author or authors from

the cultural background which is the focus of the chapter. There are advantages and disadvantages of 'insider' as opposed to 'outsider' views. However, in planning for the book, the Australian Institute of Family Studies had a strong belief that the contributors should be 'insiders'. The authors have different academic backgrounds; they come to the task with a variety of perspectives; they have very diverse life experiences. During the course of the project, they met twice as a group to discuss the aims, scope and themes of the book.

Within this broad framework, contributors were given scope to develop themes in their own way. This was thought to be essential given the diversity of the communities included, in terms of their size, demographic profile, historical and cultural background, and, for immigrant communities, their length of time in Australia and the period in which they arrived. For the same reasons, a single structure was not imposed on each chapter, nor was there an attempt to ensure theoretical consistency across all chapters. Each chapter was read for accuracy and appropriateness by one or more persons from the appropriate cultural background.

Chapters are based primarily on existing research. However, the authors' experience as researchers, writers and/or workers within their communities has added considerably to the chapters. So too has information from group discussions and/or informal consultations held, as part of the project of compiling the book, within the communities described.

Chapter themes

Because of the different starting points, each chapter makes a special contribution to the discussion of families and cultural diversity. Peter McDonald outlines the historical background of 'western' values; Eleanor Bourke and Colin Bourke discuss the unique characteristics of Aboriginal populations—the fact that they are indigenous, their special relationship with the land, their suffering as colonised peoples and the resurgence of Aboriginal nationhood and identity. In relation to two widely flung 'diasporic' populations represented in Australia—the Chinese and the Greek—Anita Mak and Helen Chan describe cultural aspects which underlie Chinese family organisation and life, and Georgina Tsolidis explores the family and cultural elements which constitute a sense of 'Greekness'.

In her chapter on Italian-Australian families, Ellie Vasta writes of continuities and transformations across generations, the different impacts of policies of assimilation and of multiculturalism on

families, and issues facing the second generation. Central themes
in Trevor Batrouney's chapter on Lebanese-Australian families are
generational change and the impact of varying work and education
experiences on families arriving in Australia at different times.
Grace Soriano discusses issues for Filipino families in Australia,
in a community which is relatively youthful and which, until
recently, has been characterised by a high rate of intermarriage
between Filipino women and Australian and European men. Lily
Amézquita, Rocio Amézquita and Renzo Vittorino emphasise the
pressures for sometimes rapid change in family relationships fol-
lowing migration, particularly in female–male relationships.
Central to Vuong Nguyen and Mai Ho's chapter on Vietnamese
families is the long-term impact of the refugee experience on
family and household structure and on relationships within fami-
lies; they write, too, of social and cultural forces towards gradual
adaptation.

Commonalities and differences

One of the most striking things to emerge from the chapters is
the similarity and consistency of some family-related values across
the various groups. There is strong attachment to family (both
extended and nuclear); children are regarded as especially import-
ant; expectations of strong family support and cohesiveness are
common; community and neighbourhood networks are highly
valued; age and the elderly are frequently given special respect. In
some cultures, there is a strong tradition whereby forms of social
interaction and appropriate behaviour are regulated according to
age. Notions of honour and shame and the importance of women
in relation to these are also evident in a number of groups. In
cultures as diverse as Aboriginal, Greek and Chinese, the connec-
tions between family and cultural identity are particularly strong.
Although Aboriginal families are undoubtedly set apart by the
nature of the dispossession and disruption experienced in the past
200 years, and by their status as an indigenous people, core values,
such as attachment to extended family and respect for elders, are
not dissimilar to those of some immigrant groups.
     Strong attachments to family and the crucial nature of family
support are manifested in many ways. The Latin American authors
outline the part played by extended family members in helping to
maintain family cohesion during settlement; Nguyen and Ho in
Chapter 10 and Soriano in Chapter 5 write of the crucial support
which families provide for newly arrived relatives who are trying
to establish themselves. Nguyen and Ho also remind us that the

arrival of new settlers tends to reinforce 'Vietnamese' values, but at the same time those new arrivals tend to be more rapidly socialised into 'Australian' ways. Bourke and Bourke suggest that cultural preference (as well as financial pressure) play a part in Aboriginal families living in multi-family households.

Maintaining connections with family members overseas (sometimes scattered in a number of countries) is a common theme for families of immigrant background; so too is sponsorship of family members and financial assistance to those left behind. For some, family business connections are maintained. Close neighbourhood support networks traditionally serve to extend family support in some communities. Vietnamese families in Australia try to duplicate this pattern in some ways by living near other Vietnamese families.

Batrouney, in discussing Lebanese families, shows us that values related to work, such as diligence and thrift, may be closely related to family life, relationships and cohesiveness. The high value placed on education in most immigrant communities serves to provide opportunities for upward social mobility and financial stability. Anita Mak and Helen Chan describe how, for Chinese families, educational achievement also contributes to family honour and status.

There are common pressure points which have significant implications for family relationships and which may lead to gradual value shifts. Families of immigrant background, Aboriginal families and the 'mainstream amalgam' share at least some of these pressures. Separation from close kin and the need to adapt to life in an urban setting disrupt previous patterns of family support. Extended family networks and the close and supportive ties which they provide have been significantly modified for many immigrant families and (for different reasons) Aboriginal families. Often, kin are not available for practical support and advice with a resulting shift in family patterns and relationships. The absence of older family and community members may leave a gap which is hard to fill within communities where authority is vested in the aged and the older generation represents stability and cultural continuity. Aboriginal people have been separated from close kin and supportive family and social networks as a result of past government policies.

Not surprisingly, tensions created by conflicting and/or shifting values are most evident in key family relationships—between husbands and wives (and men and women in general), parents and adolescent children, and older people and their adult offspring. The roles of men and women and relationships between them are contested to a greater or lesser extent in all groups; the effects

are particularly evident in some recently arrived immigrant communities. Women's entry into the workforce is widely perceived as crucial in the changing position of women.

Unemployment has had widespread impacts on families, and has contributed to changing roles and relationships in both long settled and recently arrived immigrant groups, particularly where women become sole breadwinners and men are unable to find work. Vietnamese and Lebanese families, who have very high rates of unemployment, are particularly affected.

Rearing children in a new or an alien society presents families with dilemmas. The lack of English proficiency of parents and the increasing English proficiency of their children changes the relationship between parents and children. Parents' concern to ensure validation of their own culture, while acknowledging that some adjustments have to be made, is a common theme. For example, Nguyen and Ho describe a variety of ways in which Vietnamese parents try to handle the potential conflicts. Vasta discusses the importance of cultural validation for young Italians and the effect of racism and assimilationist policies on the experiences of those who grew up in the 1960s and 1970s. Bourke and Bourke refer to the importance of cultural validation for young Aboriginal people. Tensions are caused by older people finding that they no longer exercise the cultural authority they once did. Strongly held values about responsibility for parents and general respect for the aged come into conflict with the reality of families' limited time and resources.

Underlying many of these pressure points is the conflict which arises for families from collectivist-oriented cultures when confronted with the individualism which predominates in Australia. This is perhaps most clearly articulated in the chapters discussing Chinese and Vietnamese families, but has echoes in most other chapters. Mak and Chan suggest that achieving security and prosperity may be the only fundamental Chinese family value that has not been weakened in Australia, because western societies also value achievement.

Language plays a crucial part in the ethnic identity of many communities, although its importance in this regard seems to vary across cultures (Clyne 1991b). In diasporic communities, such as the Chinese, it has served to unite people from very different countries (Ho and Kee 1988a). Maintaining the first language and the learning of English have key roles in settlement, family experience and acculturation of immigrant groups.

While common pressures on families are relatively easy to identify, families from different cultural backgrounds tend to respond in different ways; and while there are unquestionably

tensions for families, the overall picture is not simply one of conflict. Several contributors remind us that families and individuals have very different resources, react in different ways and therefore adjust to the tensions to a greater or lesser degree. Even when cultural values are very different from those of the mainstream, the outcomes for families can be quite positive.

Of interest also are indications that the numerically dominant mainstream is often perceived as more homogenous than it really is, no doubt reflecting, in part, restricted points of contact between different cultural groups.

There is a strong sense of change over generations and variability within communities in most of the chapters in this book. In some, there is evidence that separate cultural identities are becoming blurred; bicultural, or even multicultural, identities are emerging. Again, both the process and the expression of biculturalism varies according to the particular cultural background. Batrouney outlines the accommodation of different generations and cultures in Lebanese families. Tsolidis describes the many faces of Greeks in Australia and the complex ways in which individual Greek identities are expressed as a result of interaction, not only with 'mainstream' Australian values but also with those of other 'immigrant' cultures. Nguyen and Ho identify the beginnings of biculturalism in the Vietnamese community. Vasta describes the changes wrought in both 'mainstream' and 'immigrant' people by the intermixture of values and behaviours. At the same time, she identifies a 'return' on the part of second-generation Italians to some elements of Italian culture and identity, albeit expressed in different ways from those of their parents.

Large gaps are apparent in the research on families and issues pertaining to family values, certainly in relation to recently arrived communities such as those from Latin America, but also in respect of longer established immigrant communities and Aboriginal families. More research, particularly into second-generation issues, young people and their families, intermarriage and the adjustment of older people would contribute to a greater understanding of changing values.

Together, the chapters portray in part the broad commonalities and differences between cultures as they relate to families. Each presents something of both the idealised value systems which guide family life in different cultures and the actual day-to-day issues which families face. Research findings and important emerging issues for families are discussed. Overall, the book presents a background picture against which individual families and the experience of people within them can be examined. Above all, it reflects the centrality of families—as a point of reference for

individual behaviour, as an institution in which major contemporary social issues and relationships are played out, and as a site for social change.

Chapter note

On a point of style, we have chosen to refer to people born in a particular country using the adjectival form of the country's name rather than the name of the country itself. Thus we use, for example, 'Italian-born people' rather than 'Italy-born people', 'Chinese-born immigrants' rather than 'China-born immigrants', and 'Greek-born residents' rather than 'Greece-born residents'. While our usage differs from the style adopted in reporting census statistics and perhaps lacks that style's precision, we believe our approach more closely reflects everyday usage.