What are the obstacles to the integration of Iraqi Muslim Shiite refugees in Sydney, Australia?

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DEDICATION

To my wife, Zulfikar, Mohammad Reda, Fatima, and Mohammad Hassan who has supported this long journey.

To my country which inspired me and gave the power to conduct this thesis.
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I would like to express my appreciation to my supervisors, Associate Professor Carol Reid, and Dr. Katina Zammit for being generous with their time, honest in their appraisals, and their patience as I’ve worked to finish this PhD. You are the most generous ladies I have had the pleasure of working with.

I would like to sincerely thank the Iraqi community for their support and encouragement … you have my full attention now!

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STATEMENT OF AUTHENTICATION

The work presented in this thesis is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, original except as acknowledged in the text. I hereby declare that I have not submitted this material, either in full or part, for a degree at this or any other institution.

Makki Ilaj
March 2014
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## ABBREVIATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACL</td>
<td>Adult and Community Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al Hawza Al Ilmmiya</td>
<td>An Islamic Shiite theological institute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AMEP</td>
<td>Adult Migrant English Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AMES</td>
<td>Adult Migrant English Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DIMIA</td>
<td>Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mudhif</td>
<td>A guest house that is decorated with carpets and pillows. It is the place where the clan members and guests meet. It is the main centre of the clan or tribe and it has several social, religious and educational functions and building the relationship between the members of that society on the basis of values derived from religion and authentic social customs and habits.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STARTTS</td>
<td>New South Wales Service for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma Survivors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAFE</td>
<td>Technical and Further Education</td>
</tr>
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<td>WES</td>
<td>World Education Services</td>
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ABSTRACT

This study examines the concept of integration, its importance to the Iraqi refugee community and the obstacles facing their integration in Australia. The importance of the research emerges from the perceived failure of attempts by many Western governments to find a solution to the problem of integration of refugees, particularly those of Islamic background. This research is critical in the current context where refugees are seen as a threat to Australian social cohesion.

The study uses a mixed methodology using questionnaires and in-depth interviews to specifically investigate the cultural, economic, social and religious dynamics shaping the desires of Iraqi refugees in South-Western Sydney, New South Wales, Australia. Wider social factors such as racial discrimination, prejudice, and the influence of policies framing their settlement are also examined to provide a contextualised account of one of the most pressing issues confronting Western social systems today.

The study looks at theories of integration in relation to assimilation and multiculturalism. The purpose is to understand the complexities of processes of integration and the obstacles to achieving different types of integration.

Findings indicate that the mastery of the English language, employment and the ability to establish social networks with Australian people are important factors to integration. In addition, because integration is a two-way process, there is a need to educate the host community about refugees, and policies must be reviewed and amended, in terms of education and employment, to ensure the social inclusion and successful integration of Iraqi refugees.
CHAPTER 1: 
THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

1.1 Introduction

Migration is a global phenomenon, and its consequences give rise to many problems of concern to governments and scientific and civil institutions, in countries most attractive to migration or those fostering migrants by way of so-called integration programs. These programs attempt to block the creation of isolated and marginal entities or hotbeds of crime or even civil wars. At the same time they stand as a barrier to movements of racism within the country whose aim is to abuse migrants.

Little attention has been given to the Iraqi Muslim Shiite refugee experience in Australia and their efforts to escape violence. These experiences of violence are important events in their lives as they are forced to flee their homelands. They look forward to settling in another country because of persecution, imprisonment and wars, especially following the Second Gulf War and the Shiite uprising (Intifadha) in 1991. The Iraqi regime at that time devastated its opponents, particularly the Shiites. Because of violence, assault, imprisonment, displacement and lack of security and political stability, hundreds of thousands of Iraqis have migrated towards the West, particularly Western Europe, America, Canada and Australia.

Fearing a similar fate and believing there was little hope that there would ever be peace in my homeland, and in order to protect my family, I, my wife and four children fled Iraq in 1999. There was no choice but to escape the bad reality – anywhere would be better. I did not have an idea as to where I would like to begin my new life. Thus, we fled to Syria, where we spent one month before crossing the border to Lebanon, where I sought asylum. For five years, we anxiously awaited a decision regarding our status, living on less than 150 dollars per month. Substandard housing and financial concerns related to unemployment or inadequate income were central problems that we continued to encounter on a day-to-day basis in Lebanon.

1 From here on ‘Iraqi refugees’ will refer to ‘Iraqi Muslim Shiite refugees’.
There was always the fear of being returned to my country and worry about forced repatriation by Lebanese government officials. These events, scorched into my memory, happened during those years when in other, more fortunate countries, people my age were pursuing their study or working.

Feeling without hope and even without a future I told myself that improvements were not possible. I was also very worried about what would happen to my family as I did not see any future for me. So, when I thought of the future I asked myself, what will be my life? Anyone can be afraid of the future if he or she is not prepared for it.

While refugees struggle to protect their families and to confront the instability of refugee life, many remain hopeful that change will come. My asylum journey was full of self conflict, because exposure to violence and trauma creates a sense of dichotomy between past and present, homeland and country, and prior and possible self.

After spending five years of miserable life in Lebanon, without hope, a telephone call came from the Australian Embassy for me to attend an interview. I, along with my family, succeeded in the interview and medical process, and were so happy – we had hope for the future. We arrived in Sydney in February 2004 and were welcomed with every help, right from the start, for our new life.

Having lived in circumstances for a long period without the opportunity of education, on arriving in Australia I sought Technical and Further Education (TAFE) to prepare for the English language proficiency test, in order to pursue postgraduate study. In 2005, study began at the University of Wollongong resulting in a Masters Degree in TESOL. A Graduate Certificate in Methods of Research followed at Macquarie University; and the pursuit of a PhD degree in Education at the University of Western Sydney followed that.

On arrival in this country it seemed that repatriation would be easier if we had the means to restart our life. Yet, the realisation came that hardships were not entirely behind me. The pain of being forced from our home weighed heavily on the family.
The hardship of being forced to do what you do not want to do is tremendous. However, beyond the terror and trauma of conflict, refugees face numerous challenges when adapting to lifestyle changes in a new country.

Nonetheless, other Iraqi refugees have endured the same experience: we have all fled violence and many have lost loved ones and have suffered physical harm themselves. Further, psychological issues related to the death of relatives and friends in the war, being uprooted from homeland, and experiencing disconnection with the past also continue to have their impact. In the on-going hope that all the family will, one day, be able to return to Iraq, there is reluctance to establish deep roots in a new community: refugees who have grown up with violence experience great difficulties in creating new homes. Therefore, considering Australia to be a last destination, most Iraqi refugees voiced considerable concern about starting a new life without necessary resources, feeling they were wasting the most productive years of their lives in other countries or in camps.

A select few Iraqis became familiar with the Australian culture and integrated well into society, while others preferred to live in isolation and marginalisation. Some people arrived with large families, while others arrived alone. Some lived in central apartments, while the less fortunate became isolated in remote refugee camps. Rather than generalise about one common experience, this study seeks to move beyond statistics. By examining the unique situations of Iraqi refugees from various walks of life, the aim is to understand the most common and formidable barriers that prevent Iraqi refugees from integrating.

Iraqi refugees’ distinct issues are so complex and dense, that a contextual approach is critical to yield informative depictions of their circumstances. It is therefore essential to understand their lived experiences within broader socio-cultural contexts to truly appreciate the depth of their reality. The current thesis emerges from my experience as an ex-refugee as I shared patterns of experience with other Iraqi refugees currently living in Australia, despite our different and unique narratives of pre- and post-asylum experiences, which are shaped by specific gender, age, social, cultural and political aspects of our lives.
Consequently, this exploratory thesis sheds light on this issue through an examination of relevant literature, data, personal experience and legislation. It also discusses the concepts related to the idea of integration, such as social justice, cultural interaction, granting citizenship, social solidarity, assimilation and multiculturalism.

The problems of migration to neighbouring countries like Iran, Syria, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and other countries in the Middle East are different from the problems of migration to the West, because their social, religious and cultural situations and even environments are similar to those in Iraq. The current research is an effort to investigate the Iraqi community’s settlement experiences and attitudes towards integration in the Australian context.

1.2 The Importance of the Research

This thesis addresses a gap in knowledge about Iraqi refugees and their intentions to integrate into the broader Australian community. As well, relevant Arabic and Australian literature lacks a comprehensive study or research related to the situation of the Iraqi community in Australia. Part of the importance of this research lies in its aim to reduce that deficit, but also in its intrinsic significance as a contemporary study on the subject, for Iraqi and Australian readers in particular, as well as those interested in studying minorities in the world in general.

Furthermore, the Arab world does not know much about Australia, as Australia does not know a lot about the Arab world, in spite of the relatively important Arab community on the ground in Australia and the existence of intensive economic exchanges between the two. Thus, the ‘Arab’ is reduced for many Australians to a number of pictures: pictures like a postcard sent by the tourist to his or her family and friends in the country; a strange picture often representing the camel, the desert, the traditional market (Bazaar) and a veiled woman; in summary a strange unfamiliar world. That is not an ugly picture in itself, but its negative impact is that it reduces the reality of the Arab world, a very diverse one, into a few ‘snapshots’. These ‘snapshots’, repeating the same image, ultimately lead to the belief that the Arab
world means a woman wearing hijab on the back of a camel crossing the desert and heading towards the market. Thus there is a need for the present study.

An important aspect of Iraqi settlement is the process of, and the necessity for, Iraqi refugees to learn English. Despite the importance of English language, professional and scholarly literature on Iraqi refugees’ experiences of learning English is limited.

Another aspect of the importance of the current research is due to the importance of Australia, and the role it plays in the contemporary world, especially after the disintegration of the Soviet Union. Australia’s current position in the global arena is considered as a background to the making of foreign policy, including a number of separate, but inter-related policies in the areas of defence and security, trade, international commitments and foreign aid. Australian policy is influenced by internal pressures faced by various minorities. The stronger the position and power of the minority, the stronger and more effective its impact and influence on Australian decision-making will be.

Further, research about Iraqi refugees in Australia in particular is limited and most tends to focus on immigration, which is not the same as asylum (this will be discussed in detail in Chapter 3).

Moreover, this thesis will address the National Research Priority of promoting and maintaining good health, and the related goal of strengthening Australia’s social and economic fabric.

### 1.3 The Research Problem

This research focuses on the barriers to integration faced by Iraqi refugees. Integration is a challenging issue, as research requires semantically dynamic sociological concepts, such as ‘religion’, ‘culture’ and ‘identity’, whose broad scope makes them difficult to grasp and for which no two scholars agree on definition. Because the issue of integration offers a multifaceted picture that might puzzle the observer, the researcher tried to reduce the effects of this complexity by limiting the research to economic, socio-cultural and educational aspects.
While there is an awareness of torture, trauma and displacement, those who are interested in refugees know little about the settlement experiences, such as participation in education, employment, language acquisition, racism, and cultural and religious adjustments. All of these factors impact on processes of integration of Iraqi refugees into the multicultural community in Australia, as represented in south-western Sydney.

1.4 The Research Questions

This research seeks to investigate the situation of one Arab community in Australia; the Iraqi community in south-western Sydney. It will explore the circumstances and the nature of immigration in order to understand the process of integration, including the desire to do so. This is important since integration is one of the key aspects of settlement programs in Western countries, particularly those that attract immigration.

The purpose is to understand the asylum experience and to describe it in rich detail. The research questions that are raised in the current thesis focus on points in the Iraqi refugees’ life experiences and settlement experiences in Sydney in particular.

The principal question is: What are the barriers to the integration for Iraqi Muslim Shiite refugees in Australian multicultural society? The following sub-questions will assist in answering this question:

1. What is the historical and contemporary situation of Iraqi refugees in Australia?

2. What is the importance of education to Iraqi refugees?

3. How do Iraqi refugees negotiate different values systems?

4. How is English language related to the integration of Iraqi refugees in Australian society?
5. What is the impact of social interaction between the Iraqi community and the Australian multicultural community on integration?

First, it is important to differentiate between the waves of Iraqi refugees entering Australia in terms of length of residence and religion. The first waves of Iraqis were voluntary immigrants and Christians. The second waves of Iraqis were involuntary immigrants (refugees) and predominantly Muslim Shiites. These historical differences shape the process of integration and the context into which these people arrived.

Second, the level of education a refugee has acquired is a really important determinant and indicator of employment potential and capacity to integrate (Mathews, 2008). It is therefore important to understand not only the educational experiences of Iraqi refugees, but also their attitudes to education.

Third, the arrival of the latest wave of Iraqi refugees, since the 1990s, has occurred at a time of terrorism, which has created anti-Islamic sentiment and negative views of Arabic culture. This means that Iraqi refugees have had to negotiate not only different value systems, but also hostility and racism from the host society, which may be barriers to integration.

Fourth, communication is central to daily integration in schools and workplaces. Hence, English language is a central tool to the integration of Iraqi refugees.

Finally, it is important to understand the influence of interaction between the Iraqi refugee community and Australian culture and society on processes of integration. Interaction can provide opportunities to break down barriers.

1.5 The Structure of the Thesis

The research consists of two parts, the socio-historical overview and theoretical and methodological frameworks consisting of two chapters, while the field study takes up five chapters, followed by a conclusion.
The study extends from the beginning of 2010 to the beginning of 2013; the spatial limits of the field study are the Sydney western suburbs, such as Auburn, Fairfield, Bankstown, Liverpool and Granville.

Chapter 2 maps out a socio-historical overview of Iraq and Iraqis and explores Iraq from two perspectives. The first examines the socio-cultural dynamics of Iraqi people. The second is a demographic study including geography, population, climate, ethnic groups, religions and languages. It details the history of Muslim immigration to Australia and settlement background, and the history of Iraqi immigration, especially the Shiites, to Australia and their experience. It also focuses on the challenges and problems facing Iraqi families on settlement and the reasons behind the marginalisation of Iraqi Shiites.

Central to Chapter 3 are theories of integration and the difference between refugees, asylum seekers and immigrants, and voluntary and involuntary immigration. It also explores the difference between assimilation, multiculturalism, integration and multicultural integration policies. Further, it examines the meaning of integration and distinguishes among its different types and the relationship between integration and employment, religion, politics and language. Some initiating practices are also detailed, which pave the way toward integration, like coexistence, adaptation, appreciation, commitment, cooperation and participation.

Chapter 4 maps out the methodological procedures of the field study, including identification of approaches upon which the study relied. It highlights the sample and the method of selecting that sample as well as the means of data collection. The elements and language of the questionnaire and interview design are explained, as well as how the data were collected and analysed in accordance with ethics approval. Furthermore, the theoretical and methodological frameworks are detailed, which address integration in classical theories, the social identity theory and the theory of subjective-classification. Moreover, the limits and boundaries of the research, which determine the community under study and the structure of the research, are explained.
Chapter 5 presents the results of the first phase of the study, that is, the questionnaire. It provides an analysis of the questionnaire; and examines English language learning and education, using different lenses, including the Iraqi and Australian educational institutes, methods of teaching, the teaching and learning environment and curriculum. It also explores the influence of religion, the host society, unemployment and financial problems on integration.

Chapter 6 focuses on the results of the second phase of the study, that is the in-depth interviews, highlighting the obstacles and barriers to integration of the Iraqi community into the Australian community. It analyses the participants’ opinions related to misunderstanding and misinterpretation of religious teachings, cultural and religious differentiation and racial discrimination. Furthermore, some factors and denotative indicators to integration are presented, including language as a means of communication (isolation or interaction), employment, sense of belonging to a country of asylum, knowledge of the laws and customs of the host country and social relations.

Chapter 7 presents a detailed discussion of the findings that emerged in relation to the initial research questions. It draws a parallel and comparison with related findings from data and literature of integration in order to bring out key emerging themes. Various threads of the thesis are woven into a united and organised narrative and the thesis put into a framework. A series of recommendations for further research are also provided, resulting from implications of the study.

Chapter 8 concludes with an overview of what has been learnt through this study. It provides a summary of the key findings of the study and discusses the outcomes.
The purpose of this chapter is to introduce the complexity of Iraqi people. It provides a socio-historical overview of Iraq and its people in terms of its ethnic diversity, religions, languages, geography and culture. It also examines the Shiites’ historical, religious and cultural background, their suffering and the motives behind their asylum journey and the influence of the Australian demography and settlement policies on their situation there. As there is a lot in common between the Iraqi society and other Muslim societies, an overview of Muslim immigration to Australia will be presented. It is necessary to provide this overview because while we know a little about Muslim immigration, we know nothing about the specific experience of Shiites.

2.1 Iraq: Historical Background

Iraq is known as the ‘Cradle of Civilisation’ because it is the place where permanent settlement was first established by humans. These settlements developed into small clusters of houses, or villages with complex social, religious, economic, and political organisation and advanced cultural achievements. Civilisation flourished there, beginning about 4000BC, long before the civilisations of Egypt, Greece, and Rome. The ancient civilisations that occupied Iraq have left their fingerprints on the land. Yet, Iraq’s importance is not just in its ancient history: the country has played and still plays a key role in recent world events. Iraq has a rich, colourful, long and glorious history (Shlash, et al., 2008).

The word Iraq is a geographic term used in early Arabic writings to refer to the southern portion of the contemporary perimeters of Iraq. Originally the area now called Iraq was known as Mesopotamia – a Greek word meaning ‘between the rivers’, that is, the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers (Thompson and Thompson, 2004). It is also known as the ‘Fertile Crescent’ because it is a crescent-shaped band of land
that lies at the intersection of these two mighty rivers. It was one of the first culturally developed areas of the world (Shlash, et al., 2008).

The first civilisation that took root and inhabited the region was the Sumerian civilisation. This civilisation endured between 3500 and 2400 B.C., a time through which a process of urbanisation evolved. The Sumerian was one of the most famous civilisations of early Mesopotamia, and is considered to be the first civilisation in the world. The ancient Sumerians are recognised for the great inventions which contributed to lightening the darkness mankind lived in (Thompson and Thompson, 2004; Balcavage, 2003; Fichter, 1981).

Figure 2.1: A muddy tablet containing Cuneiform writing

The Sumerians developed sophisticated irrigation systems and created the first grain agriculture. They also developed the earliest writing, Cuneiform writing (Figure 2.1). Cuneiform writing was adopted by many civilisations that followed, until about the time of the birth of Christ. It ‘… takes its name from the Latin word cuneus, meaning ‘wedge,’ as its letters have wedged shapes’ (Balcavage, 2003, p.70). It was written by pressing on wet clay with the wedge-like section of a chopped-off reed. Cuneiform writing had more than 350 signs, or symbols (Fichter, 1981); and schools were established where Sumerian citizens spent several years learning how to write accurately. Thus, the importance of education has a long history in Iraq.
The people of ancient Sumer invented mathematics in order to keep accounts of their trading; as well as the plough and the wheel, which served them both in peace and in war times; along with calendars, where they divided the year into 12 units, or months, based on the cycles of the moon; and astronomy. Poetry and epic literature were also produced: the most famous Sumerian epic, the one that has survived in the most nearly complete form, is the epic of Gilgamesh.

The Akkadians, the Semites who migrated up from the Arabian Peninsula, conquered the Sumerians in 2400 B.C. and established the Akkadian empire which ruled for about two hundred years. They, in turn, were taken over by the Gutians, who ruled for about another century (Thompson and Thompson, 2004).

The Assyrians, who were known to be warriors, overcame the Gutians and established the largest empire the ancient world had ever seen (Balcavage, 2003). The Semite Assyrians settled in the north, while the other Semites, who settled in the south, were called Babylonians.

Figure 2.2: The Code of Hammurabi: Hammurabi receives a copy of the rules
The Assyrians were destroyed by another growing Mesopotamian power, the Babylonians (Balcavage, 2003). In 1792 B.C., King Hammurabi established a new empire called Babylonia. He is well known for inventing a set of 282 rules called the Code of Hammurabi (Figure 2.2), which is one of the earliest written legal systems and covered all aspects of life, from marriage to property, business, and slavery (Balcavage, 2003; Thompson and Thompson, 2004; Hooker, 1996). ‘The laws were harsh, based on an ‘eye for an eye’ philosophy … This was the kind of justice that Hammurabi put on record and then administered. Under his rule, the Babylonian Empire flourished and it was one of the best organised and controlled societies in the ancient world’ (Fichter, 1981, p.13). He also built new canals and made changes in the calendar. These political, social, economic and cultural changes produced a dynamic society.

In 634 A.D. Muslim armies conquered the Persians, who occupied Iraq at that time, and settled Iraq under the Islamic reign. The Islamic era in Iraq began with two garrisoned cities to protect the newly conquered territory: Kufa, as the capital of Iraq, and Basra, which was also to be a port, were founded. Iraqis, who were Christians, intermarried with Arabs and converted to Islam. The Muslims at that time invented the divan (Arabic form diwan), an institution founded to control income and expenditure through record keeping and the centralisation of administration.

In 750 A.D. the Abbasid dynasty was established in Iraq and in 762 A.D. the Islamic administrative centre was moved to Madinat as-Salam, ‘the City of Peace’, Baghdad (Thompson and Thompson, 2004). From the eighth to the thirteenth centuries A.D., Baghdad, which lies on the western bank of the Tigris River, became the place of the Muslim Caliphs (a caliphate is the highest office within the structure of Islamic religion), and the centre of the Islamic civilisation. Baghdad was the largest and most splendid city of the Islamic world, the centre of culture, literature, arts, sciences and learning (Thompson and Thompson, 2004). Thus it was an important cultural and learning centre in the Middle Ages, indeed, the intellectual centre of the world. Furthermore, it was a commercial hub: ‘In those days Baghdad was the most important link in the overland trade route between Europe and the Far East’ (Fichter, 1981, pp.41-43).
Baghdad remained throughout the ages the lighthouse of culture, civilisation and ingenuity, the destination of seekers of education from all places, attracting men of thought and literature from all around the world (UNESCO, 2000). Great original discoveries in mathematics, particularly in integral calculus and spherical astronomy were made, and algebraic equations were discovered. The study of medicine also progressed rapidly, and a number of hospitals were established in Baghdad, including a teaching hospital. Baghdad grew to be part of the predominately Muslim Empire, which stretched from western China to northern Africa.

In the 13th century, during the reign of the Abbasid Caliph, Al Mustansir Billah, the oldest university in the world, ‘Al Mustansiriya University’, was built, where thousands of scientists, poets, scholars, writers, philosophers, doctors, and so on, graduated (Al-Rubai, 1994). In 1067, Al Nizamiya School, Baghdad’s first school of religious law, was founded.

In 1258 the Mongol capture of Baghdad resulted in a long period of decline. Baghdad was crushed during the invasion, and nearly one million people perished. The Mongols deliberately destroyed what remained of Iraq’s infrastructure and the material and artistic production of centuries was swept away. Political chaos, severe economic depression, and social disintegration occurred, and Baghdad, long a centre of trade, rapidly lost its commercial importance.

After a period of internal chaos, the Sunni Ottoman Turks conquered Iraq in 1638, and it became part of the Ottoman Empire. The Ottomans, fearing that Shiite Islam would spread to Anatolia, sought to keep Iraq as a Sunni-controlled country. Although rule under the Turks was tyrannical, Iraq profited from the Ottoman rule, as economic conditions and overall quality of life improved for most inhabitants (Charles, 2006). The Ottoman ruler Midhat Pasha immediately set out to modernise Iraq on the Western model. He secularised the school system and improved provincial administration. He also established a transportation system, new schools and hospitals, textile mills, banks, and paved streets. Furthermore, at that time, the first bridge across the Tigris River was constructed. Ottoman rule resulted in Muslim
Sunni dominance in the north, although the Shiites in the south were generally free to practice Islam as they chose (Wardi, 1996).

The Ottoman Empire collapsed in 1917 when British forces invaded Iraq and occupied Baghdad; in 1920 it was placed under British rule. Iraq was one of the first Arab countries to gain independence in the twentieth century, but its full independence was not achieved until 1932, when the British Mandate was officially terminated; it was declared a republic in 1958. Despite the political instability that characterised the new government until World War II, significant improvements were made to Iraq’s infrastructure. Prosperity continued under King Faisal II (1939-1958), as new irrigation, communication, and oil production facilities were put in place. Iraq helped establish the League of Arab States in 1948.

From this brief overview, it is possible to conclude that Iraq was the birthplace of a variety of civilisations that have great importance in human history. Further, different civilisations and powers that governed or occupied Iraq had great effects on Iraqi society in terms of social, religious, educational and cultural practices. The demography of Iraq and Iraqis was also influenced: from early in its history Iraq enjoyed a rich cultural diversity.

2.2 Socio-cultural Dynamics of Iraqi People

2.2.1 Ethnic groups

In order to understand Iraq’s current, complex political situation, it is necessary to understand the various ethnic and religious groups that share the country. Iraq has long reflected cultural diversity; ethnicity plays a crucial role in social life. It is a mixture of many ethnic groups which differ from one other religiously, ethnically, linguistically, and culturally. Despite these differences, the Iraqis are united and live in harmony and peaceful social existence in close geographic locations (Fichter, 1981, p.24), to the extent that each group borrows cultural elements from other groups. In a sense, Iraqis are ready to coexist socially and integrate with those who are different from them in terms of religion and language.
Most Iraqis are Arabs, making up about 77 per cent (Thompson and Thompson, 2004) to 80 per cent (Ponsford, 2006) of the whole population. Most of these Arabs are Muslim Shiites, who live in the southern or central part of the country, in Al Najaf, Karbala, Wasit, Babil, Misan, Thi- Qar, Al Muthanna, Al Qadisiyah, Al Basrah, and the majority in Baghdad and Diyala (Thompson and Thompson, 2004; see Figure 2.3), while those who live in the west and north of Iraq are Sunni Muslims. The majority of Christians live in the north of Iraq and in Baghdad, whereas Sabaean Mandaeans live in the south. Several other minorities make their home in Iraq. The Kurds (19%) represent Iraq’s largest minority, living in the rugged mountain region in the north-eastern part of the country near Syria, Turkey and Iran (Cole, 2009). They can also be found in south-eastern Turkey, north-eastern Syria, Azerbaijan and Iran. Their language is Kurdish and they are mostly Sunni Muslims (Balcavage, 2003).
The Christian Assyrians, who follow the Christian Nestorian Church and belong to the Roman Catholic Church, make up about 1 per cent of Iraq’s total population (Al-Rasheed, 1998; Kalman, 2005; McGeough, 2004). They are descendants of those civilisations that inhabited Iraq for nearly 2000 years (Thompson and Thompson, 2004) and speak the Aramaic language, the ancient language of the Middle East. Their population is estimated at between 600,000 and 1,000,000 (ibid); 206,206 (3.2 percent of the population) according to the 1957 census (Wardi, 2008). Although half of these Christians live in the north, especially in Nineveh, some are Arabs, and some live in concentrations in Baghdad and Basra (ibid).

The Turkomans, who are nomadic Turkic people, live in the city of Nineveh in north-western Iraq and constitute about 1.4 per cent of the whole population (Thompson and Thompson, 2004). It is believed that they are distant relatives of the Mongols who invaded Iraq seven centuries ago. They speak a language that is similar to Turkish.

Other minorities that compose about 0.9 per cent of the entire population include the Mandaeans, also known as Sabaeans and Subbis. These are a tiny pre-Christian religious minority, followers of the teachings of the prophet Yahiya and John the Baptist, and usually live near the rivers of southern Iraq, especially in Nasiriyah city (Al-Ali, 2007; Wardi, 2008). They are sometimes called ‘the Christians of St. John’ or the ‘followers of St. John’ (Wardi, 2008), and some historians believe that they baptised Christ; their religion states that they must live near a body of running water. Other ethnic groups living in the country include Armenians, who follow either the Armenian Apostolic Church or the Roman Catholic Church (Rutter, 1994; Kalman, 2005) and live in the north of Iraq; and the Jews (Thompson and Thompson, 2004).

Furthermore, the Yazidis are a religious group located in villages and cities in the north-western region of Iraq, and in Nineveh city. They are of Kurdish ethno-religion with Indian-Iranian roots and combine Christian, Pagan, Zoroastrian (worship of sun and fire) and Muslim beliefs (Kalman, 2005; Balcavage, 2003), believing that ‘seven angels, led by Malak Taus, the peacock angel, control life on Earth’ (Kalman, 2005, p.9). Yazidi, meaning ‘God,’ is derived from Farsi, the
language spoken in Iran; they study both the Bible and the Quran (Balcavage, 2003). Some of the ethnic minorities that migrated to the region, Iraq, include Persians, Aramaic peasants, Greeks and other smaller groups which together make up less than 2 per cent of Iraq’s population (Thompson and Thompson, 2004; Kalman, 2005).

Moreover, Iraqi cultural diversity extends to include other minorities: the Ma’adan, or marsh Arabs and the Bedouin tribal groups (Balcavage, 2003; Ponsford, 2006; Fichter, 1981); as well as two ‘very small minorities’: Shabak and Chechnyas (Wardi, 2008, p.ix). The Ma’adan live in a region of reedy marshes in the south between Basra and Misan (Figure 2.4); some historians being certain that these people are the most closely related to the ancient Sumerians (Wardi, 2008). The Ma’adan life is much like that of their ancestors; they earn their living through buffalo rearing.

Both the Ma’adan and the Bedouin are known for being good hosts. The Bedouin are desert Arab nomads, who roam from one place to another, following their herds of sheep and goats, and live in tents made of goat or camel hair, where women occupy a separate room called the ‘harem’. A fierce, warlike, and independent people, they
now represent 2 per cent of the total population, but a century earlier they made up 35 per cent (Wardi, 2008).

Iraqi refugees in Australia come from three of these ethnic groups: Arabs, Kurds and Assyrian Christians (Rutter, 1994). A large number of them, especially the Shiites and Kurds, escaped hardships caused by the outbreak of the Gulf War and Shiite uprising in 1991, by moving to neighbouring countries. Some refugees lived in processing camps for up to five years before being accepted into Australia under the Special Humanitarian Program. The majority of Iraqi Christians, on the other hand, voluntarily migrated to Australia in the 1950s (see Chapter 3).

The cultural and religious aspects of Iraq’s diversity will be examined below, for their contribution to strengthening Iraqi community fabric and providing suitable bases of understanding in order to confront all forms of conflict.

2.2.2 Religions

Another important factor in understanding Iraq and its people is the religious factor: the Iraqi people are closely tied to religious practices that have roots going back thousands of years. The ethnic diversity of Iraq described above involves many different faiths being recognised within its borders. The many ethnic groups include Kurds, Assyrians, Turkomans, Chaldeans, Armenians, Mandaeaeism, Yazidians, and Jews, and for many of these religions are closely tied to customs and daily life. Some ethnic groups are named according to their religious beliefs.

Despite Iraq’s national identity being Arab, and its people primarily practicing Islam, a wide variety of other religions, such as Zoroastrianism, Christianity, Judaism, Yazidism, and Mandaeaeism are practiced. These various faiths continue to be linked to Iraq’s culturally rich people and history.

Islam dominates cultural and political life in most Arab nations, and Iraq is no exception. It is the official religion of Iraq and the overwhelming majority of Iraqis – both Arabs and Kurds – follow Islam. Islam, which came to Iraq in about 634 A.D, has been divided into two major sects: the Sunni and Shiite.
It has been noted that 97 per cent of the Iraq population is Muslim (Thompson and Thompson, 2004). The majority of these are Muslim Shiites, who represent between 60 to 65 per cent of the country’s Muslims; the other 32 to 37 per cent are Sunni Muslims. Despite the higher percentage of Muslim Shiites, the rulers of the country are Sunni Muslims. Christians are the second largest religion after Islam: of the 700,000 Christians in Iraq, Roman Catholics make up the majority but others include Assyrian Orthodox, Assyrian Catholic, Greek Orthodox, and Protestant (Balcavage, 2003, p.52). Besides the Christian religion, there are the Sabaean Mandaeans, who numbered 11,825 in 1957, as well as Yazidis. In addition, there are the Jews, who numbered some 150,000 persons before 1951, when the majority of them left Iraq, so that only 4,906 remained in 1975, according to the census of that year (Wardi, 2008).

The present study aims to explore cultural and religious sensitivity and awareness among different segments of the Iraqi community and provide a balanced and historical perspective of Iraqi culture. It also aims to dispel stereotypes, promote commonalities in different peoples and addresses cultural and religious dimensions in Australia. Accordingly, the above history has not focused on tension or confrontation among these different religious or cultural fragments, but instead inferred an atmosphere of cordiality, harmony, unity, peace and amity, despite the differing religious affiliations occurring even in regional concentrations. Indeed, these various fragments are integrated and very adamant about their Iraqi citizenship and the fact that they share civil rights and duties with their fellow countrymen, practice their civic duties and have opinions about the issues in their country.

### 2.2.3 Languages

For more than five thousand years of its history, Iraq has been home to a mixture of languages, spoken and written, and the same is true today. Although the total number of languages spoken in Iraq is not high, the linguistic variety is great: Iraq’s languages derive from different linguistic families including Semitic, Indo-European, and Assyrian.

The Arabic language, read and written from right to left, is derived from the ancient Semitic languages used in the Quran, which itself represents the actual words of God.
(Thompson and Thompson, 2004). There are 28 letters in the standard Arabic used in writing today, three of them vowels, making it extraordinarily complex. Contemporary Arabic is slightly different from the classical literary Arabic. It is the native language of approximately 80 per cent of Iraqis and is the official language of Iraq (Fichter, 1981). In public forums, schools, media, and in parliament Modern Standard Arabic is used. It is also spoken throughout the Middle East and in North Africa. The Kurds speak the Kurdish language, which is most closely akin to Persian. Other minorities speak Assyrian, Turkoman, Armenian and other languages (Fichter, 1981). For most people who work in government, business, or the professions, English is a second language.

Iraq’s long history as a centre of civilisation and its years of toleration of multi-ethnicity, have proven ideal to allow a variety of peoples to maintain their lifestyle, culture, religion and identity. Iraq’s tradition of tolerance has allowed the survival of minority identities even within cities where one group has formed a clear and dominant majority. Since Iraqis are acquainted with so many different languages in their homeland, where different languages are accepted, this may reflect on their attitude towards learning and speaking other languages. That diversity in language may contribute to the readiness of Iraqis to learn other languages.

2.2.4 Marginalization of Iraqi Shiites

In order to investigate the reasons behind Iraqi Shiites seeking asylum in the West in general, and in Australia in particular, it is necessary to explore the religious and social history of Iraqi Shiites and their relations with and suffering from successive Iraqi governments.

The Shiites’ history in Iraq dates back over 1300 years to when Imam Ali moved there, making the city of Kufa, near Al Najaf, his capital. This place had long been a centre of seminary education and clerical jurisprudence, and lay Shiites generally followed its leading scholar, the Object of Emulation, in matters of religious law (AL-Ali, 2007). The Object of Emulation holds the position considered to be the highest in the spiritual hierarchy; it is the most elevated status in the Shiite Islam.
world. The phrase literally means ‘Source to Imitate’ and the position holds the authority to make legal decisions within the limits of Islamic law.

In brief, although the Shiite and Sunnis belong to the same religion, there are some differences between them. Shiites believe that the Prophet Mohammad’s successors are his cousin and son-in-law, Ali Bin Abi Talib, and the eleven lineal descendants of Ali and the Prophet’s daughter, Fatima (Ponsford, 2006). They believe that the twelfth of these descendants, or ‘Imams,’ has disappeared due to a miraculous incident, but will one day return. However, in the absence of the hidden Twelfth Imam, the mainstream of the Shiite tradition gradually turned to trained clergymen as their leaders (Cole, 2009). The Sunnis, on the other hand, believe that the four Caliphs, Abu Bakr, Omar, Usman and Ali, are the legal successors to Mohammad. Furthermore, while Shiites believe that the current leader must name the next leader and these must be relatives of the prophet Mohammad, Sunnis believe that the religious leader may be anyone who is qualified (Balcavage, 2003, p.27).

Although the scholastic ideal for Shiites was that the laity would follow the rulings of a single most learned and upright Object of Emulation, in fact, there were always several contenders for the position (Cole, 2009). Shiites are generally more conservative and more concerned with adherence, obedience and respect for their religious leaders and the Object of Emulation, than Sunnis. The Shiite obedience to their religious leaders contributes to weaken their relations with the central government and has led to their persecution and oppression by various Iraqi governments. Shiites are mostly farmers and have been less accessible to modern influences in comparison to the Sunnis, who are consequently more active in government and in self-advancement (Wardi, 2008).

The most important religious cities in Iraq for the Shiite are Al Najaf and Karbala, where most of them are concentrated (Wardi, 2008; Thompson and Thompson, 2004; Al-Ali, 2007). Both cities are located in central Iraq. Al Najaf contains the holy shrine of Imam Ali, the fourth Islamic Caliph, while Karbala contains the holy shrine of his son Hussein, where he was killed. Muslim Shiites consider these two cities to be as important as Mecca and Medina.
The persecution of the Shiite throughout history by successive governments has often been characterised by brutal and genocidal acts. Under the Ottoman Turk occupation of Iraq (1534-1918), the majority Shiites were ill treated. That segment in their history is viewed with bitterness because they were treated as second class citizens and deprived of their right to practice their rites freely. The uneasy situation continued until British forces, who were received as liberators from the oppressive Ottoman rule, occupied Iraq in 1918. However, the same ill treatment and oppression continued, providing the perfect recipe for civil unrest, and by the time a revolution, led by brigadier general Abdul Karim Kassem, toppled the monarchy in 1958, the way had been paved for at least nine more Shiite revolts and several pogroms.

Through successive governments ruling Iraq since then the formula has stayed the same: the minority Sunnis rule the majority Shiites in a state of absolute tyranny. That consistent trend paved the way for the rise of Saddam Hussein. The utmost suffering of the Shiites occurred during the time Saddam Hussein ruled Iraq, beginning in 1968. He shielded himself behind gun towers, his vast intelligence network and torture apparatus. Further, all his opponents were oppressed and persecuted, in an effort to extinguish any threat to his rule. The Shiites were often the target; Shiite and Shiite religious leaders were repressed relentlessly (Ponsford, 2006). This was the only means used to preserve a grip on power. However, this situation created an atmosphere of mutual hatred where no channels of communication remain between the state and the people.

Shiites began to consider previous times of oppression in comparison to their present state, where they had become ‘afraid not to be afraid’ of Saddam’s sheer love of bloodshed. In this light, the Ottomans, Mongols and other oppressive rulers were being seen as angels of mercy in comparison with Saddam’s reign of terror. There was almost no hope in sight to end their thousand years of suffering. In consequence thousands fled, but about 20 per cent of Shiites died (Ponsford, 2006, pp.8-9). The majority of those who survived the hell of Iraq resorted to the promised heaven of the West, doing their best to heal their wounds and start a new life.
The continued repression, persecution, and displacement on the grounds of religion and political opinion led to the escape of Shiites at a slow but steady pace. Yet, the drainage of the marshes in their area of habitation in the south was an additional reason to escape their homeland. Furthermore, the deterioration of the domestic economic situation due to the embargo imposed by the UN Security Council in 1991 also prompted escape from their country. So, the migration of the Shiites, who were collectively denied access to public resources, was often motivated by a mixture of economic and political factors (Al-Rasheed, 1998). Comprising only about 10–15% of the entire Muslim population, the Shiites remain a marginalised community to this day in many Sunni Arab dominated countries, without rights to practice their religion and organise (Nasr, 2006).

2.3 History of Muslim and Iraqi Immigration to Australia

It can be argued that Muslims are not a homogenous people and that they are divided into several sects. The majority of Muslims in Australia are Sunnis, followed by Shiites (Saeed, 2003). However, there is considerable debate about who, where and when the first Muslims came to Australia: indeed, the first Muslims to arrive in Australia were Indonesian Macassar fishermen (Macassan sailors), who arrived in 1650 (Chelebi, 2008; Saeed, 2003; Kabir, 2004; Ahmad, 1994).

The second wave were the Afghan camel drivers known as ‘Cameleers’ or ‘Ghans’ who were brought to Australia during the period 1867 to 1910 to help in exploring Australian deserts and establish trade and communication routes (Saeed and Akbarzadah, 2001). They were followed by Indian farm labourers in the nineteenth century (Bouma, 1994).

In the first half of the twentieth century the numbers of Muslims started to grow slowly. This rise in numbers occurred through natural population growth and through immigration. In the 1920s and 1930s, Muslim Albanians arrived in Australia, followed by Turkish Cypriots in the 1950s and 1960s and more Turkish people between 1968 and 1972 (Humphrey, 1998). These waves were the first Muslim immigrants to start arriving in considerable numbers. The largest Muslim community
in Australia, the Lebanese, arrived in Australia at the beginning of the 1970s, after
the outbreak of civil war in 1975 in Lebanon (Jupp, 2001; Humphrey, 1998). From
the 1950s to the 1970s, a great number of skilled immigrants, including, ‘teachers
and engineers from Egypt, doctors from the Indo-Pakistan subcontinent, and tertiary
students from Malaysia, Indonesia, Bangladesh, India and Pakistan’ (Ahmad, 1994,
p.318) arrived in Australia.

The first Muslim community was established by the ‘Ghans’ (Saeed and
Akbarzadah, 2001) who built the first mosque in 1889 in Broken Hill; others
followed in Adelaide in 1890, in Perth in 1904, and in Brisbane in 1907 (Ahmad,
1994). These mosques represented the first brick of the Islamic structure in Australia.

By the end of the twentieth century the numbers of Muslims in Australia had hugely
increased. The number rose from 148,096 in 1991 (ABS Census, 1991) to 200,902
by 1996 (ABS Census, 1996). Numbers increased further in the present century,
rising from 281,578 in 2001 (ABS Census, 2003) to 340,389 in 2006, where 128 904
were born in Australia and the others born overseas, including 10,039 Iraqi Muslims
(ABS Census, 2007). Finally, according to the latest census, Muslim numbers were
476,300, where the total number of Australian Muslims born in the Middle East or
North Africa was 213,940 (ABS Census, 2011).

Most Australian Muslims live in New South Wales and Victoria, where the majority
live in the capital cities (Omar and Allen, 1997, p.23; Humphrey, 1998). They live in
these urban areas because most of their relatives and friends have already settled
there (Cleland, 2002; this will be discussed in Chapter 3).

While Jupp (2001) states that the first wave of Arabic immigrants to Australia
involved Lebanese Christians, in 1966, Humphrey (1998) states that the first
Lebanese Christian immigrants to Australia came in 1880. The difference in the
history of Lebanese arrival in Australia is due to confusion between the Lebanese,
the Turkish and the Syrians. Prior to 1918 Lebanese immigrants to Australia were
not distinguished from Turks, since Lebanon was a province of the Turkish Ottoman
Empire. Subsequently administration passed to France, which ruled Lebanon along
with Syria, its neighbour. In these circumstances the Lebanese were not distinguished from Syrians (Monsour, 2005). As stated above, Lebanese Muslim immigration began in 1975 due to civil war.

The first trend of Iraqi immigrants to Australia started in the 1950s, most, if not all of whom were Christian Assyrians (Al-Rasheed, 1998; The Assyrian Resource Centre, 2008). The first wave of Iraqi Muslim Shiites to reach Australia occurred after 1990-1991 as a result of the first Gulf War and the 1991 Shiite Uprising, as well as subsequent conflicts all of which generated hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of refugees (Al-Ali, 2007). These migrants were forced to escape their homeland because of war, chaos, and threat of persecution (Costa, 2007) and the vengeance of Saddam Hussein which followed the failure of the Shiite uprising.

Kabir (2004) points out that there were only 4,500 Iraqis living in Australia during the 1990-1991 Gulf crises and this number peaked between the years 1992 and 1996 reaching 4,518 in 1994 and 14,027 in 1996 (Joint Studying Committee of Foreign Affairs, Defense and Trade, 2001). Saeed (2003) states that, according to the 2001 census of Population and Housing, Iraqi Muslims made up 7,749 out of 24,832 total Iraqi Australians. The 2006 Census put the total number of Iraqis at 32,500 (ABS Census, 2006) and the number reached 50,450 in 2011 (ABS Census, 2011).

To conclude, it is important to remember that there are various Iraqi ethnic and religious groups migrating to Australia, including Arabs, Kurds, Assyrians, Armenians, and Turkmen. The major proportion of later arrivals has entered Australia under the Humanitarian programme due to the Gulf War and the uprisings of the Shiites and the Kurds in Iraq, which resulted in a large increase in the number of Iraqis coming to Australia after 1991.

### 2.4 Iraqi Family and the Immigration Journey

Understanding the cultural and social background of Iraqis and the nature of the Iraqi family may contribute to understanding their intention to integrate into the host community. The Iraqi social system has been influenced, to a large extent, by Arabic and Islamic traditions and norms, due to the dominance of the Arabic culture which
came to Iraq after Muslim conquests in the seventh and eighth centuries. That culture affected the Iraqi social system in terms of harmony and cooperation, through sharing work and gathering in transactions, worship, spiritual values and brotherly and family relations (Wardi, 2008; Ponsford, 2006; Thompson and Thompson, 2004; Fichter, 1981).

The family in Iraq is considered the basis of the society and the upbringing of children is the most important function of the family. The family is the window through which the child looks at the society. It provides the environment in which human values and morals develop and grow in the new generation; these values and morals cannot exist apart from the family unit.

A traditional Iraqi family is usually made up of an older couple, their sons and daughters, daughters-in-law, and their grandchildren. Daughters remain in the home until they marry, then they move into their husbands’ home. The oldest male in that family is the head of the whole family, dominates the whole family and has the first word on all decisions, even determining what jobs his sons should have (Wardi, 1996). Iraqis show their greatest loyalty to their immediate and even their extended family, which may contain three generations of a family often living in the same house and sharing their lives. Sometimes other relatives might also be a part of the household.

The Iraqi family is seen to be very cohesive (Wardi, 2008). Its members stand together, well united, against any danger or difficulty. That is one important nomadic trait: the family thinks and acts like a small tribe toward others. Any harm that comes to a member is considered as directed toward the entire family (ibid). Although Iraqis show their greatest loyalty to their immediate family, they also show the same loyalty to extended family, kinship groups, which are the basic units in Iraqi society, or the tribe.

Since marriage is considered a vital pillar of Iraqi life, it is rare to find single men or women (Wardi, 1996). Most Iraqis do not choose their spouses, as their parents usually arrange their children’s weddings (Birrell and Healy, 2000). In the past,
women usually got married in the early teens –15 or 16 years of age – but today, more women choose to go to universities and pursue careers before they get married (Al-Ali, 2007; Balcavage, 2003). Although some Muslim men may have four wives, most men these days have only one wife, partly because of the expense of having many wives and partly because it is now considered old-fashioned to have multiple wives (Balcavage, 2003, p.24), moreover the practice is illegal in Western countries where some Iraqis live.

![Iraqi Women in their black gowns (Abaya)](image)

Similarly, in some areas women never appear in public without a veil and black gown (Figure 2.5) (Al-Ali, 2007), but this tradition, is becoming much less common nowadays, where more often they wear a coloured scarf that is tied under the chin. Nonetheless, as the Iraqi society is Islamic and conservative, it is unusual to see single men and women socialising in public.

The Iraqi family facing its journey of asylum is bound to meet with many changes and troubles due to leaving a familiar culture and living in a new and different one. Differences between cultures can make it very difficult to adjust to new surroundings. The family may encounter unfamiliar clothes, weather, and food as
well as different people, schools, and values (Fadhlullah, 2000). Dealing with the differences can be unsettling and cause many problems inside the family, and in turn raise obstacles in the path of integration. Because the family system and the relationship between its members determine the whole character of Iraqi society, it could be considered the basis of marginalisation and isolation from a host community and adjustment to a new culture. Further, the demography and the nature of the host country, which is the topic of the following section, may determine refugees’ decisions regarding integration.

2.5 Australian Demography and Settlement Policies

Australia is one of the most attractive countries in the world to refugees (Prosser, 2004). Its population is composed of social groups which are rooted in their origins to many places and parts of the world, and they carry their beliefs, values, morals and a bit of their heritage with them. As regards the Arab world, there are some countries such as Iraq, Lebanon and Sudan, which yield large numbers of migrants, while only a small number of citizens have migrated from others, such as the Arab Gulf States (Jupp, 2001).

Australia’s area is 7,617,930 square kilometres and it is the largest island in the world (Prosser, 2004). Its climate is influenced to a large extent by ocean currents, which are related to periodic drought, and the low pressure tropical season that causes hurricanes in northern Australia and summer seasonal rains (Womersley, 1998).

English is considered the national language and it is used in most homes, with a rate of use in close to 79% of the population (ABS Census, 2006). The most common language spoken after English is Arabic, followed by Vietnamese, Greek, Chinese and Hindi (ABS Census, 2011).

The increasing diversity of Australia’s population is revealed in the high diversity of religions. The largest religion after Christianity in Australia is Buddhism (2.1%), followed by Islam (1.7%), Hinduism (0.8%), and Judaism (0.5%). The population of
Australia was estimated to be 19,855,287 in 2006 (DIAC, 2008) and increased to 21,507,730 in 2011 (ABS Census, 2011).

Australia has opened the door to immigration, mainly due to lack of manpower, large areas of country, and the presence of vast natural resources, including fertile land, huge water resources, mineral, timber, a wealth of fish and other resources (Prosser, 2004). About 6.5 million different ethnic immigrants, including over 700 000 refugees and people in humanitarian need, have settled in Australia (DIAC, 2008). Nowadays, 24 per cent of Australians were born overseas, and 44 per cent were either born overseas or have at least one parent born overseas (DIAC, 2011). Australia relates to more than 200 ancestries, speak over 300 languages, and practise more than 100 religions (DIAC, 2008, p.94).

2.6 Conclusion

It is apparent that there is a growing interest in Muslims in Australia. Little has been written about Muslims in Australia and there is a concern about Muslims in the country as a result of the events of eleventh September, the Bali bombing in 2002 and the ‘war on terror’ (Saeed, 2003). Further, there is a lack of information about Muslims in Australia and how they interact with the broader Australian society, and recent media coverage of Islam and Muslim-related issues has led to significant interest in Australia knowing more about the religion and its adherents (ibid). That interest is increasing as the number of Muslims has increased. This is clear from the recent studies cited above, which cover aspects of the lives of Muslim minorities in Australia, most of which are written in the English language, but still depend to a large extent on writings and research in the Arabic language.

An overview about Muslim immigration to Australia in general has been presented to sharpen the specific dimensions and dynamics of the socio-historical background of Iraqi Muslim Shiites in particular. That background is the source of strong familial relations which have been further affected by the arrival of Iraqi families in Australia, due to varying circumstances and cultural and religious differences between Iraqis and the host society. This is important in order to situate the research.
In order to be aware of the endurance of the Iraqi family in the Diaspora, it is necessary to address the historical and socio-cultural background of Iraq and Iraqi society and the circumstances that forced Iraqis to migrate. Marginalisation, oppression and persecution due to their Kurdish ethnicity and Shiite religion are among the key reasons behind the Iraqi escape from their country of birth. Additionally, in order to investigate the obstacles that stand in the path of Iraqi refugees’ integration, an overview of Australian demography has been given.

Against this socio-historical context of Iraqi Muslim Shiites and the explanation of Australian policies around immigration given below, integration of these people into Australian society can be considered. Also needed for a discussion of the processes and barriers to integration is an outline of theories of integration, which is presented in the next chapter.
CHAPTER 3: THEORIES OF INTEGRATION

3.1 Introduction

In Chapter 2, a socio-historical overview of Iraq and its people, in terms of ethnic, religious and linguistic diversity, was provided as a context for understanding Iraqi refugees and their settlement complexities. The current chapter will explore the concept of integration to enable an analysis of these settlement complexities when presenting data in Chapters 5 and 6.

The first section will examine voluntary and involuntary immigration. The second section will explain the concept of integration and its lexical meaning in relation to other similar levels and behaviours, such as coexistence, cooperation, participation, adaptation, commitment and appreciation. The third section will explore different types of integration and shed light on the common concepts that combine all kinds of integration, such as social, religious, civic, linguistic, economic and political integration. The fourth section will examine different policies applied in countries attracting immigration, such as assimilation, multiculturalism, and integration, and their differences and similarities in the integration process. As well, in order to thoroughly examine factors that may influence the integration process the relationships between integration and social solidarity and granting Australian citizenship will be discussed. The current chapter will examine different types of integration theories, especially those of Kymlicka, Castles, Hamdan and Bauman.

3.2 Voluntary and Involuntary Immigration

In general, immigrants have been seen as those who freely choose to leave their countries of origin. This means that they voluntarily leave.

But it is not always easy to classify people into voluntary and involuntary categories as there is a lot in common between them. First, both of these categories refer to foreign-born people. Second, the original motivation for their move may be similar. The majority of involuntary and some voluntary immigrants are humanitarian
immigrants, who are admitted into or allowed to remain in the host country because they are unwilling or unable to return to their home country because of persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution (McGeough, 2004; Brennan, 2003; Kukathas, 1993; Zimmermann, 2008; Maryns, 2006).

Some voluntary immigrants are sometimes referred to as ‘economic migrants’. They are those who have moved seeking better opportunities (better jobs and more social, political or religious freedom) than those available in their homelands, or moved upon family or skill criteria (Jupp, 2007; Hansen, 2003; Senker, 2004). Some just want to live somewhere else because of democracy, freedom, security, justice and the weather. Involuntary immigrants are less economically successful than voluntary immigrants, because they lack English language skills, have less educational experience and pre-migration preparation, have poorer physical and mental health and suffer non-recognition of their qualifications and experience (Hugo, 2011). Consequently, the employment of involuntary immigrants, especially refugees, takes longer compared to that of voluntary immigrants (ibid).

As this research focuses on Iraqi Muslim Shiite refugees, involuntary migrants, it is important to further explain the difference between immigrants, asylum seekers and refugees in detail.

### 3.3 Voluntary and Involuntary Immigration

Although the phenomenon of immigration is an old phenomenon, the ending of the cold war witnessed dramatic changes in the scale and scope of international migration. Loescher (1992) argues that the period after the cold war marked ‘the beginning of a major new phase in the post-war history of international migration’ (p.10). The major changes were the emergence of new areas of immigration (Cohen, 1997; Castles and Miller, 1998) and the escalation of particular forms of immigration, notably refugees and asylum seekers (Cohen, 1997).

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2 For purposes of this thesis, ‘immigrants’ are considered to be people who have migrated, either voluntarily or involuntarily, to seek asylum in another country.
This section will explore the differences among refugees, asylum seekers and immigrants. Although there is a lot in common among them, there are significant differences in their legal rights and experiences. Some authors use the term ‘immigrant’ to include refugees and even asylum seekers (Banting and Kymlicka, 2003; Baubock, 2001; Kymlicka, 2001a; Samers, 1998; Sassen, 1998a, 1998b; Soysal, 1994). Samers (1998) uses the terms ‘immigrants and ethnic minorities’ (p.124) when referring to refugees and asylum seekers and their settled ethnic communities. He argues that there is no defined term to describe ‘the vastly complex interweaving of legislation, social networks, and psychological spaces which [refugees], immigrants “ethnic minorities” inhabit and produce’ (p.125). Despite the fact that using the term ‘immigrants’ or ‘migrants’ does not represent the social and economic issues of refugees, Kymlicka (2001a, p.278) refers to immigrant multiculturalism. Immigrant multiculturalism is part of a larger movement towards liberal culturalism, where it (immigrant multiculturalism) participates in the new politics of identity, and tries to find room where citizens can express their identities and diversities, and share a commitment to principles of pluralism and the recognition of difference.

‘Immigration’ is theoretically referring to people of both refugee and immigrant backgrounds. The distinction between them is important in terms of the settlement opportunities and outcomes for refugees in the host societies. However, for the purposes of this study, which is concerned with a specific group of refugees’ integration into Australia, it is necessary to include not only those who meet the legal definition as refugees but also those who have been exposed to the refugee experience; that is, asylum seekers or ‘boat people’ (Potocky-Tripodi, 2002, p.7).

### 3.3.1 Refugees

Helton (2002) claims that the term ‘refugee’ emerged with the flight of the Huguenots from France (p.8) and it ‘first became standardised and globalised’ (Malkki, 1995, p.497) in the post-Second World War era. From the legal category of ‘refugee’, the term ‘forced migrant’ has been developed as the name for a wider class of people (Turton, 2003b, p.13). Richmond (1994, 2001), Van Hear (2006) and Crisp (1999) state that there is a slight difference among types of forced migrants including
refugees, asylum seekers, humanitarian and economic immigrants, and immigrants from refugee-producing countries.

Hence, in an attempt to identify persons in this study who escaped Iraq into Australia due to violent conflict, the term ‘refugee’ will be used. In this, it conforms to the definition of a refugee according to the 1951 United Nations (UN) Convention, 1967 Protocol, describing the status and rights of a refugee, and the UN Human Rights Commission:

A refugee is any person who owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it. (UNHCR, 2010, p.3)

This definition only includes individuals fleeing a serious risk of persecution that is committed or tolerated by governments. It does not include people fleeing acts of persecution that are not committed by governments, such as those committed by terrorists and rebels, unless such persecution is tolerated or caused by governments. Refugees experience greater instability and are unable to have the protection of their homeland (Kukathas, 1993; Goodwin-Gill, 1996), and in turn, they are in life-threatening danger in their homelands, so they seek refuge and protection in another country.

Although the 1951 UN Convention highlights the notion of refugees as people who escape an existential threat from which they have no domestic protection, there are other causes not covered by the 1951 UN Convention, such as environmental disaster, livelihoods failure, or state collapse (Betts and Kaytaz, 2009). It also does not include persons who are displaced by man-made or natural disaster (Phuong, 2004; Weiss and Korn, 2006). Given these characteristics, refugees have a historically symbiotic relationship to the development and evolution of the international system of refugee treatment and settlement (Haddad, 2002).
Additionally, the 1951 UN Convention definition does not take into consideration refugees from armed conflict. Stedman and Tanner (2003) note that in addition to the definition provided in the 1951 UN Convention, the term ‘refugee’ applies to every person who is compelled, due to armed conflict, to leave his or her homeland in order to seek refuge and protection in another place outside his or her country of origin (p.139).

This protection is generally viewed as a humanitarian issue (Crisp, 2001), because many refugees have limited resources after they arrive and are forced to live in poor neighbourhoods or spend many years in refugee camps, cut off from normal life, and they may experience physical hardship and trauma. In that sense, they are in need of aid, not because of an intrinsic helplessness, but because they are victims of violence effected by world powers.

This opens a wide gate through which to consider the rights of refugees. Using the 1951 UN Convention as a standard, these rights include the right to seek employment, to engage in other income-generating activities, to own and dispose of property, to enjoy freedom of movement and to have access to public services such as education (UNHCR, 2010, pp.22-23).

Newman and Selm (2003) and Ghosh (2000) refer to another kind of refugee: the internally displaced refugee. These are people who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homelands as a result of bad circumstances or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, violence, violations, or human-made disasters (Newman and Selm, 2003, p.165) and remain in their own countries; they do not or cannot seek refuge across borders (Ghosh, 2000, p.190). Nonetheless, the current thesis concentrates on Iraqi refugees who are forced to leave Iraq and are unable or unwilling to return to it.

It has been noted that refugees are civilians who no longer receive protection from their government. International humanitarian law interprets the notion of refugees more widely, also taking into consideration population displacements caused by conflicts. This definition does not mean that refugees must automatically be granted
that status under national laws, but it does establish their right to receive international protection and assistance while the conflict lasts.

In this thesis, the term ‘refugee’ refers to an ethnic Iraqi, generally a Muslim Shiite, who, for political, religious, and ethnic reasons, was persecuted on the basis of his or her ethnicity (ORR, 2007b). Accordingly, he or she was forced to leave his or her previous residence, or has lost his or her home because of a physical threat to his or her survival and escaped Iraq in the 1990s.

3.3.2 Asylum seekers

The terms ‘refugee’ and ‘asylum seeker’ are not interchangeable. According to the UNHCR (2010) the terms ‘asylum seeker’ and ‘refugee’ are often confused. Markus (2010) notes that Australians do not distinguish between asylum seekers and refugees, which often leads to the negative view of asylum seekers who arrive by boat being transferred to all refugees. Emphasising the Australian confusion, the Scanlon report found that 66.5% of Australians have a somewhat or very positive feeling towards ‘refugees who have been assessed overseas and found to be victims of persecution and in need of help coming to live in Australia as permanent or long term residents’ (ibid, p.37).

Initially, an asylum seeker is a person who alleges he or she is a refugee, but whose claim has not yet been definitively evaluated. Asylum seekers usually flee their homeland for fear of persecution because of race, religion, social group, or political opinion, and cross international borders into a country in which they hope to be granted refugee status (Rutter, 1994; Zimmermann, 2008; Hayes and Humphries, 2004). They request personal protection and refugee status through submitting a request to the national authorities to reside in a country, when they arrive in that country, and are awaiting the results from the examination of their application. They remain under the title and status of ‘asylum seeker’ until their application has been decided in their favour or not. They often spend years waiting to have their claim assessed. The waiting time for an answer to their asylum application is the most stressful period, especially when they do not know when their claim will be decided. If the application is approved, the person will be recognised as a refugee, either
political or humanitarian depending on the grounds on which the decision was made (Bjertnaes, 2000). Otherwise, their claim may be refused and consequently they may be returned to their homelands, if they do not fulfil the strict criteria of refugee status.

Accordingly, they may spend years in the reception or detention centres, where life is very hard and difficult to manage; feelings of being degraded, ignored or dismissed by others may appear (Iversen and Morken, 2003, 2004). Their long-period stay seems to increase their feelings of isolation and doom, without any serious purpose for their daily living (Lavik, et al., 1996), and feelings that their futures are uncertain. Refugees and asylum seekers may have different feelings and expectations about the future, than immigrants. Thus, negative expectations may dominate the thinking of asylum seekers and refugees, who know that some of them may be sent back home or remain in exile for life.

Although the asylum seekers are not formally recognised as refugees and, accordingly, do not enjoy official refugee status, they have the minimum guarantees set forth by the Refugee Convention. The aim of these guarantees is to protect the rights of those who flee their country of origin and request asylum in another country without facing any administrative obstacles. They also protect the individuals’ right not to be expelled or sent back to their homelands, which are considered to be a source of danger.

Furthermore, although asylum seekers are the same as economic immigrants, in terms of their flight from common situations of transformation and crisis and their escape from social, economic or political insecurity to a safer place (Khan, 2000), they are illegal immigrants who enter a country without meeting the legal requirements for entry (Pickering, 2005). Nevertheless, asylum seekers cannot be described as illegal, since they escape threats in their own country, and everyone has a recognised human right to seek asylum. The Information Centre about Asylum and Refugees (ICAR) (2012) states that ‘illegal asylum seeker’ as a definition is wrong, as there cannot be illegal asylum seekers.
3.3.3 Immigrants

Immigrants or economic migrants are people who voluntarily leave their homelands in order to improve the future prospects for themselves and their families; they may have skills, and relatives living in the host country (Senker, 2004; Seymour-Jones, 1992). They immigrate in accordance with the guidelines and conditions of the country of immigration.

Immigrants move to another country for a combination of reasons. They may leave their country of origin in search of work or a better quality of life, to be reunited with family members, or to escape persecution or environmental disaster (Jackson and Passarelli, 2008, p.5), to ensure the safety and security of themselves and their families and live there either temporarily or permanently. Frequently, these factors are interrelated and cannot be clearly separated (Ghosh, 2000, p.191).

It can be argued that there are a number of factors which set refugees apart from other immigrants. Refugees are not in the same situation as immigrants, although the two groups are often confused. Zolberg, et al., (1992) and Richmond (1994) confirm that while immigration or economic immigration reflects the global structuring of inequalities between the countries of the ‘core and periphery’ (p.205), refugee movements reflect the political structure of the international system.

Generally, a key difference between refugees and immigrants is their experience before arriving in a country of immigration. Refugees’ previous experience of trauma, torture and oppression may be particularly serious, causing severe emotional and psychological stress (Youth Studies Australia, 2007). Consequently, they do not settle as easily as immigrants (Jupp, 2007).

Furthermore, refugees usually do not choose to leave their country of origin (Ocasi, 1996) and ‘they do not select’ their destination (Collins, 1991, p.48). They spent long periods of time in refugee camps in countries of first asylum leaving behind their family and loved ones (ibid) and spend long waits for acceptance by the country of refuge. They ‘were often subject to a hostile response from the established..."
They often escape without any documentation whatsoever, including educational qualifications. In that sense, they have higher unemployment rates and lower earning and occupational attainment than immigrants (Williams and Batrouney, 1998; DIMIA, 2003; ABS Census, 2006a).

Although refugees suffered more financial crisis than Australians and other immigrants, in terms of unemployment, the majority of the second generation are more successful economically than the first generation (Hugo, 2011). Accordingly, the second generation has much higher levels of labour force engagement than the first generation, and it is higher than for second generation Australians (ibid, p.xxiii).

Immigrants, on the other hand, choose to leave their country and choose the time and destination, seeking for a better life, and they can usually return whenever they like for visits, or return permanently if they cannot settle or things did not work out (Collins, 1991). They can take with them their travel documents, passports, and other documentation, including educational qualifications that influence their education, employment and health. Due to their better levels of health, education and economic independence, they are less likely to encounter negative attitudes in their new country.

Despite these differences, immigrants or economic migrants and refugees enjoy better legal status than that of asylum seekers, because their arrival to the country of immigration is based on government approval. Asylum seekers and refugees differ only in regard to the place where they ask for protection.

The contrasts given above demonstrate the different motivations which urge people to leave their country of origin and live in another country. Motivations vary from individual to individual and from circumstance to circumstance. From this description, it can be noted that immigrants voluntarily leave their countries to look...
for a better life in another place; while refugees are forced to escape their countries because of political or ethnic situations beyond their control.

To conclude, it can be argued that there is a lot in common among refugees, asylum seekers and immigrants in terms of leaving their countries of origin and circumstances that force them to escape from their homelands. In spite of this, they differ from each other in terms of their status in the host country, their settlement and the motive behind their immigration.

To find out more about the integration phenomenon for immigrants, the next section will examine the concept of integration as a way of bringing Iraqi refugees and Australians together into a whole, in order to include or be included in a community.

3.4 The Concept of Integration

The term integration is an ambiguous term, subject to varying interpretations. It is a multilayered issue because of social, religious, cultural and political differences between refugees and the host community and it also has multiple meanings. Therefore, in order to shed more light on this term, its different meanings will be investigated.

3.4.1 Interaction, meaning and application

The term ‘integration’ is a very vague concept because it can refer both to the intake of new members and to the forces of internal cohesion within the broader social unit (Baubock, et. al., 1996, p.10). It is, as Robinson (1998) indicates, a chaotic concept, it is ‘a word used by many but understood differently by most’ (p.118). Castles, et al. (2001) confirm that despite its frequent usage, ‘[t]here is no single, generally accepted definition, theory or model of immigrant and refugee integration. The concept continues to be controversial and hotly debated’ (p.12). This contributes to the ‘great deal of disagreement about what constitutes integration, how one determines whether strategies for promoting integration are successful, or what the features of an integrated society are’ (Atfield, et al., 2007, p.12). Nevertheless,
integration remains significant both as a stated policy purpose and as a targeted result for those interested in refugee issues (Frattini, 2006).

The concept of ‘integration’ comes from a Latin word ‘Integer’ that means untouched or whole (Maagero and Simonsen, 2005, p.147). Fadhlullah (2000) suggests different terms for this phenomenon, like absorption, adaptation, race relations cycle, assimilation, acculturation, inclusion, incorporation and, of course, integration. While Esser (2004) suggests four essential forms of integration: acculturation, placement, interaction and identification, Baubock (2005) confines it to two different terms: inclusion or incorporation. He argues that both terms, ‘inclusion’ and ‘incorporation’, are only used transitionally and not in the sense of the long-term social accommodation of new arrivals. That is, ‘societies include or incorporate migrants, but these do not include or incorporate themselves’ (Baubock, 2005, p.2).

Jacobsen (2001) describes integration as ‘where the lived, everyday experience of refugees is that of being part of the local community’ (p.9). Stubbs (1995), however, points out that integration refers to

... the development of cultural exchanges and new cultural forms, between forced migrants and all other members of a society ... it involves ... minimising social distance and facilitating communication and cooperation through creative negotiations which produce new social meanings. (p.36)

Finally, Penninx (2005) defines integration as:

... the process of becoming an accepted part of society. There are two parties involved in integration processes: the immigrants, with their particular characteristics, efforts and adaptation and the receiving society with its reactions to newcomers. The interaction between the two determines the direction and the ultimate outcome of the integration process. They are, however, unequal partners. The receiving society, its institutions, structures and the ways it reacts to newcomers is much more decisive for the outcome of the process. (p.1)

In that sense, integration puts demands on host societies and refugees. From the refugees’ viewpoint, the integration process requires their readiness to adapt to the
lifestyle of the host society without losing their own cultural identity. In regards to the viewpoint of the host society, it requires a readiness to adapt itself and accept refugees as part of the broad community, and take action to facilitate their access to resources and have a role in the decision-making processes. Thus, integration is understood as the process of inclusion of refugees in the institutions and relationships of the host society.

As a result, it is a two-way process of adaptation by refugees and host society (Spencer, 2003, p.6). A two-way process means that the integration process should not be taken as a kind of medication, which refugees take in order to ‘fit in’ the host society, but they should contribute to the processes in which integration is defined (Korac, 2003, p.53). In other words, the focus of the integration process should be refugees and the host community and to insure that both involved parties agree to share things they have in common (Spencer, 2003, p.7). But, unlike assimilation, it also implies mutual adaptation, an openness to change to improve the overall culture of the host society (Delanty, 2000). In this regard, refugees and the host community join in diversity to form a new society through putting together all the cultural, religious, psychological, social and economic differences in order to make a common heritage.

It is a mutual process, which requires a refugee’s willingness to adapt to the lifestyle of the host society without having to lose his or her own cultural identity. It also requires readiness of the host community to be welcoming and responsive to refugees and of public institutions to meet the needs of a diverse population. From the above discussion, one can conclude:

Integration is not only about focusing on the similarities and ignoring the differences, but about working through the differences and coming to a common understanding, as part of the dynamic two-way process of mutual accommodation. (European Commission, 2004, p.17)

In conclusion, although the term ‘integration’ has been used by different countries in different contexts and with different interpretations, it can be viewed as a process of equal participation in the social, religious, economic, cultural and political life of the
host country, without abandoning the cultural and linguistic background of immigrants and refugees. Hence, it refers to stable, cooperative relations and a dynamic process of interaction between the host society and new arrivals, and if this process succeeds, the society is said to be integrated. Accordingly, successful integration of refugees may create opportunities and benefits for the host country.

It has been suggested that successful integration requires practicing some behaviours or levels of integration, such as participation, coexistence, cooperation, commitment, appreciation and adaptation on the part of refugees (Hamdan, 2003). These levels of integration may be helpful in the initial period of transition and integration, but not for full integration across all aspects of a refugee’s life in the new society.

### 3.4.2 Levels of integration

It can be argued that people vary in their natures, backgrounds, languages, colours, and their readiness to accept the other. That difference does not prevent convergence, cooperation and integration. Cooperation, friendship and being acquainted with others are the purpose of humanitarian meetings, for the various benefits they have which help in achieving the interest and progress of the individual and society. Generally, according to the data from this study, there are some behaviours, practices or levels of integration that might be confused or mingled with the integration process. In this regard Hamdan’s typology is useful because these behaviours may seem similar in terms of their impact on building the desired relationship between refugees and the host community, but actually vary in content and application.

**Coexistence**

Coexistence is accepting living, working, housing, travelling or studying in the presence of others without the need for direct interaction or dealing with them (Hamdan, 2003, p.31). It is the first step adopted by an individual or a group to survive and interact with others. It happens because the individual is new to the environment, and it takes place for a specific period until gaining confidence and the ability to do more than coexist, the ability to adapt (*ibid*).
There was confusion between ‘coexistence’ and the ‘integration process’ shown by some interview participants and also by some writers. Harrell-Bond’s definition of ‘integration’ is an example. He defines this as:

*A situation in which host and refugee communities are able to co-exist, sharing the same resources – both economic and social – with no greater mutual conflict than that which exists within the host community.* (Harrell-Bond, 1986, p.7)

In that sense, he leaves open the possibility that there may be quite a lot of conflict and division among hosts and his definition is therefore more useful in its comparative frame than the term ‘coexistence’.

**Adaptation**

Adaptation is an individual’s agreement with the wishes, needs or habits of others, in order to be an accepted member, live in balanced relations with them and participate in a society’s values and views (Hamdan, 2003, p.37). It results from the adequacy of the individual to adapt to the cultural generalities of society, thus, he or she maintains a socio-psychological balance through dealing with people within their behavioural limits to run the basics of life or maintain their daily needs (Zimmermann, 2008). The relationship between integration and social adaptation is that adaptation is a spontaneous individual process, while integration is a social process; adaptation is one phase of integration. For example, a student may adapt to the university environment, and then integrate into it.

‘Adaptation’ also implies the selective and often conscious attempt to modify certain aspects of cultural practice in accordance with the host society’s norms and values. The idea may be to coincide in public with the behaviour and culture of the host community, while private activities may continue in line with the society and culture of the country of origin (Castles, et al., 2002). From the perspective of integration, it might be argued that the success of this approach rests on a degree of similarity as, according to Berry, ‘*the greater the cultural differences, the less positive is the adaptation*’ (Berry, 1997, p.23).
Appreciation

Appreciation is contained in every word, emotion, feeling and the conduct that an individual expresses towards others, whether positively or negatively (Hamdan, 2003, p.46). Visits, invitations, friendships, interactions in special or public events and gifts to create and maintain social ties (Komter, 2005), are all behavioural forms of appreciation. In appreciation people live, talk, eat, and travel together. Thus the gap between them narrows, their meetings increase, their feelings of love and friendship are observed and their transactions begin to grow.

Commitment

Commitment is every word or action where an individual takes into account the public constitutions or general order of society from traditions, ethics, laws, regulations, and daily life (Hamdan, 2003, p.53). It preserves their living together in a cohesive and stable life, no matter how different their ethnic backgrounds or their emotions towards each other are. So, it makes any group, as a human unit, live or work in one limited environment in order to meet individual and collective needs of interest. Further, it operates when people organise or share their mutual personal and practical relationships in a fair balance or according to an agreement upon criteria and conditions.

Cooperation

Cooperation is evident in every individual’s display of conduct to achieve mutual shared interest with others or a benefit for the participants, such as in marriage, companies, institutions, and various kinds of jobs (Hamdan, 2003, p.58). Any defect or deficiency in one or more of the members of that behavioural equation put the matter of cooperation into demise, injustice or unfairness. It occurs most likely as a result of people’s adaptation or agreement, and their appreciation for each other which exists in bonds of friendship or affection (Fadhlullah, 2000).

Participation

Participation is the contribution of an individual to help people in doing something or meeting a temporary need or to change their situation for the best, such as the
provision of expertise, opinion, counselling, donating money or blood and sponsoring others financially or judicially (Hamdan, 2003, p.66). The individual comes close to people through participation, more than in the behaviours described above, because he or she lives with their ordeals or direct needs, and partially contributes to meet them, and then works with them to change them for the best.

Apart from levels of integration, it is necessary to consider types of integration in order to determine how integration may vary from one person to another in relation to each type. Together they give a fuller picture of the experiences of refugees in their host country.

3.4.3 Types of integration

The integration process of refugees into the host country is characterised by several dimensions, typically aggregated into six distinct but not mutually exclusive general categories: social, educational, economic, religious, political, linguistic, and civic integration. So, this section covers these different types of integration.

Social integration

Social scientists use the term social integration to refer to individuals’ connections with others in their environments (Shubbar, 1992). Social integration involves many different definitions. According to Ritzer (2007), social integration refers to elements in a social system, where the term ‘social system’ describes a social unit with a stable order, such as groups, organisations or even whole nation-states. These social systems have contributed to develop the concepts of system integration and social integration. System integration is the result of the anonymous functioning of institutions, organisations and the state, and the legal system. In that sense, the term ‘social integration’ implies the relationship among people in a society.

Marshall (1994) says:

*Social integration refers to the principles by which individuals or actors are related to one another in a society; system integration refers to the relationship between parts of a society or social system.* (p.488)
Turner (2006), on the other hand, defines social integration as the different parts of social life which depend on each other and fulfil functions contributing to social order and its reproduction (p. 576). Thus, social integration means that each of the parts in a socially integrated society depend upon one another. In other words, all these parts are interconnected. So, socially integrated societies create values and ethics that accommodate diversity, and enhance values of freedom, security and democracy to form a unity and diversity, which is considered the main characteristic of social integration.

Likewise, Kaladjahi (1997) defines social integration as ‘the fitting together of the parts to constitute the whole society’ (p. 116). Thus, fitting together suggests that all members of a community are closely related in sympathy in order to form one harmonious unit to promote equality at all levels of the society. So, the purpose of social integration is to create a more stable, safe and just society for all, in which every person has an active role to play. Further, it must be based on the principles of embracing diversity where all stakeholders have a role in the decision-making that affects their lives.

Having a role in decision-making implies justice for all in the society, because justice creates social cohesion, which will become easy when people live in mutual confidence. The society would be for all where all members of society interrelate and play an active role towards peace, cooperation and development. Consequently, higher levels of social integration are associated with fewer depressive symptoms because relationships with others increase the opportunities for social support during times of adversity. Social integration also has a positive impact by promoting interaction between isolated groups of society and on mental health outcomes (Zimmermann, 2008).

Social integration contributes to bridge the gap between minority communities and the host community and is considered a key and effective factor to obtaining a voice in society, which will enable those who gain a voice to enjoy greater and better power in society, and may give them better resources and higher social status (Burr, 1998). Thus, obtaining a voice in society enhances interaction among individuals,
which needs to be based on complementarity of interests and to respect the local moral rules and traditions of different cultures (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994; Maryns, 2006).

In contrast, disrespect of cultural diversity will lead to a lack of social interaction and acceptance, which will result in negative consequences for individuals, families and the community. So, without the means of interaction, individuals may experience isolation, frustration, depression, physical and psychological illness, disillusionment, and worthlessness that might deter them from experiencing productive and happy lives (Mathews, 2008; Anthais, 2002). In that sense, social integration will become a sharper and more complex problem for some minor communities. The complexity and sharpness of this problem forces immigrants to establish their own communities and residential and cultural institutions in areas almost exclusively for them (Johnson, et. al, 1997).

However, active engagement in society contributes to help refugees build self-esteem, physical wellness and a sense of belonging and commitment to the community in which they live. That implies working to rehabilitate refugees who have suffered from injustice, persecution and displacement, and it may contribute to facilitate the social integration process, as actions and behaviours remain to some extent linked to their psychological situation. A particular high school, for instance, did not take into account the mental and psychological condition of my son, and did not deal with him in accordance with his previous suffering. The teachers’ actions forced him to leave school and stay home. Clark, et al., (2006) suggest that adult refugees should be carefully coordinated and plans made systematically from an evidence-base. In turn, ill treatment to those from minority communities may become a sort of euphemism (Al-Rasheed, 1998; Collins, et al., 2000), where the majority give positive appearances and hide unpleasant truths towards the minority.

When referring to the concept of social integration, participation, as a level of integration into different social activities, employment and in decision-making, is the best method to be applied. Participation provides a space for relatively safe and festive interaction in a public space, and therefore would be suitable for attracting
participants who would not be drawn to something requiring more formal involvement. In that sense, different groups can move from a state of confrontation and conflict to a state of living together. Also, refugees and local citizens have to cooperate in order to get on well together and achieve meaningful interaction. The greater the extent of cooperation between members of the community, the greater the unity and cohesion among community members will be. Cooperation determines the state of belonging of the individual and his or her relationship with others.

Furthermore, the social, religious, ethnic, political and intellectual differences between the Iraqi community and the broader community create the need for coexistence. These differences create a specific culture within the community which needs to coexist and combine a sense of belonging and loyalty with the host country. Accordingly, coexistence promotes the concepts of social unity and cohesion within the community.

In conclusion, social integration can be defined as the inclusion and acceptance of refugees into the host society. In other words, it is an interactive process between refugees and the host society. For the refugees, integration means the process of learning a new culture, acquiring rights and obligations, gaining access to positions and social status, building relationships with people and forming a feeling of belonging to that society. For the host society, social integration means opening up institutions and granting equal opportunities to refugees. So, it promotes societies that are stable, safe, just and tolerant, and respect diversity, solidarity, security, equality of opportunity and participation of all people. Social integration also relates to the participation of refugees in the social life of the host society.

Yet, integration of refugees into a host society should be understood as a special case of social integration, where the concepts of placement, acculturation, interaction and identification should be applied (Heckmann and Schnapper, 2003). Social exclusion may intensify the enclave mentality which is a notable feature, particularly amongst adult refugees.
Social integration and ethnic enclaves

The tendency for refugees to locate themselves where their relatives and friends have already settled is a familiar process resulting from the need to reunify with family members and other relatives and friends and from initial unfamiliarity with the country as a new environment. So, they depend profoundly on their relatives or friends in the host country (Portes, 1995) to assist them finding the best opportunities for employment (Birman and Trickett, 2001) or where they can best use their skills.

Ethnic enclaves are places characterised by their high ethnic concentration and economic activity and they are culturally different from the broader host society (Portes and Leif, 1992). The success and growth of their members depend on self-sufficiency, and are coupled with economic prosperity. As a result, they create potentially beneficial relationships and assist their members in achieving economic adequacy, thus, their members do not need the social and cultural skills of the host country. Because they eliminate language and cultural barriers, ethnic enclaves have the ability to employ a great number of their members.

Ethnic enclaves can resemble the refugee’s place of origin through mutual factors, like physical appearance and language (Portes, 1995). Connections with members in ethnic enclaves can provide the new arrival with work opportunities. Enclaves can also afford refugees informal training related to the culture, common values, lifestyle and even the socio-political system of the broader community and help them to face challenges in many areas of everyday life (ibid) such as social hostility faced by them in their host society.

Ethnic enclaves in the host country can also provide assistance to meet refugees’ emotional and socio-psychological needs (Menjivar, 1997) in addition to meeting their physical and economic needs. Although, the socio-psychological challenges faced by refugees can be reduced through ethnic enclaves, those who choose to live in ethnic enclaves have less education, shorter periods of residency in the host country, and lower English proficiency (Funkhouser and Ramos, 1993).
Pallon, et al. (2001) and Kao (2004) affirm the importance of ethnic enclaves in enabling refugees to gain access to social resources. They are important for the long-term integration of refugees who might suffer isolation in the broader society, because of language, cultural and other barriers (Kao, 2004; Pallon, et al., 2001). They can help refugee communities to cope with and better achieve in education, since those who choose to live in them generally have less education. They can also help them benefit from schooling without the risk of losing their unique identity and cultural heritage (Zhou, 1997). Kao (2004) affirms that parents who may have difficulties understanding the education system of the new country, communicating with professional staff and accessing education, could use ethnic enclaves to overcome these barriers.

However, ethnic enclaves may impede their members from acquiring the host country language and skills that benefit the immigrant in his or her settlement career (Per-Anders, et al., 2003). Therefore, the failure in learning the language and social norms of the host community constrains refugees to their ethnic enclave and isolates them from the broader host community. So, refugees may miss many employment opportunities available, their integration into the host society may be delayed, and their benefit from the mainstream institutions will be prevented.

Yet, those who arrived in their new society and had no ethnic community to welcome them, facilitate settlement, and connect them to the people, jobs, and resources they know and use, lacked social support networks and the social capital often implicit in these networks (Hyndman and McLean, 2006). The idea is that the members have each other for support and solidarity in an enclave, rather than be spread, a few families here and there, across the country.

Similarly, Humphrey (1998) claims:

*Muslim immigrants have entered Australian society through the cultural mediums of family, community and religion which have located them in social spaces shaping their status, employment and residence patterns.* (p.21)
This has meant that social relations of the family and relatives have become firm and essential resources for social change in themselves. Consequently, this helps to create their own social world which, in turn, helps to maintain ethnic language and culture. So, it is very rare to find the presence of Anglo-Celtic Australians in neighbourhoods such as Lakemba, Auburn and Wiley Park in Sydney, where Muslims comprise more than one third of the total population (ABS Census, 2006a).

Thus, ethnic enclaves contribute in offering an alternative means of reducing the higher cost of integration that some refugees may face (Chiswick and Miller, 2002). Refugees who have greater difficulty in adapting to the new culture, such as older people and those who lack the skills of speaking the host country language, prefer to live with others who speak their language and share a similar culture. In this way, ethnic enclaves contribute in assisting in achieving mobility through increasing employment opportunities and other services necessary for their resettlement.

Although newly arrived refugees tend to settle in major Australian cities, particularly Melbourne and Sydney (Hugo, 2011), especially in metropolitan centres near to family supports and other social networks and services, the Australian government in recent years worked hard to settle refugees in regional areas of Australia (CVWPM, 2004; Sypek, et al., 2008). The rationale behind such a policy is to encourage refugees to contribute to and participate in Australian society as soon as possible after arrival, and help integration into the broader society.

In conclusion, ethnic enclaves, where refugees are settled, comprise an important aspect of refugee experience as they can facilitate access to work opportunities, settlement services, and the ability to interact with people who speak the same language and who have similar cultural and religious backgrounds (Hugo, 2011). But despite ethnic the contribution of enclaves to the economic, cultural, psychological and religious development of refugees, they may lead to the formal exclusion of refugees from the wider community in some domains.
In the light of the above discussion there is a necessity for refugees and the host community to achieve some sort of unity and solidarity, which is considered an important factor to reach social integration.

**Integration and social solidarity**

There is a strong relationship between integration and solidarity. While solidarity means that different communities have to connect together, integration means that new arrivals and local people adapt to one another.

So, one of the key components of promoting solidarity, integration and, therefore, positive community relations, is the encouragement of meaningful interaction. Interaction is seen as a main factor of solidarity that is particularly suitable to government and grass-roots level interventions, approaches and policies. These approaches are vitally important for minor communities since they typically have most concerns and least trust or sense of a stake in the society and institutions.

Solidarity and integration strategies rely on targeted as well as universal approaches in their commitment to social justice and tackling long-term inequalities. That means a sense of equality and fairness for both the minor and host communities in order to fill the gap between the minority and ethnic groups. To avoid tensions and conflicts that may arise from targeted approaches, social justice has to be made visible, by communicating and addressing the fairness and justifications for such approaches.

In order to make solidarity and integration active, the initiatives and approaches have to be community-led, including consultations and involvement in decision-making. Such engagement and participation in one’s community has many benefits, such as providing grounds on which people from different backgrounds interact meaningfully to break down misconceptions, encouraging understanding, trust and a sense of common purpose between the new arrivals and host community.

While solidarity and integration emphasise building bridges between both parties, it is just as important to recognise limits to the achievements of solidarity and integration at the level of local government and grass-roots organisations. Solidarity
and integration in the broader community must leverage existing networks within the host community to be effective.

In conclusion, the role of social interaction and communication are essential in the process of integration and social solidarity, because through social contacts and the climate created by such contacts refugees develop a sense of belonging in a particular social space. Although these two notions are separate, they play an essential role in improving community relations.

**Educational integration**

Education has long-term effects in preparing new generations for adult life, in terms of certification and socialisation, performing vital functions on behalf of society and increasing individual cognitive capacity (Haynes, 1997; Marginson, 1993). It is a vehicle for developing the human resources and contributes to the cohesion of society, by transmitting to new generations the central or core values of that society (Haynes, 1997). Education is often a relatively advantaged sphere of social life for refugees as it is considered:

> ... a stabilising feature in the unsettled lives of refugees. It provides them safe spaces for new encounters, interactions and learning opportunities. [I]t also deliver[s] literacy, the key to educational success, post-school options, life choices, social participation and settlement. Education in general facilitates intellectual and personal development. (Mathews, 2008, pp.31-32)

Consequently, many refugees and their children work hard to extend their skills through education, both as a means of improving their life-chances and assisting their communities and also as a prestige factor (Joyce, et al., 2010; Turner and Fozdar, 2010).

Education through schools, colleges, universities and vocational institutions is considered a cornerstone of successful integration, in terms of both English language education and training to maximise employment opportunities (Potocky-Tripodi, 2003; Potocky and McDonald, 1995; Potocky-Tripodi, 2001), as it ‘can be turned to advantage in the labour market as human capital’ (Hage, 2002, p.121). However,
one-quarter of refugees do not take up English language tuition for various reasons including the prioritising of employment (Young, 2003) and because of logistical difficulties, particularly for mothers of young children.

Education promotes cultural and religious tolerance and conflict prevention (UN Secretary General, 2006, p.16) because it leads to the respect of human rights and human interaction and acceptance among people, and is necessary to create tolerant citizens who turn their backs to prejudice and discrimination. So it contributes to ending discrimination of all types by producing socially and critically active and aware citizens through emphasis on various cultures rather than the dominant culture and by promoting the merits of cultural and linguistic diversity (Kymlicka, 2001a; May, 2001). Accordingly, education can successfully convey the mind and soul of minority groups, and this is the first step to mutual integration by creating an inclusive society, which celebrates diversity and appreciates the contributions made by minority groups to the functioning of the society.

Education builds societies through harvesting full individual potential (Suarez-Orozco, et al., 2008; Richman, 1998) and forming individuals’ opinions, attitudes and behaviour towards the society and people. When the society is involved in the educational organisations system, social cohesion in various fields of life will be strengthened (Timperly and Robinson, 2000). This social cohesion, especially in the Australian multicultural society, is achieved through finding a mutual language among the members of various cultural and social components inside and outside school. This mutual language is the language of shared values and shared morals which is perceived by the school, the family and all members of the multicultural society.

Furthermore, much of a refugee’s integration may occur in school settings, as school environments serve as a primary source of contact between refugee families and the host society, therefore, refugee pupils will be equipped with both ‘cultural recognition and academic skills’ (Machin, 2006, p.188). Basu (2011, p.10) points out that multilingualism within schools will participate in creating a suitable environment of integration, where schools will not be just sites of social provision...
but engage in processes of social relations. So, multilingualism will recognise a refugee’s role in the host community as an active agent. Moreover, integration in schools will be achieved through exploring the multi-ethnic cultural capital of the new arrivals by learning their language and exploring ‘a rich interplay and exchange of cultural diversities’ (ibid, p.18). Hence, bilingual education for refugees in the educational mainstream needs to be applied as it leads to greater educational achievement for refugee communities and contributes to successful educational integration.

Although using multilingual education may impede acquiring the host country language, which is an important precondition for successful integration, Reich (2001) criticises the one-sided focus on language capability in the host country language as being the essential condition for educational achievement and integration, where other languages stand as an obstacle rather than a resource. Linguistic diversity has played an important role in the field of multiculturalism because refugee students’ multi-linguistic capabilities are often used as a criterion to measure the success or failure of educational integration or the integration process in general. In order to avoid the disadvantage of refugee background students with respect to school success, it is the responsibility of public schools to establish equal chances for every citizen (Mehlem, et al., 2004), through encouraging multilingual education. Hence, problems of integrating refugee children in the educational system were not seen as being in the refugees and their children alone, but also in the educational system. Similarly, Radtke (1994) refers to the institutionalised reproduction of inequality as a factor for refugees’ and their children’s educational underachievement. There needs to be a more balanced understanding of linguistic and educational integration barriers and difficulties.

Importantly, at the level of integration, educational participation will have a significant impact on the type of social activities that refugees undertake. More educated refugees tend to relate somewhat less to individuals from their close neighbourhood than to the broader community. Educational participation is a useful means to promote inter-cultural relations and combat racism, social exclusion and the alienation of ethnic communities from their host society. It exposes refugees to the
English language, interaction with local citizens and it develops their academic skills and the acquisition of lifelong knowledge needed to fully integrate into their new environment (Suarez-Orozco, et al., 2008).

Further, the level of education of refugees on arrival in a host country has significant implications on the pattern of integration they will adopt. Integration within the education system is an important condition for the economic integration of refugees, the topic to be examined next.

**Economic integration**

Employment plays a significant and vital role in refugees’ lives as it contributes to restoring self-confidence, and strengthens and enhances their status socially, psychologically and financially. It also ‘provides an important source of social attachment’. Moreover, ‘a community with a high rate of unemployment is assumed to be less integrated than a community where most people are employed’ (Siahpush and Singh, 1999, p.572). Council of the European Union (2004) states that ‘[e]mployment is a key part of the integration process’ (p.20) and a key element in successful settlement. It becomes the essential focus of integration policies of countries which attract immigrants due to the shocking degree of unemployment rates among refugees and their offspring.

Economic integration refers to the participation of refugees in the labour market of the host country. Because employment is one of the key elements for successful integration into the broader community, failing to address economic integration sends a negative indicator to refugees and encourages them to marginalise themselves. It is possible to find the principle of economic integration in the souls and minds of refugees since they prefer employment to other important facilitators of integration (Young, 2003), in order to run their lives, regain their identity and a sense of stability and for supporting families in the host country and homeland (Iredale, 1994; Colic-Peisker, 2003; Dunlop, 2005; Taran, 1998).

A number of factors influence refugees’ opportunities to reach economic integration through employment. One of these factors is the English language. Although it is
considered significant to improving professional participation, labour market participation can facilitate language acquisition through contact with the local population. English language along with a long period of settlement will contribute to better employment in comparison to those who have arrived more recently. In addition, according to Furtado and Theodoropoulos (2009) a refugee’s marriage to a local person or someone of a different ethnic group increases the employment probability of a refugee by approximately 5 percent and increases his earnings compared to those in an ethnically homogenous marriage (Kantarevic, 2004; Meng and Gregory, 2005; Meng and Meurs, 2006; Gevrek, 2009).

Hence employment, which is based on mutual interest, could provide a common cultural background to the host society and refugees. In turn, their identity will grow owing to the process of interaction with others (Burr, 1998). Employment, in the light of Castles’ theory, could also increase refugee contribution to the development of the host country and improve the economic burden, since refugees are considered an additional supply of cheap labour, which helps, in turn, to keep wages down (Castles and Kosack, 1985). Employment can also influence refugee access to accommodation, education, and health, which are not just seen as keys to the integration process and to improvement of their position in the host country, but as an investment in refugees’ human resources.

In spite of the strong desire among refugees to work rather than being on welfare (Fozdar, 2009), they experience difficulties in their endeavour to integrate into the labour market and, accordingly, have higher unemployment rates and lower earning and occupational attainment than other immigrants (Williams and Batrouney, 1998; Colic-Peisker and Tilbury, 2007b; Hugo, 2011). They are less likely to secure ‘good’ jobs (Junankar and Mahuteau, 2005). Actually, about 43 per cent of refugees are still unemployed in the first 18 months of their arrival, due to language and other settlement factors, in comparison with 7 per cent of holders of other visa categories who enter Australia (Hugo, 2011, p.110).

There are many reasons for their unemployment or underemployment (defined as holding a job which does not require the level of skills or qualifications possessed by
the jobholder). As it is mentioned above, recently arrived refugees have the lowest levels of employment (Hugo, 2011), while length of residence promotes job retention and job transition (Potocky and McDonald, 1995; Potocky, 1996; Takeda, 2000; Vinokurov, et al., 2000). Other factors include non-recognition of skills and overseas qualifications (Casimiro, et al., 2007), lack of referees and work experience in the host country, discrimination that negatively impacts their self-esteem and self-confidence (Dumper, 2002; Colic-Peisker and Tilbury, 2007b), xenophobia, racism and sexism (Coates and Carr, 2005; Dumper, 2002). Furthermore, while family responsibilities may impede women from working (Potocky-Tripodi, 2003; Race and Masini, 1996), lack of English language and/or experience of discrimination and other social or structural barriers obstruct older refugees from working (Race and Masini, 1996).

In addition to ethnic background, health condition of refugees may play a role in refugees’ unemployment. Hume and Hardwick (2005) noted that many refugees continue to suffer from chronic illnesses or trauma incurred prior to their arrival in Australia, thus hindering their ability to join the labour market.

It has been noted above that refugee experiences, such as unpreparedness for departure, experience of torture or trauma or mistreatment prior to arrival, disruption to education in refugee camps, grief and loss of loved ones and health problems, add additional barriers (Chafic, 2008). Hugo (2011, p.164) reveals other barriers including, pre-migration issues such as exposure to violence, lack of knowledge about the host community labour market, employer discrimination, and educational background.

Although Potocky-Tripodi (2003), Potocky and McDonald (1995) and Potocky-Tripodi (2001) found higher education to be associated with better economic status, Hugo (2011), Johnston, et al. (2009) and Takeda (2000) found even highly educated refugees often have difficulty finding work due to a lack of English language proficiency and lack of proof of prior occupational skills. Many highly educated refugees are employed in manual occupations, with only 10 per cent of them working
as managers or professionals, in comparison with almost 40 per cent of all migrants (Hugo, 2011, p.145).

Colic-Peisker and Tilbury (2007b) confirm that the unemployment rates within refugee communities are much higher than those for the people of the host community. Skilled refugees, especially those who have graduated from Australian educational institutions, are unable to find appropriate employment. They admit that racism and discrimination stand as an obstacle towards getting appropriate employment for skilled refugees. According to Vinokurov, et al. (2000) and Werkuyten and Nekuee (1999) discrimination along with unemployment contribute to reducing refugees’ psychological well-being.

Williams and Batrouney (1998) also found that refugees have higher unemployment rates and lower earning and occupational attainment than other immigrants. The DIMIA Longitudinal Study of Immigrants to Australia found that 71 per cent of the Humanitarian entrants are unemployed (DIMIA, 2003a). In regard to Iraqi refugees, the ABS (2006) confirms that 22.3 per cent of them suffer from unemployment in Australia, especially those with overseas education and qualifications, and they were found to be more disadvantaged in the labour market than any other ethnic minority community (Lovat, et al., 2011).

It is arguably the case that unemployment statistics are not always correct because many people who are technically unemployed may actually be working in the black economy (Lewis, et al., 2010). The Black economy, informal economy or underground economy is every type of economic activity that is not declared or reported to the government for tax purposes or to avoid inquiry by government officials, and is usually carried out in exchange for cash (Venkatesh, 2006; Sennholz, 2003; Schlosser, 2003). Individuals refuse to report their employment because their freedom to work is restricted or they fear that Centrelink\textsuperscript{3} benefits or other kinds of public assistance may be stopped (Sennholz, 2003). Some of them may be rendering

\textsuperscript{3} A federal government agency where payments are allocated for each unemployed or disabled individual.
services without a license due to lack of English language or the required skills. The black or underground economy, which results from unemployment in the mainstream labour market (Kabir, 2004), is the main reason behind benefits eradication, reducing job security and lower wages (Schlosser, 2003).

However, since the unemployment rate for overseas-born people is higher than for those Australian-born (Collins, 1991; ABS, 2006), refugees’ early employment and experiences in the host country are important as they provide refugees with new learning prospects, including skills progress, and enhance their self-esteem, satisfaction, and goal identification and planning (Lent, et al., 1994). In contrast, lack of access to the labour market during a refugee’s early period of arrival in the host country hinders the integration process in the long term (ECRE, 2005, p.29), because the integration process starts when the refugee reaches the country of asylum.

These bottom end jobs could result in loss of self-respect by refugees since they cannot support their families, as well as a rise in crime and drug abuse (Wilson, 1996). There are disrupting effects on social relationships; perhaps resulting in marriage breakdown or family violence. These kinds of jobs may also cause refugees to ‘suffer from obsolescence and loss of skills and from employer discrimination’ (Lewis, et al., 2010, p.191), creating, in turn, a sense of marginality and racial discrimination (Kabir, 2004; Garcia, 2002). So, it is almost impossible to achieve integration without equal economic participation, because without it a clear message is sent that some citizens, refugees for example, are not equal in society and, consequently, they are socially excluded, facing ‘multidimensional disadvantage’ in host societies (Samers, 1998, p.126).

It is important to say that economic participation is an important step towards self-sufficiency (Taran, 1998) and an important part of the resettlement process, and has also been identified as an essential part of refugees’ integration into a host society. According to ECRE (1999b), integration is built upon a refugee’s economic participation in the host country and becoming an active member in it. Thus, giving refugees the opportunity to use their relevant skills will enable them to make a great
contribution to the host society, and become self-sufficient, which will, in turn, assure a rapid integration into the broader society.

Remittances, or sending money back home, are another kind of self-sufficiency, with positive psychological effects giving peace of mind, which, at the same time, helps a person to become a part of the host country workforce and, in turn, integrate into the economic life of the host country (Hooshiyar, 2003).

Kaladjahi (1997, p.18) argues that refugees’ economic integration will not be achieved unless their present careers in the host country are similar to their career in their homelands. If their socio-economic status and standard of living is similar to that of their local counterpart, it can be said that they are professionally integrated (ibid, p.19).

At the level of integration, adaptation is the best level to be applied when referring to economic integration, because social and cultural adaptation may lead to successful labour market adaptation and adaptation to different work cultures. It is represented in securing a job appropriate to a person’s qualifications, skills and experience. Rogler, et al. (1991) found that immigrants low in adaptation to the new socio-cultural environment have a greater chance of suffering low self-esteem. In addition, refugees’ participation in the labour market will improve their income, so that they feel that they are part of the community, want to contribute to the community and participate in the economy and other aspects of social life. Because refugees have significantly greater dependency on welfare, their participation in the labour market will reduce their reliance on state welfare.

Employment is of significance to the current study as it is considered the first step of stability and comfort in a refugee’s new environment. Refugees will also become acquainted with the host society culture through interaction with others, because in order to understand those with whom we interact, we need to be acquainted with their culture: human beings are the products of their culture, and much of their behaviour, values, and goals are culturally determined. Employment will also compensate for the Iraqi refugees’ years of deprivation in other countries or refugee
Another type of integration is that of religious integration, which will be examined next.

**Religious integration**

Religion has a major influence in societies, affecting nonreligious institutions specifically, such as the family or conjugal ties, as well as bringing about general social change. All religions confirm that cultural relations, actually, are exchangeable among civilisations and give those relationships effectiveness. They strongly tend to focus on building common universal values among all human beings, such as the right to life, justice, equality, freedom, democracy, decent living, and dealing in a more modern way with woman’s rights (Fadhlullah, 1998).

The coexistence of religions and cultures stems from an ideological ground and occurs in an atmosphere of social peace, increasing the coherence of bilateral, religious and social ties and tolerance, which embrace difference in others whether of religion, race or politics. Subsequently, in contrast to what most European thinkers assume, that is, that a society with one religion is more cohesive than one with a diversity of religions (Turner, 2008), Islam encourages and insists on integration and harmony among diverse cultures and religions if their aim is to serve noble humanitarian objectives and achieve noble humanitarian interests. Accordingly, Quran says ‘O mankind! We have created you from a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes that you may know one another’ (Al-Hujurat, verse, 13).

Religion has significance, vitality and transformation in the context of contemporary immigration (Beyer, 1994) as religious rules influence members in nearly all parts of daily life, such as in prayer times, worship rituals, religious holidays, fasting times or rules related to food. This can be seen in how it features significantly in the lives of Iraqi refugees in Australia. Away from their home country, it becomes a formidable anchor in their lives. It affects and shapes their daily life, their behaviour, their way
of approaching situations and the way they relate to one another. In that sense religion can serve as a crucial force in terms of collective belonging and identity, providing a tool for the management of social problems (Zachary, 2003). So it is important to discuss religion as a factor of integration, since religious rights along with the cultural and linguistic rights form the basis of a two-way integration process for refugees (Kymlicka, 2001a; Penninx, 2000, 2004).

Religion becomes an inseparable part of refugee identity and when they immigrate to another country they will carry elements of faith with them. It strengthens a sense of belonging through the interaction of both the homeland and host country religions and encourages creating a new identity that is not just a combination of two cultures but something completely new, something that may prove valuable for both societies. So, in the process of immigration and after leaving behind family and social links, refugees, believers or not, may join religious communities more eagerly because they may feel the need to defend their identities.

Consequently, the religious community may play an important role in directing immigration movements. Sometimes immigrants choose the country or even the town of destination because of particular religious links in that place. They may be aware that in a certain city there is a community that professes the same creed, where it will be easier to feel at home and to receive support. In this way, religion may become a pull factor for immigration, since it explains to immigrants the best ways to use religion in all stages of the immigration process, including initial decision making, preparation, the journey, the arrival, in settlement, and in the development of subsequent transitional linkages.

Because immigration has led to ethnic and religious diversity in some countries which attract immigration, religion may have a positive or a negative effect on the integration process. It can become a major cause of conflict within a state or it may affect the way refugees integrate with their host societies as it influences not only individuals, but possibly community life and the internal cohesion of a country as well. It is considered a supportive element to the integrative meaning system which links citizens of the same country into an integrated religiously-legitimated culture.
and social structure (Turner, 2008, p.22). So, religion becomes an essential place of focus on cultural diversity, especially for immigrant-receiving states, in ways such as, the wearing of distinctive clothes like the hijab, the building of places of worship like mosques and so on (Grillo, 2004b).

While Huntington (1998) affirms that this diversity represents a threat to internal security and a challenge to the host country, Turner (2008) states that religious and cultural diversity consolidate cohesion, solidarity and integration of the society, as is the case in Australia, because diverse religions and ‘communities are best served by their own diverse laws and customs’ (p.68). Thus, in order to tackle these challenges, mutual relationships between society, state and religious organisations should be addressed (Bader, 2003c). In other words, religions, represented in their organisations, should be informed, heard, and consulted in contested issues.

Woodberry (2003) believes that religious organisations are sources of financial, human, social, and cultural capital, and also sources of moral teachings and religious experiences that may motivate, channel, and strengthen people to reach particular ends. Among the instrumental activities that organisations undertake are their functions of maintaining cultural and religious values. In other words, those actions performed by them are directed towards having an impact in the religious and social process. Religious organisations could act as potential partners in the integration process. That implies, in turn, regular relations and negotiations between these organisations and the authorities, both for the regulation of definite facilities in the host country for Islam, for example, (halal slaughtering, mosque building, state funded Islamic schools, and other functions) and for integration activities by Islamic organisations.

Although religious organisations may promote social relations to reduce inter-generational stress among refugees and thus facilitate growing mobility (Warner, 2007), it is only participation in religious majority organisations that provides the kind of bridging social relations which may be translated into tangible and successful integration. So in contrast to what Warner (1997) states, that there is a boundary drawn between religious communities, Putnam and Campbell (2010) assert that high
religious mobility facilitates boundary crossing and produces blurry religious boundaries overall. While the first generation typically adheres to religious organisations, such as mosques, the involvement of the second generation in gathering will be most beneficial if it is active religious participation. Religion has positive impact on integration, such as occupational attainment, especially for the second generation.

As a level of integration, adaptation to the religious environment in the host country would take place as time goes by. It allows bridges to be built between immigrants and the local population. Religious adaptation creates linkages between the immigrants and the local population and smoothes the integration process. As well, religious adaptation facilitates the process of acquaintance with the new socio-cultural environment.

It is important to conclude that religion is a main vehicle through which the process of refugees’ integration occurs. Both refugee communities and host community can be enhanced, spiritually, through building connections with each other. These relationships require a positive environment, as well as openness to cooperation and change, from both the host community and the refugee community. Therefore, it is essential that all individuals involved work hard to promote an active and positive role for religion in the integration process.

Religious organisations, on the other hand, help new arrivals to settle and integrate, assisting them to build and sustain communities that support their members, building bridges to others, maintaining transnational linkages and maintaining family and religious connections. Consequently, in order to bridge the gap between refugees and the host community the government needs to take some positive steps towards the inclusion of religious organisations in negotiations about the governance of diversity, which may have positive impacts on the processes of integration (Penninx, 2000). The recognition of religious organisations as partners in integration policies will create positive attitudes of refugees towards integration.
These organisations may pave the way towards obtaining religious integration because religion is important for all parts of refugees’ daily life, such as praying, fasting, worshipping and eating. Religion also represents a key tool in expressing and living their religious faith. This faith can be a tool for stabilisation, allowing them to avoid marginalisation. Meanwhile, the loss of religious identity may lead to the loss of ethical values, which can cause immigrants to feel even more uprooted in the host society, which would cause major changes in refugees’ lives (Hage and Couch, 1999, p.111).

Religious integration is important to the present thesis as Islam strongly inclines towards rationalism, and focuses on building common universal values among all human beings, such as the right to life, justice, equality, freedom, democracy and decent living, respects minorities and guarantees the rights of religious and ethnic groups in maintaining their advantages. It also shows a positive connection with Non-Muslims and other immigrants. Islam comprehends and coexists with the concepts of Western civilisation in a more tolerant spirit. It also believes that the coexistence of religions and cultures in an atmosphere of tolerance and social peace increases the coherence of bilateral, religious and social ties, as well as interacts with the mechanisms of perfection and integration in Western society.

Islam deals in a more modern way with women’s issues, where Muslim women in the West are more active than they were in their homeland. They work in all areas and even enter political life, participating in decision-making through membership of different political parties, competing in general and local elections, and seeking to provide support for Muslim community affairs.

Religious elements may be associated with politics in determining the relationship between Muslims and the West in general, and between Muslims and civic politics in particular.

**Political integration**

It can be argued that events such as war and major political upheavals increase social integration. The ‘us-against-them’ mentality that overflows during times of war
causes people to bond closely with others on the same side of the conflict. Additionally, having a common enemy brings people together, turning individuals into a society. The feeling that the public political culture centres on the idea of justice, fairness and equity regardless of the people’s religious or ethnic belonging (Rex and Singh, 2003) may also contribute to unite all the members of the society.

Political integration, according to Tillie and Slijper (2003, 2006), relates to the effective participation of immigrants in the public sphere through voting, raising funds for parties or social movements, or trying to affect the government related to homeland issues (Goldring, et al., 2003). Accordingly, becoming a full member of the community might be called multicultural political integration (Kymlicka, 1995; Vertovec, 1996).

The concept of political integration could be considered as an extension of the concept of social integration when referring to the individuals’ relationship to the political domain and understanding their role within the state. One can say that people, including of course, refugees, are politically integrated if they show positive attitudes towards the political community and participate in the political process. They can contribute politically in the host society as they contribute through their labour contribution in the development of the civil society (North-South Centre of the Council of Europe, 2006, p.33). Their political participation and, of course, representation are important factors for their inclusion in society. So, refugees need to be acknowledged by a secure legal position and have the opportunity to participate in politics and policy-making; especially those affecting their status in the host country.

As a result, the host country needs to create new policies and legislation that increases the participation of refugees in the political sphere, so that refugees politically integrate in the host country through voting and electing. The host country may develop effective alternative channels for immigrants’ political participation by creating a local form of inclusion and citizenship (Penninx, et al., 2004a) and confirm that integration policies should be comprehensive and do not only represent the interests of the majority, but also the needs of the minority communities.
These procedures will contribute to increasing refugees’ participation in political elections, which is considered a sign of their commitment to the socio-political development of Australia. The high percentage of refugee participation in the political elections process may also contribute to uniting all the members of the community in terms of their sense of belonging to a country in which they have the right to vote and choose their representatives. Participation may also help refugees position themselves in local public spheres and unite with the local people of the country in selecting the honest candidate to represent them. Thus, a refugee’s election would create a platform that ‘particularly focused on the recognition of dual citizenship, eradication of racism and discrimination’ (Turner, 2003, p.338). In such a political system, the majority-minority relationships would be enhanced and the clash of interests would vanish and this may lead to inclusion of most refugees in the political system and deter marginalisation of their voices.

Political exclusion, on the other hand, which is the opposite of political integration, is when refugees are not regarded as a part of the political status of the host country so that their political position is different from that of local people. This leads, in turn, either to an absence of integration policies and an avoidance of refugee issues, or support of policies related only to the majority interests and disregard for the needs and opinions of refugees. Political exclusion ‘is likely to have a negative effect on mental health’ (Hayes and Humphries, 2004, p.191), where the process of cultural and ethnic diversity, coupled with unequal opportunity, overwhelms the community. Subsequently, a person may feel that he or she is an inactive and undesirable person in the country.

However, in order to foster political integration within minority communities, refugee membership and participation in activities of ethnic organisations may have an impact over their interest and involvement in the host country’s politics (Diehl and Blohm, 2001). Fennema and Tillie (1999) and Togeby (1999), alternatively, demonstrate that membership and participation in ethnic organisations alone might not be sufficient to promote refugees’ political integration and connect refugees to the host country. These ethnic organisations may become much more important for
the political involvement of ethnic minorities than for the host community (Leighley, 2001).

Participation is the best level of integration when talking about political integration. Participating in the host country’s political life, such as elections or joining a political party, opens the door to consultations, involvement in decision-making and representation of refugee communities. It also creates effective partnerships with different government agencies at different levels and achieves more political support for public policy in such areas as education, health insurance and income distribution programs. Moreover, political participation in social campaigns, especially in political and economic crises and wars, reflects the values of citizenship, belonging and national unity.

Political integration can be linked to the creation of a sense of belonging to the host country. Consequently, a sense of belonging seems to be more linked to the host country conditions than to refugees’ gains from the host country migratory laws. Political integration can also be linked to social integration through refugees’ membership in ethnic organisations, which can serve as an indicator for social and political integration. Ethnic organisations, refugees’ participation in elections, and political representation at the local level are additional signs of political integration.

Refugees need to be inspired to feel that politics is now something that they can get involved in, as refugees have energy, fresh ideas and different perspectives, which politics in the host country needs. Their political participation is an essential step towards integration, so all refugee candidates need to be encouraged to contribute their experience and to employ their civic responsibilities.

Refugees’ political participation impacts the current study as Iraqis were denied, for nearly fifty years, voting to elect their representatives. They have lost the thrill of a sense of citizenship and belonging to their homeland because they felt that they were merely tools for the government to organise and shape the way it liked.
All the above mentioned forms of integration depend, to a large extent, upon the existence of the human communication tool, language, because without it the Iraqi community cannot decode the Australian community secrets, penetrate to its depths and understand it thoroughly.

**Linguistic integration**

Language plays an essential role in the life of the human being, because only through language can human beings express their thoughts, desires, needs and inclinations, understand the surrounding environment and be involved in social interaction with others (Burr, 1998). It is essential for social inclusion and integration because it is the principal medium for mediating and directing social relationships in any society. Therefore, linguistic integration is among the first essential steps, and refugees’ proficiency in the host country language provides an important insight into this aspect of integration. It is related to settlement factors, particularly education, employment (Schleicher, 2006; Wayland, 2006; White, et al., 2002) and social structure. Language makes refugees aware of host community values and culture and makes the host community aware of the refugees’ values and culture (Turner, 2008), which will facilitate, in turn, the idea of integration from both sides.

Thus, a mutual language shared by all members of the community is important for the unity and solidarity of the community, where all its members are able to speak the same language (Battle, 1998; Singer, 1998). The more an individual is able to speak the language of the country in which he or she lives, the more chances he or she will get to interact, and so be able to integrate in a reasonable time (Burr, 1998).

Significantly, learning a foreign language is one of a selection of integrative motivations toward the foreign culture, which is expressed by the willingness of the learners to share the society’s language (Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford, 1997). ‘These motives could be one or more and could be categorised as: economic, political, religious, cultural, social, and professional motivations’ (Al Sayyid, 1989, p.26).

Educational and cultural motivations are represented in a refugee’s desire to learn English to pursue study or to be acquainted with the host country culture. Professional and economic motives are represented in a refugee’s desire to learn
English to obtain employment (Anyon, 2005) and enhance his or her ability to participate in the labour market (Hugo, 2011, p.xxiii). Eventually, personal and social motives are represented in a refugee’s desire to learn English because he or she lives in Australia and his or her friends speak and read English, and to participate in the social life (Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford, 1997).

As has been noted above, learning English language is:

... critical in facilitating social contacts, in enhancing employment and educational opportunities, and in providing the basis for productive involvement in the economic, social and cultural life of the receiving society. (White, et al., 2002, p.149)

Nevertheless, Hugo (2011, p.127) found that 36.5 per cent of immigrants who arrived in Australia since 2001 could not speak English well or at all in comparison to other visa holders, especially skilled immigrants. Lack of English language skills is considered an essential factor that affects immigrants’ settlement (Wooden, 1994a, 1994b) and employment. Consequently, Hugo (2011) confirms that in 2006, the proportion of immigrants who did not speak English well or at all and were unemployed was 74 per cent (p.128).

However, the inability to speak English creates social problems such as the inability to mix with non-native people, which leads to social isolation, loneliness and depression (Kyle, et al., 2004; Coilic-Peisker and Tilbury, 2007a; Casimiro, et al., 2007). It may also affect mature refugees, because they are incapable of handling their daily affairs. Therefore they use their children or friends, whose English is far better, as interpreters and that may create a gap between parents and their children, since mutual communication is not found because some children speak English at home. As a result, parents’ relationships and supervision will be limited. That, in turn, may result in parents’ low self-confidence and children with high rates of truancy and disruptive behaviour at home, and poor attendance, low achievement and educational failure at school, and a separation from the family and society (Collins, et al., 2000; Garcia, 2002; Portes, 1995).
Additionally, educational failure may be an essential factor in non-mastering of the English language, because although education reinforces and supports societal homogeneity, many factors may interfere with refugee adaptation to education, including displacement, the degree of pre-immigration trauma, mental health status, the degree of family cohesion and other issues. Further, early school leaving, which can be the result of the cumulative effects of low individual and group self-esteem, unemployment, economic hardship, family violence, cultural differences and continual familiarity with the police, courts and prisons, may be seen as a key factor in not learning English (Kukathas, 1993).

Thus, due to the importance of acquiring English language, providing these skills is considered a public task. Integration programmes, through language courses for adult immigrants, were established as an obligatory requirement (Mehlem, et al., 2004) for the right to receive Centrelink assistance. As a result, and to meet the needs of refugees, and Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP), which provides up to 510 hours of basic English language tuition to refugees from non-English speaking backgrounds, has been established.

While AMEP was adapted to make it better suited to the needs of refugees, criticisms remain about issues of access, concerns regarding its adequacy for those students who are illiterate in their native language, and in terms of its lack of focus on English for the workplace and spoken English (RCOA, 2007; Moore et al., 2008). In relation to high-level professional refugees the program has also been insufficient (Tilbury, et al., 2005). Olliff and Couch (2005) argue that six to 12 months of language training is grossly inadequate for those who have not experienced formal learning before and are not literate in their first language.

Furthermore, in relation to language acquisition among elderly refugees, Grognet (1997) writes of the demoralising effects that resettlement can have on the elderly, noting that ‘[a]t a time in their lives when they should be looking forward to respect and reverence, elderly refugees find themselves transplanted in a culture which is focused on youth’ (p.3). She then discusses physical and mental health factors which affect language learning among the elderly, and notes that mental health ‘is probably
the single most decisive factor in refugee language learning’ (ibid, p.4). Depression stemming both from age and from the horrors of war ‘do[es] not permit them to concentrate well, thus reinforcing the cycle of not being able to speak English and deal with the demands of everyday life’ (ibid, p.4). Successful programs, according to Grognet, are those that cater to the language needs of elderly refugees, that is, learning English language skills that they need in everyday life, and do not focus on grammar or expansive vocabulary (p.6).

As discussed above, while acquiring the dominant language plays a crucial role in the integration process, from the perspective of linguistic diversity there is concern about whether teaching the dominant language makes sense when the majority of pupils have other language backgrounds (Mehlem, et al., 2004). That debate is directly linked to the politics of recognition (Baubock, 2003) of immigrants as linguistic minorities. In this view, courses in the native language of immigrants should be introduced in public schools.

Since learning the dominant language is a challenge to many refugees, and in order to enhance linguistic integration and prevent blaming immigrants for their failure to integrate, small classes for refugees who live in their ethnic community using their native language could be held, for those who speak the same language, making use of interpreters who would work with these groups (Else, et al., 2007). Trained interpreters, friends, or family members may be used as translators. As well, different types of curriculum should be designed for those with limited literacy skills; for example, picture-based courses with visual aids and pictorial stories.

Some authors affirm that host countries should guarantee the right of immigrants to use their native languages (Baubock, 2003). They should not only have the right to use their languages for shop signs, advertising, private print or audiovisual media, but also as a medium of instruction in private schools. Some necessary institutions, especially hospitals or police stations, should be fostered by providing translation and interpreter services, bilingual forms and ballots, and information in immigrant languages (ibid).
As well as many studies showing that bilingualism is associated with higher academic achievement (Bankston and Zhou, 1995), multilingualism allows better employment of cultural instruments which promote self-esteem and identity. Refugees’ English language will be improved as they work hard to be proficient in their native language and in English, which will, in turn, increase and reinforce their aspirations. Proficiency in English language will permit refugees to best interact with local students at school and in their communities.

Accordingly, such linguistic assimilation is reasonable only in case of assuming a mutual approach between public interests and private interests of the immigrants. Hence, the host country should provide compulsory language courses for adults to secure refugees’ long-term settlement and socio-economic stability (Baubock, 2003).

Whether language courses are compulsory or voluntary, the other important issue is their content. While some studies argue that it is crucial to teach the basis skills necessary for everyday conversations, others stress the importance of literacy and writing (Mehlem, et al., 2004).

As a level of integration, participation is the best level to represent linguistic integration. Participation in different fields of social life requires speaking the native language because the most important function of language is to exchange ideas and opinions among different members of the community to achieve national unity and social interaction. Language is the bridge, where different cultures cross from one society to other societies.

In conclusion, language is an important instrument in developing social interaction and, more generally, is seen as a positive sign in the integration process. Moreover, speaking the host country language plays an important part in:

... the successful settlement of migrants. In the workplace it enables them to seek better-paid and more congenial work that may be closed to them without some knowledge of the language of the country. It also helps to widen social contacts and break down feelings of loneliness and isolation. (Collins, 1991, p.167)
Despite the significance of English language in refugees’ integration into the broader community, the support provided by the government represented by multiple educational institutions is not sufficient. However, a refugee’s desire to learn English may depend on whether he or she lives in an ethnic community with other refugees who speak his or her native language, in which case there may be less opportunity and motivation to speak English and learn English. The challenge Iraqi refugees face relate to their pre-immigration circumstances and to the kind of educational institutions they may join.

**Civic integration**

Civic integration is to treat immigrants as individuals responsible for their own integration. It aims to support and empower different ethnic communities. It implies that ethnic minorities have to be taken into consideration by all government departments, allowing different religious groups to set up religious schools (Entzinger, 2003). It also ensures that students of immigrant families receive lessons on empowerment in their native language, from their own cultural perspective.

Civic integration has to be understood within the specific host society’s context. It compels immigrants who seek permanent residence to learn to speak the host country language and have basic knowledge of its culture and society through obliging them to actively participate in an integration course, civic education, preparation for the labour market and getting to know the details of the host society (Entzinger, 2003). In turn, immigrants will be connected to the host society, familiar with its values and ways of life, becoming functioning members of society, self-sufficient and autonomous (Joppke, 1999).

In order to facilitate civic integration policy, the host country provides compulsory civic integration courses which consist of language training, orientation courses and educational and social counselling. In that sense the immigrants will actively participate in all segments of society. The immigrants are not only required to participate in organised language training courses but they have to pass a test (Entzinger, 1994). If failing to pass this test, the immigrant can be penalised with administrative fines and a denial of permanent resident status. That means that the
immigrant will always remain confronted with an insecure residence status, which will influence his or her study, starting a job or getting married. Further, obtaining host country citizenship is also dependent on passing the civic integration test.

Through introducing civic integration programmes, the host country endeavours to improve the modest position of ethnic minorities through stimulating group emancipation and fighting racial discrimination (Entzinger, 1994). Moreover, it seeks to encourage immigrants to actually participate in the society at large (Joppke, 2007). Finally, the host country may try to apply a new approach where cultural relativism makes way for the domination of liberal values and principles (Entzinger, 1994). This perspective is characterised by a strong emphasis on common values and on institutions as a binding factor in society.

However, in an attempt to control the flow of immigrants, some governments introduce civic integration tests abroad to prevent the arrival of poorly educated and ill-prepared immigrants (Goodman, 2010). This way, immigrants will be prepared before arrival through acquiring a very basic knowledge of the host country language and society. As a result of this test, only those who are better prepared can make their way to the intended country. So, preparation and selection will benefit the integration process of immigrants in this country, because ill-prepared and poorly skilled immigrants would impede the integration process of immigrants and their children. Therefore, those who intend to immigrate for the purpose of family formation or reunification have to pass a civic integration exam in their homelands before being granted a visa. Refugees and asylum seekers are, for obvious reasons, exempted from this obligation.

Accordingly, Entzinger (2003) believes that civic integration has been set out to be a tool of immigration control, helping to limit the entry of unskilled immigrants, asylum seekers and non-adaptable family immigrants, and attract high-skilled immigrants. In addition, it has sought to control who can obtain a permanent residency permit, and ultimately who can become a citizen of the host country.
Human Rights Watch (2008) criticised civic integration exams abroad and raised the matter of the time required for the applicant to prepare for the test in combination with an application procedure for entry, which could lead to long periods of separation of family members. Further, those who intend to reunite with their families need to sit for a civic integration test at the host country embassy abroad, which can involve long travel distances for spouses and other family members, sometimes to other countries.

Civic integration policies intersect with social rights of immigrants, since access to social benefits is determined by legality of residence in the first place, rather than by nationality (Vonk, 2002). Although language is considered an essential key for both interaction with local people and access to mainstream society, levels of language proficiency are often too poor to anticipate a better socio-economic performance (Klaver and Ode, 2009). The reason behind that is that many immigrants do not participate in any language teaching, while those who attend language classes do not show any considerable improvement in their proficiency of language after finishing an integration course (ibid). So, civic integration is not the best way to deal with the problems surrounding the integration process, because the immigrants’ problems exist due to the reality of the society they live in and not because of poorly-educated or unskilled immigrants.

In regards to Australia, it has been noted that one of the civic integration policies is restricting the entry of certain types of immigrants. This policy creates a lot of barriers, which result in decreasing the number of immigrants, through limiting the entry of unskilled immigrants, asylum seekers and non-adaptable family immigrants (Entzinger, 2003), where they become dependent on welfare payments and create serious problems for the host community. Therefore, Australia selects predominantly highly skilled, resourceful, and proficient-in-English-language immigrants (Jupp, 2001; Koleth, 2010).

It is important to conclude that civic integration policies are expressed in obligatory language courses and citizenship tests (Brubaker, 2001; Joppke, 2007) and the integration of refugees is bound by host country historic and socio-political contexts
and the roles of the state and civil society. However, these policies do not only contribute to growing exclusion or discrimination, but can create an environment full of grievances and feelings of alienation and marginalisation, especially experienced by young people from minority groups who may feel like outsiders lacking equal opportunities.

**Civic integration and granting citizenship**

There is a strong connection between civic integration requirements and residence status. It can be considered as a dramatic change in the host country attitude towards citizenship and immigrants, where language proficiency, moral values and country knowledge have become important conditions for citizenship acquisition (Goodman, 2010). This change is considered a reversal of the dominant citizenship concept. That means those who apply to obtain citizenship have to become, first of all, citizens in the socio-psychological sense before obtaining formal citizenship or moral citizenship. This change can be characterised as a move towards a more exclusive and thick concept of citizenship (*ibid*), which is a legal and social status that provides rights and entitlement to individuals.

These rights and entitlements can include access to education and social services and the right to vote in elections. While Isin and Turner (2002) point out that citizenship ‘*has systematically made certain groups strangers and outsiders*’ (p.3), Yuval-Davis, et al. (2006) see it as an informal, multi-layered way of participating, which is not limited to states. In that sense, the concept of citizenship means the willingness and capability of citizens to participate in the community and actively contribute to it. In other words, it is the participation of citizens in society and knowledge of and commitment to the society culture.

Overall, citizenship refers to formal membership of a country, like having the host country passport or enjoying a set of rights, like civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights. It operates socially through the mutual balance of rights and responsibilities that the bearers shoulder, which affords those bearers equal opportunity, dignity and confidence (Meer, 2010).
Obtaining citizenship, which means that refugees become citizens of the host country, is a significant achievement for many refugees, not only for personal reasons, but also for the practical reason of having the same rights and access to services as local people. It also integrally links refugees to the host country and to the people belonging to that country.

In regards to Australian citizenship, Hage (2002) states that it has been marked by a movement from exclusion to inclusion (p.53) and is focused on ensuring cohesion and integration of all citizens. The Australian government reformed the citizenship laws and subsequently issued a new citizenship test (Koleth, 2010) which examines the requirements a person should meet for becoming an Australian citizen. The citizenship test consists of questions which examine refugees’ awareness of the host country culture, history and geography, as well as a brief interview. Refugees’ need for citizenship assistance was so great that there has been a citizenship class offered by the Adult and Community Learning (ACL) English language institute. Citizenship classes focus on teaching enough English to pass the test, especially for the elderly. The elderly’s need for English language capabilities is often an issue because many of them lived with their families, and only had interaction with their families and with other refugees. Therefore, they really needed English language to get citizenship.

Nevertheless, citizenship is not easy for many refugees to obtain; as is noted above, it involves establishing refugee’s ability to speak and write simple English sentences. People who have endured severe trauma may be mentally incapable of learning English, or of sitting through the test, and accordingly this influences their ability to obtain citizenship. Others may suffer from medical conditions, which make it difficult to sit in a classroom and learn English for several hours at a time. Many of them may be illiterate in their own language, which means that learning to read and write in any language is a challenging task. On paper it was a great idea to target these populations, but in reality it is much different. Therefore, it has been difficult for the ACL teachers to teach elderly refugees English, at the level of the citizenship test, when what was needed was basic literacy.
Obtaining the citizenship of the host country can be considered as the most successful step towards the integration process or as a changing point in a constant process of integration. It can be argued that its requirements are set in a way to guide refugees through steps that are considered to promote their integration. One of these steps is the period of time a refugee has spent in the host country, which is thought to be positively correlated with their integration.

Although, it is sometimes seen as a mark of full integration into society, those who have formal citizenship may not enjoy full access to important rights, as a result of racism or social exclusion. In such cases, citizenship may not be a sufficient condition for full integration (Castles, et al., 2002). This point creates debate on whether citizenship is an adequate requirement for the integration of immigrants into a society. Some scholars insist that citizenship remains vital for the integration of immigrants and can be seen as an instrument to bring different communities into unity and consolidate a sense of belonging and national unity (Koleth, 2010; Turner, 2003). Similarly, Penninx perceives that culturally diverse individuals and groups can be fully integrated into society without losing their individuality or being denied full participation. The basic premise proposed by Penninx (2000) is that:

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\text{... immigrants cannot become equal citizens unless state and society accept that both individuals and groups have the right to cultural difference. The prevailing institutions and rules in society are historical and cultural products that are not neutral for newcomers and thus may need revision in order to accommodate newcomers according to the multicultural vision. (pp.8-9)}
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Others such as Joppke (1999) argue that the acquisition of citizenship is one facet of integration but it does not guarantee equal rights and it is only a ‘legal process of naturalisation’ (p.629). It is among the various factors supporting the integration of refugees and it can be perceived as the relationship between the individual and the country which is determined by law, and what that relationship includes in relation to duties and rights. Maalouf (1999) believes that although the human being may live for many years in another country, he or she remains, in principle, a holder of his or her first cultural experience, because citizenship is not always indicative of the sense of psychological and social belonging to a country. On the other hand, granting
To conclude, the principle of citizenship assumes that the host country has to cope with balancing pluralism and diversity and the needs of the state to ensure equal rights (Kymlicka and Norman, 2000). Granting citizenship implies shared citizenship, which is defined by the host country as involving cultural elements such as acquaintance with the dominant language and adherence to the host society norms and values. In this sense, the elements of civic integration policy arise from a one-dimensional normative framework, based on the dominant culture, where there is little room for different social and cultural standards and prevailing patterns of social exchange. Accordingly, the rhetoric of respect for diversity has been replaced by implanting the dominant host society values and norms (Entzinger, 2003). Moreover, civic integration, where immigrants are asked to adopt a shared standard of language and values, resonates closely with the philosophy of assimilation (Favell, 1998; Brubaker, 2003). As a result, minor communities may withdraw to their own ethnic groups and develop the concepts of identity and difference which do not match with the idea of promoting social cohesion and shared citizenship.

Obtaining citizenship may add a brick to the integration process structure, but it is not an essential factor of the integration process. Granting Australian citizenship is important to the current study as it may contribute to consolidate social solidarity and a sense of belonging and it is sometimes seen as a sign of full integration into society (Castles, et al., 2002).

Being acquainted with the different kinds of integration may shed some light on the integration process. So, with this broad understanding of the term ‘integration’, it is important to see the relation between Australian immigration and integration policies.
3.5 The Relationship Between Australian immigration and integration Policies

It can be argued that immigration is a human process that involves all aspects of social life, and touches all the citizens of the countries most attracting migration. So these countries worked and still work hard to create positive community relations by encouraging meaningful interaction inside the broader multi-ethnic society by exploring some policies. These policies or programs emphasise building bridges between different religious and/or ethnic groups. They try to provide arenas in which people from different backgrounds interact meaningfully and with a common purpose, breaking down misconceptions, and encouraging understanding, trust and a sense of common purpose amongst participants (Fadhlullah, 1998).

Immigration is considered an essential feature of Australia’s history and identity as it is a country composed not only of its own local people but a wide variety of ethnic and cultural groups – a fifth of the Australian population was born overseas (Wooden, et al., 1994). It also has an impact on every aspect of Australian development and plays a crucial role in shaping the Australian economy and society (ibid) as it creates a kind of competition among the races in constructive ways and ensures success, production, proof of existence, and the gaining of the respect of society and other groups.

Australia has an interesting and dynamic immigration policy history, with changes instigated to adapt to waves of immigration and settlement challenges over the decades. Four historical phases can be identified in Australian immigration policy, namely, the White Australia policy, assimilation, integration and multiculturalism.

The current section discusses the confusion in using these terms and their relationship to the integration of refugees in Australia. Though these three terms may look similar in purpose, they are different conceptually and in application.

3.5.1 White Australia policy

From the time of Federation in 1901, until the end of the Second World War, Australia implemented the Immigration Restriction Act (White Australia Policy)
(Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2012) which prohibited undesirable immigrants like prostitutes, paupers, and criminals from immigrating to Australia (Adelman, et al., 1994). In that view, ‘whiteness had become the defining racial marker of the Australian nation [with] ... the exclusion of all who were not white’ (Hage and Couch, 1999, p.175). Although Australia needed immigrants, it had welcomed only whites in order to ensure that a racially homogenous society would confront the challenges of the post-war era (Collins, 1991, p.10). The policy was also introduced due to fear of losing national identity and of foreign invasion, especially after high waves of Chinese immigrants (Hage, 1998; Georgiou, 2008). It is built on the easing of racially restricted immigration and racial and other forms of discrimination. So, the Australian government was reluctant to accept non-European refugees, ‘fearing that because of their cultural and linguistic diversity they might not be assimilated into Australia’s predominantly British society’ (Jupp, 2001, p.65).

The White Australia policy meant that certain ethnic groups were preferred as immigrants. In this way, whiteness was preserved as a naturalised quality of Australia (Hage and Couch, 1999, p.175). This policy was aimed to emphasise that the entire population of Australia was to be of one race only, the white race, and to exclude the Indigenous Australians. The presence of all those who were not white was considered undesirable (ibid, p.191). Overall, the White Australia Policy created racism against immigrants (Castles, et al., 1995).

According to the Immigration Restriction Act (York, 1996), the immigrant has to pass a test in English language chosen by an immigration officer. That language test was used to prohibit non-whites or undesirable persons and allowed those of good character to immigrate to Australia. The White Australia Policy, which prohibited all non-European people from immigrating into Australia, lasted from the 1900s to the 1950s.

After the Second World War, the Australian government started dismantling restrictions on non-British immigration and almost all conditions blocking entry of non-European stock had been removed (Wayne, 2004). This policy was based on the belief that these immigrants could easily abandon their cultural and linguistic
backgrounds and assimilate into Australian society. To achieve this assimilation policy the government proposed to counter the small number of European immigrants with a much higher number of immigrants from the United Kingdom (DIAC, 2008). Therefore, in 1947, Australia changed the immigration policy which concentrated on attracting those of British and Irish ancestry to one with a significantly polyethnic character (Adelman, et al., 1994). The government promotion of large-scale immigration, in terms of numbers and ethnic heterogeneity affected various institutions of the society, including education, work, the family, the law and immigration itself. From the mid-1960s, just highly skilled non-Europeans were allowed to settle permanently in Australia for business reasons, as immigration coincided with long-term business interests (Collins, 1991, p.25; Adelman, et al., 1994). This policy avoided references to questions of race; therefore it allowed well-qualified persons to immigrate.

It was only in 1972 that the White Australia policy was formally buried (Collins, 1991, p.9). About mid-1973 and in the late 1990s, due to economic collapse in Australia, the government was obliged to reduce the immigrant target by 21 per cent, because of high levels of unemployment (Jupp, 2001). Selection methods favoured skilled immigrants who were proficient in English, and over half of the immigrants from countries whose main language is not English arrived with post-school qualifications (Jupp, 2001; Koleth, 2010).

Some observers argue strongly against immigration, pointing to its apparent role in adding to domestic unemployment, pressing down wages, reducing opportunities for local employees through undue reliance on overseas-based skills, and adding disproportionately to budget costs through settlement and language programs and welfare payments (Adelman, et al., 1994, p.445). On the contrary, Jupp (2001) believes that immigration is clearly beneficial to the host economy, citing such apparent advantages as its provision of a ready source of qualified new arrivals and new skills to the domestic labour force. Or as Castles (1985) theorises, immigrants are scapegoats for host country economic development.
3.5.2 Assimilation

Some authors believe that the refugee integration process comprised an interconnected set of stages that all refugees had to go through (Malkki, 1995) including refugees’ abandonment of their original language, customs and beliefs, and adoption of the host country language, customs and beliefs (Taran, 1998). In that sense, they have just focussed on integration processes through the lens of the host country and proceed towards assimilation (Molesky-Poz, 1997).

The word ‘assimilation’ means to make similar. This policy within the social and political context implies that there is a dominant cultural heritage for the members of a given society to follow in order to be accepted as a member of that society, and this policy indicates that some people have to change so as to be like the local people of that society (Maagero and Simonsen, 2005, p.146). The term ‘assimilation’ is often used with regard to immigrants and different ethnic groups who have settled in a new country. Immigrants will obtain a new culture and new attitudes that might be largely different from their original culture through contacting and communicating with the people of the new country.

Assimilation policies have a single dimension, where there is no other choice for minority communities but to assimilate completely into the culture of the majority or remain as members of the minority group (Lazear, 1999). Alba (1999) has understood assimilation as a one-sided process, where immigrants and their descendants give up their culture and adapt completely to the host society they settle in, but goes on to say that

*[a]ne implication of this is that assimilation need not be a wholly one-sided process: it can take place as changes in two (or more) groups, or parts of them, shrink the differences and social distance between them. (p.6)*

Following this definition, assimilation means the reduction of social difference between groups that share one society. These social differences might mean values or income differentials. It can also mean the disappearance of immigrants’ social and cultural identity and their absorption both politically and economically into the
broader community. Further, this occurs spontaneously and often unintended, in the course of interaction between minority communities and the broader or dominant community (Clark, 2003).

Assimilation expresses the natural and normative goal of the time when and context in which immigrants were thought to eventually let go of their original culture, beliefs, and language and adhere to the standards and ideals of the host country. The idea is that minority communities assimilate with the traditions of the host country, because refugees have nothing to contribute to the culture and society of the host country, except their employment (Taran, 1998).

However, there are many factors which may interfere with the process of assimilation. One of these factors is religion. Religion has a key role in the assimilation process, as it has the ability to replace ethnic and national identities and help immigrants to adapt to the host country identity (Peek, 2005). Moreover, religion has the ability to lessen immigrants’ ethnic, national, and racial differences and bring them together with the host community through shared worship (ibid). Because religion is not connected to a particular place, religious identification could become a factor that enables new arrivals to overcome social isolation.

Furthermore, religious institutions sometimes provide material benefits and play an important role in information transmission regarding economic opportunities in the receiving society (Borjas and Hilton, 1996; Munshi, 2003; Mayda, 2010). They can help refugees by facilitating the assimilation process through religious activities, which will help them acquire social and civic skills (Cyrus, et al., 2006; Ramakrishnan and Viramontes, 2006).

Religious institution services, prayers and religious rituals represent a constant connection between life in the homeland and life in the host country (Tiilikainen, 2003), and help refugees to establish new ties with the local people and adapt to the host country. They also represent the material and social spaces where immigrants can achieve the changes required by the new environment (Ebaugh and Chafetz, 1999), provide psychological comfort and lessen isolation (Chiswick, 2003; Waite
and Lehrer, 2003; Connor, 2010b; Lehrer, 2010). Accordingly, religious institutions are considered as a shock-absorber for immigrants within their new community.

On the contrary, religious organisations may have negative effects on the process of assimilation and could slow the process of assimilation, and serve as a mobility trap (Cadge and Ecklund, 2006). Thus, immigrants who are less integrated into the host society are more likely than others to frequently attend religious occasions. Moreover, those who attend religious services are the unemployed and less educated immigrants, who are more religious than others (Van Tubergen and Sindradottir, 2011).

The concept and policy of assimilation has been criticised for its essentialist assumptions of automatic and permanent absorption into monocultural surroundings (Bosswick and Heckmann, 2006). It undervalues the cultures and languages of minority communities, and consequently, it contradicts democratic principles of diversity and free choice. Although it assumes that the host society is eager and capable of offering equality of rights and opportunities to assimilated immigrants, it fails because of discrimination. It is based on a personal model, and ignores the importance of family and community in social life and gives little attention to the possibility of diverse paths followed by immigrants.

Moreover, assimilation creates hypocritical individuals since their behaviour and actions indoors will not be the same outdoors, which will result in a society dominated by social, psychological and even physical dissent (Fadhllulah, 1998). Life will be paralysed because the refugee will resort to building a new personality and adopting ethics, values and manners that are far away from those with which he or she was brought up. Accordingly, the refugee could revolt, first of all, against his or her community and then against the laws, culture and the country as a whole. In short, refugees might seem to assimilate to the host community, but at the same time increasingly retain their ethnic origin traditions (ibid, pp.30-31).

Assimilation implies bringing refugees into society through a one-way and one-sided process (Boswick and Heckman, 2006, p.4) of adaptation, in which refugees have to
give up their distinctive linguistic, cultural or social characteristics and adopt the values and practices of the host society and become indistinguishable from the major population. Hence, refugees have the same opportunities as the local citizens in the social and economic field, on condition that they adapt their behaviour to the basic values of the broader society. Moreover, the host country works hard to create the suitable circumstances for this process through insisting on the usage of the dominant language and that immigrant children attend public schools. The host country emphasis is on the individual immigrant, who learns the new culture and gives up the culture of origin.

For the above reasons, assimilation can have negative consequences on the immigration status: it may result in cultural isolation, segregation, and parallel societies. So, it has come to be viewed as a policy which imposes ethnocentric and patronising demands on minority groups struggling to retain their cultural and ethnic integrity, such as the Iraqi community, which tends to preserve its cultural characteristics and aims more at maintaining social cohesion. Further, all religions, in general, and Islam, in particular, stand against assimilation, as those anticipated to be assimilated will be forced to give up their beliefs, morals, traditions and values (Fadhlululah, 1998, p.31). For that reason, Iraqi refugees react against the model of assimilation, as it requires giving up their value systems and forces them to retreat into their own communities and refuse to interact with the host culture, living in isolation and loneliness.

After getting rid of the White Australia policy, having regard to Australian status and in order to assist immigrants to adapt on preliminary settlement and become active participants in economic, social, and political activities, the Australian government applied assimilation programs (DIAC, 2009). Assimilation policy was introduced in the 1940s, continued in the 1950s and dominated in the 1960s, and some would argue continued even into the 1970s (DIMIA, 2003; DIAC, 2009). This policy ‘required new arrivals to learn English, adopt Australian cultural practices and become indistinguishable from the Australian born population as quickly as possible’ (Koleth, 2010, p.2). In that sense, immigrants and refugees had to
assimilate and blend into the broader community, while settlement assistance was limited to providing immigrant hostels and some language tuition.

### 3.5.3 Integration

Integration could be recognised as the process where the whole population, regardless of their ethnic background, acquires civil, social, political, human and cultural rights, creating the conditions for greater equality. It could also mean that minority groups should be supported in maintaining their cultural and social identities. Integration can be seen as the main river where a variety of smaller processes can be nourished.

Castles, et al. (2002) states that integration is concerned with issues of identity, belonging, recognition and self respect, however, the nature, history and structure of the host society will determine refugees’ integration. In other words, ‘integration is relative and culturally determined’ (p.26) and it can only occur ‘if the host society provides access to jobs and services, and acceptance of ... the new members of society ... in social interaction ... so they can become equal partners’ (ibid, p.113). Therefore, integration is a two-way process.

By the late 1960s, after Australian assimilation policy was beginning to weaken (Castles, et al., 1995, p.117) and after minor groups felt that they were marginalised and public opinion changed and became more accepting of diversity, the Australian government introduced ‘integration’ (DIAC, 2009) as the guiding principle for immigrant settlement. This satisfied the universal right of refugees to maintain their own culture and identity while trying to integrate into their new environment (Turner, 2003; Jupp, 2007). It is a consolidation or harmony with the host community as equals in society where refugees ‘cling’ to their cultural and religious roots, but in a kind of openness and cooperation with other cultures and beliefs under the umbrella of the same society (Zimmermann, 2008).

The Australian government took steps in order to advance policies to integrate, instead of assimilate all cultural and religious diversity into one united wider culture (Bouma, 1999; Casimiro, et al., 2007). These steps and attitudes built on a basis of
the knowledge of all diversities in religious and social beliefs within all communities in Australia.

3.5.4 Multiculturalism

The policy of multiculturalism has become a key issue of political and intellectual dialogue due to large-scale immigration to the West. One can clarify the confusing image of immigration and integration through deeply investigating this concept. Multiculturalism has been recommended as a beneficial policy for multiethnic societies due to immigration, and introduced because of the growing rejection of assimilation policy. So, multiculturalism represents a significant shift of policy from assimilation, which is blamed as the cause of most immigrant settlement problems (Kalantzis and Cope, 2001), to the recognition of cultural diversity.

Multiculturalism does not mean acceptance of diversity only, but it perceives diversity through quality and social wealth, where minor communities should be open and interact to learn and benefit from each other’s heritage. From this perspective, immigrants’ cultures contribute to enrich the cultures of the host society, where the host community can learn from immigrants’ qualities, like emotionality and stable family relations. According to this concept, multiculturalism represents a model of immigrant integration which respects the process of equality in an environment of mutual tolerance and cultural diversity (Zincone and Caponio, 2005). It also includes a positive attitude towards the rights of minority communities to speak their native language and practice their religious beliefs, granting them a high degree of political and cultural autonomy. Therefore, it is a fertile ground for accepting religious diversity (Bramadat and Seljiak, 2008-2009).

Multiculturalism advocates the formation of ethnic groups and the establishment of ethnic institutions as a means to preserve immigrants’ cultures and identities and encourages being self-conscious and self-contained. It also supports the formation of ethnic pressure groups to compete for political influence and power, to get their welfare benefits and achieve economic opportunities (Kalantzis and Cope, 2001, p.37).
In fact, multiculturalism is ‘not about minorities’ only, rather:

*It is about the proper terms of relationship between different cultural communities*, which implies that differences between minor communities and host communities should be resolved *through an open and equal dialogue between them.* (Parekh, 2002, p.13)

Thus, members of minor communities will consider themselves as active integral segments of the whole society rather than just foreigners or outsiders.

Kymlicka (2001a) points out that minor communities have a valid claim not only to non-discrimination but also to explicit *accommodation, recognition, and representation within the institutions of the larger society* (p.41) and to some particular dimensions, including culturally or religiously based concerns. Included in these dimensions are health, legal and judicial systems, like the permission for the ritual slaughter of animals for Muslims and government funds for language training, translation, interpreting facilities and education. In that view, the essential philosophy of multiculturalism is to raise the self-esteem of minor communities and to create the basis for social understanding in the host community.

Multiculturalism as a means of social inclusion is represented in the diversity of cultural and religious groups, languages and ethnic origins of the population. The critical aspects of multiculturalism in society are characterised by recognising the needs and aspirations of new arrivals, the support required by host communities to learn about new arrivals, and by granting immigrants opportunities to access socioeconomic and political participation. Multiculturalism also promotes the importance of positive two-way community relationships in the broader host community. The ultimate objective of multiculturalism was a new society free from inequality, exploitation, racism, and injustice (Kalantzis and Cope, 2001), a new society that respected the host country’s laws and institutions (Fraser, 2001).

With regard to the Australian situation and as an endeavour to create a multiethnic society, the policy towards refugees changed once more to encourage ethnic diversity (Kymlicka, 1995; Mathews, 2008) and self-determination. In 1989, The Whitlam
Government adopted a policy of multiculturalism (National Agenda) (DIAC, 2009) which was intended to meet immigrants’ settlement needs (Koleth, 2010; Wooden, et al., 1994). It is based on the minor communities’ respect for basic Australian institutions and democratic values (Hage, 2002).

In the 1990s the Australian government supported and showed some commitment to a multicultural Australia. In the 1990s’ multicultural policy (Joppke, 2004), the government stated that multiculturalism has been central to our social, political, cultural, and economic growth as a nation over the past fifty years, and is vital to our further development in the new millennium and beyond (DIMA, 1999). In an attempt to release the new policy, the government published a Practical Reference to Religious Diversity for Operational Police and Emergency Services. It is designed to offer guidance to police and emergency services on how religious affiliation can affect their contact with the public (Chilana, 2005, p.444; Dunn, 2000).

Consequently, in 1996, the Howard Government called for replacing the term ‘multiculturalism’ and focusing on ‘One Australia’ (DIAC, 2009), which would mean respecting Australia’s cultural diversity, which is a unifying force for Australia, and maintaining a loyalty to Australia, and to its traditions and evolving values of democracy and citizenship (Koleth, 2010). The government also focused on promoting community harmony and the benefits of diversity, ‘through the Living in Harmony grants program and Harmony Day’ (ibid, p.14). In January 2007, the word ‘multiculturalism’ was removed from the Department of Immigration and Citizenship title. Due to criticism of multiculturalism among some conservative politicians, the Howard Government ‘advocated a shift away from multiculturalism and back to a focus on integration or assimilation’ (ibid, pp.33-34).

While integration implies a single culture where all minor groups would share, multiculturalism allowed for diversity into future generations within the broad community culture (Hodge and O’Carroll, 2006). Thus, it acknowledged the ethnic, racial and cultural diversity that had transformed Australian society since 1947 (Jupp, 2001). In that sense, multiculturalism emphasised the need for a multicultural
approach to integration, ruling out, therefore, separation or the need for cultural assimilation philosophy.

The Australian multiculturalism policy ‘Australian Multiculturalism’ (DIAC, 2009) means that ethnic and cultural diversity of the country are encouraged as long as they do not destabilise the values, customs, and institutions of the dominant Anglo-Celtic society: it places an emphasis on the Anglo-Celtic Australian heritage. According to Hage and Couch (1999) ‘this would help one ethnic group understand and therefore live convivially with another’ (p.246). Collins (1991), however, considers it ‘a radical conspiracy, promoting ‘the interest of ‘ethnics’ above those of the Australian-born’ (pp.226-227). Accordingly, this policy assumes that immigrants will automatically adapt to the dominant Anglo-Celtic way of living when joining the labour market, and then they will abandon their customs and habits (Graetz and McAllister, 1994). That policy became the characteristic Australian path to full citizenship. Consequently, the integration process requires immigrants’ participation in the essential fields of society, such as employment, education, and accommodation.

The policy also stresses the minor communities’ maintenance of cultural identities, the recognition of identities, appreciation of diversity, the integration of immigrants, nation building, economic efficiency, affirmation of their rights, achieving social justice, social cohesion, equality before the law and equality of opportunity regardless of origins (Koleth, 2010; Jupp, 2001; Wooden, et al., 1994). In this sense, multiculturalism ensures that all citizens can keep their identities and heritage, and at the same time have a sense of belonging to the host country. It also gives refugees a feeling of self-confidence, makes them more open and accepting of diverse cultures and encourages racial and ethnic harmony and cross-cultural understanding. Furthermore, it encourages minor communities to integrate into the broader society and actively participate in its social, cultural, economic and political affairs and to ‘maintain, develop and utilise effectively the skills and talents of all Australians, regardless of background’ (Hage and Couch, 1999, p.22). Moreover, it imposes other duties such as the commitment to Australia’s interests and future, acceptance of its basic structures and principles and acceptance of the right of others to express their culture, beliefs, views and values (Koleth, 2010).
Multiculturalism as policy and philosophy endured dispute and criticism; it was a controversial proposition, and it never fully convinced all Australians (Galligan and Roberts, 2004). Critics argue that it works against the integration of immigrants into the broader society. Castles (2000), Faist (2000) and Grillo (1998) maintain that multiculturalism represents a kind of corrective to assimilationist approaches and policies surrounding the national integration of immigrants. It is also associated with many discourses related to religious, racial and ethnic otherness which are perceived as threat or challenge in many national contexts (Blommaert and Verschueren, 1998; Vertovec, 1998). It failed, too, to cope with the demands of a social reality in which ‘global economic relations have created critical problems for fiscal and monetary policy in Australia’ (Jayasuria, 1999, p.389).

Further, multiculturalism refers to the majority desire to cherish cultural and ethnic diversity but it does not realise, accept and value cultural and ethnic diversity (Mathews, 2008; Meer, 2010). Consequently, it creates a sense of tension, ethnic conflicts and reduction in social cohesion, and cannot accept cultural and ethnic diversity and contradictions as a form of cultural pluralism (Mathews, 2008; Meer, 2010; Jayasuria, 1999; Adelman, et al., 1994; Cope, et al., 1991 as cited in Adelman, et al., 1994).

As a result, the dominant Australian culture, which stems directly from England (not Britain), should be adapted to by the new arrivals, and this can be seen as the beginnings of the shared values of the Australian multicultural society. Thus, ‘it might seek to assimilate these communities into its mainstream culture either wholly or substantially’ (Parekh, 2002, p.6). In that sense, multiculturalism limits the extent to which people can absorb different experiences and undermines the possibility of dialogue and debate, by dividing society into fixed cultures and by imposing rigid identities upon the individuals.

According to Hage (1998) multiculturalism involved strategies of exclusion and inclusion, in which it maintains the marginality of immigrants and their descendants. It also failed to recognise that there were other ethnic communities who are part of
the host community (Hage and Couch, 1999, p.10). Further, Koleth (2010) argues that ‘[a] truly multicultural country can never be strong or united’ (p.29).

Despite the services multiculturalism provided, the social justice objectives of multicultural policy were undermined through persisting inequalities and injustices facing some minority communities and the disadvantages endured by Indigenous Australians. It has been criticised for failure to recognise Indigenous Australians (Hage and Couch, 1999), and combining issues facing them with those facing other ethnic communities in Australia. Indigenous people, as the first people of Australia, did not wish to be treated the same as other ethnic communities (Koleth, 2010, pp.11-12). In that view, it is portrayed as not appreciating the origins of multicultural policy in Australia, and not recognising the exclusive consideration of Indigenous peoples as the first peoples of the land. So, it could be considered as a threat to social cohesion by increasing ethno-cultural diversity and evoking tensions and challenges. Kalantzis and Cope (2001) argue that multiculturalism ‘was in conflict with one Australian identity and that it was divisive of the nation’ (p.49). Further, it has ‘the tendency to construct closed cultural categories rather than open, negotiated syncretising ones’ (Hage, 2002, p.223).

Kymlicka (2007) notes that one of the criticisms of multiculturalism is that it could not be introduced and applied in countries where the basic foundations of liberal democracy are not yet present (p.8). Furthermore, some communities strongly oppose the multiculturalism policy. They consider it as an invasion of their values (Guild, 2009) and supporting of problematic, old and probably inhumane practices, such as polygamy, arranged marriages, marriages between blood relatives, or dress on religious grounds. It also represents a threat or challenge to the national societal values and therefore is a tool of destruction of national identity and a breakdown of social cohesion.

Multiculturalism creates a sense of white exclusion and those who represent minor communities are only elites (Alibhai-Brown, 2000a). It also opposes change and consolidates inequalities and erects group barriers (Alibhai-Brown, 2004, p.52). Therefore, the host country concentrates on the unwanted and generally meaningless
concept of cultural recognition that multiculturalism introduces and ignores inequalities and injustices (Day, 2004).

It also seems that multiculturalism is confined to limited sections of the Australian community, mainly in the big cities, and within government and community services. Thus, it needs to go beyond that so that:

*It recognises and promotes the socio-economic potential of diversity and facilitates and supports participation of all Australians in building a strong, harmonious and fair community.* (Federation of Ethnic Communities’ Councils in Australia, 2008, p.2)

By way of conclusion, it has been noted that assimilation and multiculturalism policies provide different views of the same phenomenon. The focus of assimilation policy was on immigrants’ succeeding generations gradually moving away from their original culture and being absorbed into the host community culture. Multiculturalism, on the other hand, acknowledged that the cultural characteristics of immigrants are constantly reshaped along the integration process and therefore may never completely disappear.

Although Australian multiculturalism is considered one of the most successful policies applied in the world, as it recognises cultural diversity, accepting, respecting and celebrating it (Castles, et al., 1995) and contributes to social cohesion and economic prospects; it causes many ethnic tensions and social problems, and Australia continues to have some problems with intolerance and extremism (Rubenstein, 2011). One of these problems is the Cronulla riot of 2005, where small Islamist terror groups evoked problems by assaulting some local citizens.

Therefore, the key concept for Australian multiculturalism has always been integration into the core values and institutions of Australian life, avoiding the pitfalls of the other two discredited models of separatism and assimilationism (Rubenstein, 2011). Accordingly, Multicultural-integration policy, according to Rubenstein (2011) will benefit Australia’s harmony, diversity and cohesion as it prepares appropriate circumstances for immigrants and pays increased attention to
social cohesion and settlement issues, in a process of physical, cultural, social and emotional transition and change.

Nevertheless, integration policy, as this thesis will reveal, is the appropriate policy to be applied in Australia as it is based on harmonious relations, guaranteed equality, good position, true active participation, and sharing in power, wealth and decision-making (Fredman, 2001). Furthermore, it is built on the basis of fundamental values and granting refugees prominent, distinct and effective status in the host country.

Because integration emphasis is on the preservation of immigrants’ identities during their integration into the host community (Taran, 1998) and it shows respect for difference as well as the right to be different and opposes one-way assimilation, outright marginalization, or segregation, Iraqi refugees prefer adopting integration as a desired policy. It also builds unity from diversity and creates a cohesive and inclusive society through supporting an inter-group relationship and at the same time, maintains and preserves cultural heritage of minority groups (Zimmermann, 2008; Kymlicka, 1995). In that sense, diversity is viewed as positive and stimulating (Maagero and Simonsen, 2005, p.147). That, in turn, creates a stable, secure, just and tolerant society which respects diversity, cares for the most vulnerable individuals and understands equality of opportunity, irrespective of colour and ethnic origin, and the importance of including all segments of society in the social fabric.

3.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, the concept of integration, levels of integration and types of integration were covered. It explored how refugees and host countries have different understandings of the concept of ‘integration’. The viewpoint of the host country is that integration refers to the process of becoming a good citizen, finding employment, acquiring the host country language and culture, and participating in local events. In contrast, the refugees’ viewpoint saw integration process as being directed towards achieving higher levels of economic welfare, finding employment and good accommodation, social aspects and learning the host country language. In this context, while local people need policies that increase levels of ‘integration’,
newly arrived refugees are not worried about this matter, since integration is linked to a shared need to face some form of common threat to their way of life that either has not yet occurred or has not been identified by the government.

The chapter also examined a series of important concepts to establish the theoretical framework for this thesis. These include social, religious, linguistic and economic concepts. In order to investigate and determine the relationship between refugees, asylum seekers and immigrants the chapter examined the meaning of voluntary and involuntary immigration.

The chapter has provided an overview of the programs applied in Australia presenting a comparative analysis through discussing the difference and similarity among them. These programs include assimilation, multiculturalism, and integration. Overall, the different government policies for refugees in Australia constitute an effort to create a more socially, economically and culturally inclusive society for refugees. However, the government endeavours to provide frameworks for the settlement of diverse cultural groups in Australia to facilitate their integration into the broader community.

The next chapter describes the methodology that was employed to explore the research questions posed in Chapter 1.
4.1 Introduction

The major purpose of the current chapter is to supply an explanation of the research design, the appropriate research methodologies, and rationale for the selected methods. It also includes a clarification of the research tools and techniques of data collection and analysis. The first section concentrates on the research approaches used to address the research questions. An account of various data collection methods and their strengths and weaknesses is provided, as well as a detailed description of data-collection instruments. The limitations of the study, the participants and methods of sampling are also described, along with ethical matters and how they were handled in the selected approach.

4.2 Approach

It could be argued that there are no right or wrong methods. There are only methods that are appropriate to the research topic (Silverman, 2005, p.112). Methodology choice should be made with regard to issues related to the study, such as methods of data collection and analysis, and planning and execution of a project (ibid, p.99).

In order to analyse the problem at hand successfully, qualitative research methods have been employed, since the concern of this study was to explore the driving forces behind the abstention from integration of some Iraqi Muslim Shiite refugees in Australia. In addition, the sample size in this study was small, and the focus was on understanding the phenomenon and trying to generalise it to a broader level.

Qualitative research is what we all do in everyday life (Holliday, 2002, p.10). Life is full of problems and people need to understand the source of their problems. To do this they need to research not only the source of these problems but also how they should find the solutions to them. There are five elements that define the qualitative research process. They are namely the researcher and the researched society,
theoretical paradigms, research strategies, methods of data collection and analysis, and the evaluation criteria (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994, p.12).

The current research employed a set of social research methods in order to complement each other because what might be lacking in one approach could be compensated for in another approach. A historical method was employed to trace Muslim immigration to Australia, including involuntary and voluntary immigration. Furthermore, the origins and evolution of the phenomenon of Islamic communities in Australia was tracked. The purpose was to explore the obstacles that stand in the path of integration into the broader community.

The other methods were questionnaires and interviews. The questionnaire was used to gather detailed primary data and qualitative descriptions of the participants’ social, cultural, religious, political and professional experiences in the host country. Interviews with Iraqi refugees who had settled in Sydney were used to enhance the data collected from the questionnaires. It is this distinct interpretive community which configures the multicultural, gendered components of the research act where the researcher speaks from within (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000a, p.1022). Research interviews, according to Cohen, et al. (2000):

... a two person conversation initiated by the interviewer for the specific purpose of obtaining research-relevant information, and focused by him [sic] on content specified by research objectives of systematic description, prediction, or explanation. (p.269)

Before conducting this research, the social, economic and cultural situation of Iraqi refugees was outlined to ‘rediscover their roots in a sociology committed to social justice’ (Feagin, 2001, p.1). Then investigations were begun ‘with assumptions on the table, so that no one [was] confused concerning the epistemological ... baggage’ that was brought to the research’ (Kincheloe and McLaren, 2005, p.292). Behind this particular research stands the biographically situated researcher. Every researcher enters the research process from inside an interpretive community that incorporates its own historical research traditions into a distinct point of view. Schmidt (2007) points out:
... forced immigration research can be described as taking place in what sociologists would call situations of ‘heightened reflexivity’ where both findings and terrain are strongly influenced by the presence of the researcher. (p.82)

This reflexivity is particularly heightened when the researcher is a member of the community being researched, as is the case here.

Community problems, participants’ alliances in a particular area, their own social and religious activities away from the host community and their positive or negative attitudes towards integration initiatives have all been taken into consideration in this thesis. The following (Figure 4.1) shows the fields of interest in the present study as they relate to the key question of this thesis.

![Figure 4.1: Fields investigated](image)

The research methodology specifically focused on gaining complex and multidimensional insights into the issues and problems faced by the participants.
4.3 Research Design

As noted above, a qualitative approach has been used in order to explore and investigate in detail the settlement experiences of Iraqi refugees since arrival in Australia, because qualitative research is creative, interpretive, and it is capable of capturing lived experience (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994, p.3). It also attempts to get a broad perspective of the subject it handles using different resources, including personal experiences, life stories, interviews, cultural and historical texts and productions, and questionnaires. A qualitative researcher can directly capture ‘the patterned conduct and social processes of society’ (ibid, p.18).

The research consisted of two phases. First of all, in order to get a broader picture of the existing situation, a questionnaire was conducted. The second phase was an exploration of the questionnaire results through in-depth semi-structured interviews with 7 male and 4 female Iraqi refugees.

It was anticipated that the questionnaires, which will be examined next, might provide new meanings to the interviews, and that the interviews might suggest new aspects in or attach new meanings to the questionnaires. Subsequently, the interaction of interviews and questionnaires would give the research greater depth (Krathwohl, 1997).

4.4 Questionnaire

Although there are many methods that are used for data collection, the questionnaire is the most popular and widespread data collection method (de Vaus, 1996). All types of questionnaires perform two types of functions. The first one is descriptive, where data that can be obtained through the questionnaire provides a description of the characteristics of individuals or groups, such as gender, age, education level, occupation, income, and so on (Shaughnessy, et al., 2009). Correct and precise description of these elements is necessary in identifying the relationships between the various elements and helps in exploring the community under study.
The second and important function of the questionnaire is to measure trends of opinion of individuals and groups about issues or topics to be measured in the study. These include the participants’ educational, social, religious and financial background (ibid) and their situation in the host country.

De Vaus (1996) suggests that a questionnaire ‘is a highly structured data collection technique whereby each participant is asked much the same set of questions’ (p.80). It also provides a kind of social scientific investigation that deals with the social and other situations in a particular community through the sample, in order to collect data and draw conclusions to solve social problems. It enables the participants to give very direct information about how they perceived the new environment, and how they judged their interaction with their new community and their role in building a harmonious and unified community.

The kind of language used in the questions, which will be examined next, can play a key role in getting the most suitable information required.

4.4.1 Language of questions

In this study, great attention was paid to the questionnaire’s wording. It was first developed in the English language and the final version was then translated into the Arabic language because all the research participants were Arabic speakers. Care in development was necessary to decrease the possibility of any problem, because understanding participants’ perspectives is complicated when language translation is involved (Merriam, et al., 2001).

More than half of the questionnaires distributed were in the Arabic language, as half of the participants could read English and half could not. All Arabic language questionnaires were translated by interpreting what it was believed the refugees were communicating using relevant knowledge in respect to cultural norms and values of the participants. Hayes and Humphries (2004) and Maryns (2006) argue that the interpreter should have detailed knowledge about the participants’ culture in order to provide valuable translations, as well as speaking the same language. Accordingly,
the questionnaire has been carefully translated to ensure exact and accurate wording was translated from the original questionnaire.

Despite the efforts made in transliterating the questionnaire, some of the concepts were not easily transliterable due to difficulty in interpreting some cultural contexts. Although this posed difficulties, a standard Arabic-English dictionary was used to find the closest words possible to ensure accuracy of the transliterations.

Leading questions were avoided, those that are worded in a particular way that suggest to participants that there is only one acceptable answer. Complex and ambiguous questions or questions that could be interpreted differently from the way that is intended were also avoided (Cohen, et al., 2007). Classical Arabic was the basis for translation; the findings from analysing the questionnaires were translated into and presented in English.

Choosing classical Arabic was considered important so that slang or colloquial expressions that might affect understanding of the content of the questionnaire could be avoided. A final version of the Arabic questionnaire took into consideration the recommendations obtained from those who checked and corrected the questionnaire during the piloting process. Two different versions were used. One of these versions was directed to the male refugees and the other to the females, since the Arabic language is a gender based language which deals with males and females in different ways in terms of articles, verbs, and pronouns. In writing two Arabic versions, offending the participants by addressing them in a grammatically incorrect manner has been avoided.

4.4.2 Piloting process

Although the questionnaire was drawn from previously developed questionnaires, the literature, and data derived from a previous study, it was essential to undertake a pilot of the questionnaire before embarking on the research, so that the quality of the data gathered could be improved and prejudice minimised. Additionally, particular areas of research that may have been unclear previously could be amended (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994; Basit, 2010). Before asking about certain issues, it was assumed
that participants had knowledge about that issue (de Vaus, 1996), and consideration
given to whether the question needed to be made more clear and was sufficiently
general or precise. In addition, the need for a number of questions was considered, in
case one question were not enough to get the required answer and therefore must be
detailed using more than one question.

Piloting the questionnaire had several functions, including increasing the reliability,
validity and practicability of the questionnaire, checking the clarity of the
questionnaire items and instructions, eliminating ambiguities or difficulties in
wording and checking readability levels (Cohen, et al., 2007). Several meetings were
held with two Iraqi educated and expert people in the field of research for the
purpose of checking and modification. These experts, which included both genders,
had been previously contacted and consented to participate in the pilot study. They
were given detailed information on the questionnaire for the purpose of additional
checking and modification and to ensure its quality and usability, and wrote down on
paper everything they noticed that could be improved. These meetings also covered
the ethical considerations, sampling technique, and methods of questionnaire
distribution and collection. Their comments about the design of the questionnaire,
unclear questions and phrases were taken into consideration in order to smooth the
progress of the sequence of the questions. Corrections were made to the sections of
the questionnaire and to the sequence and content of questions, deleting some
questions, correcting grammatical errors in the Arabic language, and including
explanations of wording. These meetings were essential in providing appropriate
information to improve the quality of the data gathered. Analysing data from a pilot
study provides a different perspective on the questions asked and indicates whether
they need adjustment or might cause problems at the analysis stage (Basit, 2010).
The pilot study established that 18 questions out of 73 were ambiguous or not useful,
so these were deleted.

During the pilot study researchers became aware that not many Iraqis know what is
meant by the phrase ‘integration process’. It also became clear that it would be
necessary to explain why the researcher was interested in Iraqi refugees’ integration
and not in other important matters concerning them. Thus, it was challenging to write
down everything that the participants were saying and to keep up in the interviews. The train of thought was often lost as everything needed to be written down and repeated. Once the piloting process and design were finalised the questionnaires were to be distributed to those people who expressed their willingness to participate in the study voluntarily. Participants who completed the questionnaire would be invited to take part in an interview. With all this in mind, the pilot study was followed by the actual study.

4.4.3 Elements of the questionnaire

The first questions shape the first impression of the questionnaire and they also affect the progress of the entire process. The choice was made to start with simple descriptive questions which facilitate an easy answer. In this study, the first questions focussed only on demography, preparing the participants to enter the environment of the questionnaire.

The questions were drawn from three main sources: previously developed questionnaires, relevant literature, and data derived from a previous study by the present researcher (for a Postgraduate Certificate in Research Methods, Macquarie University, 2009). Each questionnaire item was designed to answer a specific research question. The questions covered educational and professional background; the usefulness and usability of methods of teaching, comparing the Iraqi and Australian educational systems as a whole; and readiness and intention to integrate. The questions also covered the participants’ religious, social and political inclinations. The information gathered formed part of an ongoing social process which is understood from the point of view and the eyes of the participants, who are part of the topic being investigated (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994).

In the current study, the questionnaire used two types of questions, closed and open-ended questions. Closed questions provided a range of alternatives where the participant was required to choose the answer that suited him or her. A number of closed questions were employed across the sections as they ‘enable participants to select the response that more closely represents their view’ (Cohen, et al., 2007, p.324). These closed questions included rating questions, where the Lickert scale was
used based on a 1-5 scale, dichotomous questions and multiple choice questions. Choosing ‘closed’ question as a tool for data collection depends on several factors, including the participants’ sufficient knowledge of the subject of research and prediction for specific types of answers. Generally, these are developed from the literature review, personal experience and theory (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994; Saldana, 2009).

Some advantages of ‘closed’ questions are the ease of coding the data; it does not require writing an answer by the participant. It is also effective in cases that cannot be expressed verbally. It encourages the participant to complete the questionnaire, as it does not require writing long answers. Ultimately, in the case of sending the questionnaire by mail, participants are often more likely to complete and return it if it does not require writing. Closed questions also provide a range of alternatives from which the participant is asked to choose his or her answer. Additionally, the participant will not spend a lot of time answering the questions and he or she will not feel uninterested in answering them.

Some of the disadvantages of ‘closed’ questions are the incapability of providing all the anticipated answer choices to the participant, which could lead to incorrect data and such questions also ‘reduce expressiveness and spontaneity’ (Shaughnessy, et al., 2009, p.97). Also, the participant may choose only the first answer to all the questions. This often happens where there is a long questionnaire or desire of the participant to complete it quickly for some reason.

Open-ended questions, on the other hand, are characterised by no such structure in the answer and allow the participant to reply in any way he or she likes, rather than determining the number of responses. In that type of questionnaire, a number of pages with open-ended questions are provided to the participant asking him or her to detail his or her vision about the research topics.

Some advantages of open-ended questions are that they are more useful in the case of having inadequate knowledge of the subject under study. Also the participant is less bound to the choices made available. Additionally, open-ended questions often help
to identify the behaviour of certain groups, as the participant will write down and express his or her ideas and opinions deliberately (Shaughnessy, et al., 2009).

In contrast, the disadvantages of open-ended questions are the difficulty of coding and classifying the answers (Shaughnessy, et al., 2009), and lack of precision in the responses, resulting from differences in abilities of participants to answer in writing because of variations in levels of education, social and economic backgrounds and the language of the questionnaire itself. The open-ended question needs more time to be completed by the participant in relation to the smaller sample required.

A number of open-ended questions were also included within each section which invited more thoughtful responses, to allow the participant to reply in any way he or she chose. Open-ended questions related to the motive behind coming to Australia, the subjects the participant enjoyed or found difficult at school and the reason behind his or her choice, and explaining whether education or learning a language helped in social integration. In addition, these questions related to the reason behind not pursuing study here, preferring or encouraging their children to pursue study, encouraging the marriage of Iraqis to Australians and going to places of worship.

The questions were kept short and clear and instructions were given to guide participants through each question. The questionnaire contained 55 questions in total: 14 were open ended questions, where sufficient space was left for detailed responses. There was a concentration on closed questions because they are easy to analyse and quick to answer.

The demographic section with which the questionnaire began included questions on personal data like age, gender, marital status, employment status, type of employment, period of residence, and their previous life as refugees, such as in camps or in other countries, before coming to Australia. The questionnaire’s second section sought factual information related to educational attainment, which concentrated on school completion rate, age at leaving school, school level attempted or completed before leaving school and highest qualification attended. It also included questions related to the level of previous and present jobs, the need for
better English, and education before arriving in Australia (years of study, reasons behind leaving and missing school, dropping out of study, qualifications, and so on). Section three was about English language proficiency and the obstacles standing in the path of learning English. It also included the factors determining the relationship of the refugee with his or her new environment, including his or her views relating to matters that help in integration, such as following Australian TV or radio. The fourth section dealt with the refugees’ educational expectations. Finally, the fifth section of the questionnaire asked about working with Australians, attending Australian activities, knowledge of laws and customs, sense of belonging to Australia, desire to integrate, marriage to an Australian person and refugees’ inclination towards Australians and others.

4.4.4 Administering the questionnaire

It should be noted that the process of collecting data was based primarily on interaction between the researcher or assistants and the researched community. Therefore, the research should be viewed as a cooperative process between the researcher and the community under study (Burr, 1998). Furthermore, because the participation was voluntary, the questionnaires began by thanking the participant for his or her consent to participate in the study and the promised of a copy of the results of the study.

4.4.5 Sampling and selection methods

The questionnaire and interviews were conducted with a small group of Iraqi refugees who volunteered for this study. The sample size was determined to some extent according to the size of the community under study (Nachmias and Nachmias, 2000). However, this group consisted of a heterogeneous sample of Iraqi men and women who belonged to various age groups and had various educational and social backgrounds. The commonalities of the participants, namely their sex, refugee status, and their time of residence in Australia were considered desired characteristics in regard to the information sought in this study.
All participants shared the reasons for leaving their homeland and living in a second country as refugees. The 30 participants who took part in the questionnaire included 18 males and 12 females; while the 11 participants who took part in the interview included 4 females and 7 males who had lived in Australia for five years or more.

Although this thesis seeks to make generalisations, it is not based on a large sample size, as is often the case for quantitative studies, or qualitative studies with quantitative elements. Such a procedure is considered particularly helpful in gathering in-depth information from a group of people who share a similar experience or similar background (Greenbaum, 2000, p.3). Because of the similarity of ethnic and religious background, all interviews were conducted in the native language of the participants (Arabic), while half of the questionnaires were conducted in Arabic. Data were interpreted in the context of other studies and literature pertaining to refugees, as well as social theories. Quotations or whole segments were used and are replicated in this thesis. Ideas and recurrent themes related to the research questions were identified and are described in the ‘Findings’ Chapter.

The Iraqi refugees were initially contacted and asked to participate in the questionnaire and interviews through managers of the Australian Ahl Al-Bait Islamic Centre and the Migrant Resource Centre (MRC) in Auburn. This method of using these managers in gathering participants is non-random and is referred to as snowball sampling (Trochim, 2002). Initially the two managers were informed about the study. Other participants were subsequently identified through the assistance of these managers, through networking with other officers who are members of the same community.

The snowball sampling process has limitations as well as some benefits. Snowball sampling is considered useful, especially when there is a kind of mutual trust created between the participants, or when it is otherwise hard to reach that particular population (Trochim, 2002). This form of sampling seemed particularly advantageous for this project due to time constraints. It is non-random, and is not assured to be representative of a larger population, and the responses obtained may
therefore be biased. Nonetheless, this sampling procedure is useful when opinions or views are being sought, and there is no concern about representing these views proportionally (ibid).

Snowball sampling is considered useful in finding specific populations, but it makes it likely that several or all participants know each other prior to participating in the study. This familiarity can work both to the advantage and to the disadvantage of the research, because it can influence the answers participants give in various ways. It may cause several of the participants to feel more confident and comfortable to talk openly. However, issues of a sensitive nature may cause participants to decide not to reveal their personal opinions, or avoid taking a stance on a certain issue, to potentially avoid conflict. Trying to assess the exact impact this problem has on this particular study is at best difficult.

All participants received a letter describing the purpose of the study and the nature of the questionnaire and interview. This letter briefly introduced the topic of this research, but did not include the actual questions, in order to avoid revealing the exact subject matter. Doing so was believed to potentially compromise the authenticity of the answers obtained, because respondents may construct answers prior to the interviews or questionnaires, especially if they believe their answers will favourably highlight certain aspects of their experience. Prior to the questionnaire and interview processes, participants were again informed about the confidentiality of the study, the risks and benefits involved, and the voluntary nature of their participation.

4.5 Interviews

Interviews focus on social interactions, particularly on the individual. Moreover, these are considered the most flexible device for data collection, where different channels can be used, such as, verbal, non-verbal, spoken and heard channels (Cohen, et al., 2007).

Interviews or question asking are considered the principal data collection methods for this kind of research. Yin (2009) argued that it is very important to consistently
ask why events appear to have happened or to be happening. It is a sociological method of collecting data that relies on verbal interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee. Denzin and Lincoln (1994) believe that it is the favourite methodological tool of qualitative research as it produces situated understandings grounded in specific interactional episodes (p.353). As well, the best way to find out an individuals’ understanding is to directly ask them about their actions through talking to them.

Al-Ali (2007) refers to interview as ‘oral history’ since it is a method of gathering historical information related to specific events, experiences, memories and ways of life. It includes life stories and experiences and the views of a person about specific historical events. Oral histories allow for a holistic approach to the past and the present by allowing people not only to provide accounts of specific events, but also to reflect on their own roles, their interpretations of events and their emotions (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994; Al-Ali, 2007). It is an interactive process, in which the interviewer not only asks questions to obtain information and listen, but also engages, discusses and argues with the interviewee.

It has been noted that the interview is a type of verbal communication used to obtain required data. The most important characteristics of the interview are that the questions are verbally asked and answered and can be conducted face-to-face. Thus, there might be an opportunity to identify signals of emotion that the participants may show. Such signals may comprise pausing between sentences, expressions of sorrow and joy, or other facial expressions and gestures (Greenbaum, 2000).

The other characteristic of interviews is that data is not recorded and written by the participant. Furthermore, although the interview is usually between two persons, it is not limited to that number of individuals; it is often done with husbands and wives or children and their parents and can also be conducted with groups of individuals. The interview design is characterised by great flexibility compared to other means of data collection. Freedom available to ask questions allows a great deal of understanding of questions and answers by the participant.
Interviews effectively perform two basic functions. The first is the description function, where data that is obtained through the interview ideally describe the social reality. The other is the exploration function, where the interview helps providing new insights into unexplored aspects of the research topic.

Many factors overlap to determine the feasibility of using the interview as a means of collecting data. Most important of these factors are the personal characteristics of the interviewer, including race, class, ethnicity, and gender and their ability to distinguish their own characteristics and subjective and objective features.

The subjective properties are of greater importance, especially if the goal of the study is exploratory. In order for the interview to become an effective exploratory tool, it must be carried out by an interviewer who is characterised by a curious mind and ‘openness, emotional engagement, and the development of a potentially long-term, trusting relationship between the interviewer and the subject’ (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994, p.353). In possessing these qualities, the researcher will be able to undertake a number of tasks related to the questions, answers, interviewed individuals, and what must be done in general.

The characteristics of the interviewer, including gender, ethnicity, age, race, social class, dress, and how they speak, also have a significant impact on the effectiveness of the interview (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994). The impact of these characteristics is not only limited to the first impression created, when the participant agrees be interviewed or not, but they put certain limits on the roles that the interviewer can play successfully.

Another characteristic involves the willingness of a participant to be interviewed. That problem will be overcome by looking for volunteers, because individuals who are willing to talk freely and openly are considered to be the best participants compared to those who do not wish to participate at all (Basit, 2010, p.60).

The elite and specialists including policy makers in the education and community sector and community workers in government and non-government departments in
charge of supporting refugees (Mathews, 2008) should be given exceptional
treatment, as they usually have something to say. That category includes those who
have more information and knowledge about the issue (de Vaus, 1996), and
influential persons in the community under study.

The decision to choose the interview as a means of collecting data is affected by the
type of the research. There are some topics which do not have sufficient responses,
such as income. Other topics are classified as private or confidential, making it
impossible or hard to talk about them at all. Further, some topics are hard to be
expressed verbally, so in these cases the interview is not appropriate as a means of
data collection and it is better to study them through other means.

4.5.1 Interview process

In order for the research to achieve a precise quality as natural social research, it is
important that the research process be methodologically articulated in such a manner
that data collection and data analysis are both seen as part of a single and unified
process. Therefore, in order to invite Iraqi refugees to participate in the interviews,
the managers of the Australian Ahl Al-Bait Islamic Centre and the Auburn Migrant
Resource Centre (AMRC) were initially informed about the study so that participants
could be invited through the assistance of these managers. Arrangements were made
concerning the interview expectations, the place of the interviews and the time the
process could take, all in accordance with the desires and needs of the participants.

Before starting the interviews, the participants were asked permission to tape record
the conversation and to sign the approved consent document indicating that they
agreed to tape the conversation (Appendix 5). Morgan (1997) suggests that
regardless of the method of data collection, an interviewer should take field notes
after each session to facilitate data analysis. Accordingly, all interviews were
recorded and some notes taken in the event the tape recorder stopped working. By
taking notes at the beginning of the interviews, the researcher could capture exact
phrases and statements made by the participants.
The participants were reminded that any references that could identify their identity would be removed so that the participant’s identity would remain protected, since:

... the obligation to protect anonymity of research participants and to keep research data confidential is all-inclusive. It should be fulfilled at all costs unless arrangements to the contrary are made with the participants in advance. (Nachmias and Nachmias, 1976 as quoted in Cohen, et al., 2000, p.61)

Recording interviews by a digital tape recorder would affirm that the participants’ thoughts were accurately recorded.

The most important dimension that can bring some regulation and control over the interview is determining the place of the interview, because the place in which the interview is conducted has a lot of implications on the quality of data that can be obtained. Hence, there are many factors that govern the decision to identify the place. The first factor is the importance of time, because usually there is not sufficient time to travel long distances several times to meet the researched community, so the researcher may need to conduct interviews in places that reduce the time required to perform the research. The second factor relates to the confidentiality of the data itself and openness throughout the research process (Merriam, et al., 2001), because there are many places that cannot be classified as suitable places for interviews: places of work, for example, are not suitable for interviews on a research topic related to the work itself.

Therefore, in order to achieve privacy and enhance the process, participants were interviewed individually at a mutually convenient, safe, private and neutral setting where the participants could feel comfortable and unthreatened (Longhurst, 2003). Most of the interviews were carried out in the privacy of participants’ homes, at the Australian Ahl Al-Bait Islamic Centre or at the AMRC, based on individual requests, because ‘When interviewing “away from home”, the mutually perceived homogeneity can create a sense of community which can enhance trust and openness throughout the research process’ (Merriam, et al., 2001, p.407).
The formal interview took approximately one to two hours. All the interviews were conducted in the Arabic language. The participants’ observations, opinions and comments were later translated into English. The translation was accurate since the translator was of the same ethnicity as the participants, had endured the same circumstances and speaks the same language (Hayes and Humphries, 2004).

The interviews took place at the end of May 2011 and continued till the end of June of the same year. Lists of the names and contact numbers of people who may have felt the need to talk about their experiences were made, and permission from the Australian Ahl Al-Bait Islamic Centre and the AMRC was arranged in advance. Some interview participants volunteered after being informed about the study, while others were invited to take part in the interviews because of their position, their professional development, or simply because they had no other obligations that day.

Participants were contacted either informally or through established contacts with community workers, service providers and representatives. The participants who were interviewed consisted of Iraqis who had entered Australia with refugee status or as part of the Special Humanitarian Program.

Time and financial limitations also dictated the use of interviews. Furthermore, the interviews were semi-structured, where the content and procedures were organised in advance (Cohen, et al., 2007) to precisely address the research questions, so that they covered different aspects of the issues involved in the study. They involved eleven Iraqi refugees in the target areas and in the several governmental agencies and offices concerned with providing the needs of Iraqi refugees. Confidentiality needed to be emphasised prior to gaining approval from interviewees to participate.

As noted above, interviews were designed to facilitate open-ended conversation on topics related to the Iraqi refugees’ settlement and the process of integration in Australia through their experiences, opinions, feelings, factual knowledge, and personal background (Esterberg, 2002). At the time of interview and after exchanging greetings, the purpose of the research, the procedures and the time the interview would take were explained and the confidentiality of the information and
need for informed consent were discussed. For ethical reasons, all participants received a signed letter explaining the goal of the interview and assuring them of the confidentiality of their responses.

In each of the interviews, informal conversation preceded semi-structured questions which were in the form of a script consisting of a few questions to be used as a starting point for the interview. An interviewer guide was also used, which identified which topics should be raised and roughly in what order. The aim was to capture the complexity of these Iraqi refugees who had been uprooted from their familiar environment and taken to a land that was strange to them, in terms of the people and the culture, and to provide a description of the findings to readers.

Conversations with participants prior to interviews were noted down in memos and notes; only the scheduled interviews were audio recorded (Crowl, 1993). However, these conversations were very helpful during the analysis stage of interviews because they offered access to the new social environment described by the refugees, resulting in a better understanding and interpretation of their responses. Moreover, these memos were used to discuss specific situations in following-up interviews with the Iraqis as well as to identify key themes that emerged during the questionnaires.

An information sheet (Appendix 4) was issued to each participant before the interview took place. It was important to introduce participants to the topics to be covered in the interview, prior to the interviewing process, for two reasons. Firstly, knowing in advance what the interview was about would relieve any anxiety. Secondly, this would provide interviewees enough time to reflect on the topics that would be covered so that they could provide thoughtful answers. Accordingly, some interviewees became excited and eager to talk about their personal experiences and express their views on some matters or criticise some situations. Although that was helpful and precious information, sometimes it did not relate to the interview topic.

It has been argued that in highly sex-segregated societies ‘gender filters knowledge’ (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994, p.369) that is, the sex of the interviewer and of the participant makes a difference. As the interview took place within the cultural
boundaries of a paternalistic social system in which masculine identities are
differentiated from feminine ones, and because social traditions prohibit talking
between men and women, it was not possible to conduct face-to-face interviews with
the opposite gender. Accordingly, an Iraqi female interviewer conducted interviews
with Iraqi women. She was a university educated woman with good experience in
conducting interviews. In order to guarantee consistency, the female assistant
followed the same order, essence and logic of questions in the interviews.

In order to elicit additional information related to questions and to use responses as a
basis in the interview procedure, a well-designed interview is required.

4.5.2 Interview design

The topics emerging from the questionnaire analysis were useful to create questions
appropriate for the interviews (Ezzy, 2002). In order to obtain information in more
depth and discuss further issues about how Iraqis adjust to the Australian society,
some questionnaire participants were contacted for follow up interviews (Basit,
2010).

The most difficult stage that might be faced is choosing the appropriate category of
interview that suits the type of research to be conducted. There are two categories of
interview, the unstructured interview and the structured interview (Denzin and
Lincoln, 1994). The unstructured interview does not require more than determining
the nature and subject of the study and then interviewing the participants about this.
The time spent on each interview may not be determined. The sequence of questions
is not organised and a question that might be asked first in an interview might instead
come in the middle or at the end of it, and one question may not be asked to all
participants. There is also a high degree of flexibility and freedom (Denzin and
Lincoln, 1994) with regard to characteristics of the participants, their number, the
way of presenting the topic, and so on.

That degree of flexibility and freedom gives the unstructured interview many
advantages. The first one is the resemblance of the interview to natural spontaneous
conversation. The other one is that there is a great potential to explore aspects of the research topic without any restrictions (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994).

Nonetheless, there are also some negatives to the unstructured interview, such as the difficulty of comparing data from one interview to another one because of the lack of control over the way the questions have been asked (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994). A lot of time might be lost in conducting irrelevant interviews that do not add new data to the collected data. Finally, because a particular method of pre-classifying data is not followed, a lot of time must be provided for the operations of coding and classifying data.

The structured interview, on the other hand, provides many ways that give some control over the interview through predetermining the order and wording of the questions. Further, each participant is asked exactly the same question in the same way.

In that type of interviews, there is a degree of knowledge about the subject of the study and accordingly the questions and answers can be controlled and determined. Questions can be controlled by the researcher by placing them in a specific order and prepared for the various answers, or the answers determined by giving the participant more than one option from which to choose as he or she sees appropriate.

However, semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions (Lofland and Lofland, 1995; Patton, 2002) have been used as the technique for collecting data in the present study, as they are designed to encourage a full, meaningful answer using the subject’s own knowledge and feelings. These are the opposite of closed-ended interviews, which encourage a short or single-word answer. Open-ended questions also tend to be more objective and less leading than closed-ended interviews. They put a minimum of restraint on answers and allow flexibility and probing, encourage cooperation and can often result in the raising of issues that were not thought of. All the questions asked in interviews were initially derived from the research questions.
Semi-structured interviews also permit depth and complexity of issues to emerge and provide insight into problems. They are important because they give interviewees a lot of freedom in choosing the appropriate answer to questions since questions are usually open-ended. This kind of interview is considered helpful to gather in-depth information from interviewees who share a similar experience or similar background (Greenbaum, 2000, p.3).

Furthermore, semi-structured interviews:

... consist of predetermined questions related to domains of interest, administered to a representative sample of respondents to confirm study domains, and identify factors, variables, and items or attributes of variables for analysis. (Schensul, et al., 1999, p.149)

In cases where participants seemed reluctant or unable to continue the discussion, additional questions were asked. As with all questions, all prompts were open-ended, which is the most preferred way of asking questions in focus groups (Krueger, 1998, p.31).

Overall, the interviews began with some general questions about age, qualifications, date of arrival in Australia and marital status. These were followed by questions about the role of religion in creating social coherence or differences, the participants’ perspective towards Australians, whether education and learning the language of the country of refuge facilitates the process of integration and if so – why? Participants were also asked about their educational experiences and aspirations, and to evaluate social justice initiatives aimed at integration.

To accentuate the research further, informal conversation was used to capture some material that the researcher thought was important as background. Informal conversation (Mertens, 1998; Patton, 2002) has been described as an interview technique that occurs spontaneously so that a participant may not know that an interview is taking place. Thus, most of these informal conversations occurred in places where most Iraqi refugees gather, such as in mosques.
The use of informal conversation was beneficial because it allowed casual discussions outside of meetings. Thus, they were free to speak about what they felt was most pressing, without necessarily adhering to the agenda of a meeting, or focusing on issues that other people had deemed important.

The data collected through interviews was transcribed and translated into English soon after the interviews, as data analysis was to start from the moment interviews were transcribed, listened to, and read (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994). Data were interpreted in the context of other studies and literature pertaining to refugees, as well as social theory. Quotes or whole segments were used and replicated in this thesis. Ideas and recurrent themes were identified and are described in the ‘Findings’ section below.

Still, in order to reach specific and accurate results, careful selection of the sample of participants was made.

4.5.3 Participant sample

As mentioned above, the aim of the interviews was to gather comprehensive and informed accounts of settlement into the Iraqi Muslim Shiite community living in Sydney from those who possess permanent legal residence and have been resettled here for more than five years, and to create a picture of their understanding and experience of integration in Australia. According to the 2006 Census, Iraq-born people in Australia number 32,520, where 20,530 settled in New South Wales (ABS Census, 2006).

The research was carried out within the districts of Auburn, Fairfield, Granville, Bankstown, and Liverpool, which had population characteristics relevant to the study and where most resettled Iraqi Muslim Shiite refugees live. The interviews were conducted at participants’ homes, the Australian Ahl Al-Bait Islamic Centre or the AMRC, where Iraqi refugees met frequently in significant numbers.

First of all, information about the participants’ backgrounds will be provided. This information includes the gender, age, marital status, educational level and social
background, their role in the society and years of settlement in Australia. The criteria for the selection of the participants are also provided.

In order to ensure a spread of educational and social background, eleven selected refugees were invited to participate in the interviews. Four females were interviewed face-to-face (1 teacher, 1 student, and 2 housewives) and seven males were interviewed face-to-face (2 religious leaders, 3 workers, 1 doctor, and 1 teacher). They were selected for interviews because they were refugees and for their experience working with different refugee groups and their knowledge of the employment, education and training needs of this group. They were asked about their views on what models and program elements are required to meet the needs of this group.

All interviews with females took place at the Australian Islamic Ahl Al-Bait Centre with the assistance of an Iraqi female interviewer. Interviews with males were conducted at the Australian Ahl Al-Bait Islamic Centre, the AMRC or at their homes.

**Description of participants**

The following is an outline of the characteristics of participants. This includes a brief overview in terms of age, gender, marital status, previous and current work, date of arriving here and number of children. In total, seven male and four females were interviewed.

As illustrated in Table 4.1, two of the participants were religious practitioners. Mr Hussein, a clergyman, is considered one of the Iraqi elite. In addition to his religious role in the Iraqi community, he is a social, political and psychological expert. He is 63 years old, married and has five children: two boys and three girls. He came to Australia in 1996. He spent more than five years in Iran studying theology and working in Al Hawza Al Ilmiya⁴. He is unemployed. He was an opponent to

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⁴ Al Hawza Al Ilmiya is an Islamic (Shiite) university and organisation that was founded in the late tenth century. It includes religious schools, colleges and universities and teaches subjects related to religion, Islamic philosophy, Arabic language, logic and astronomy.
Saddam Hussein’s regime and served the Iraqi community in Iran and here. Therefore, he has great experience in dealing with Iraqi refugees.

Table 4.1 Participants’ background

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Previous Employment</th>
<th>Employment Now</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>Clergyman</td>
<td>Unemployed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>Clergyman</td>
<td>Unemployed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>Writer and Poet</td>
<td>Unemployed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>Dermatologist</td>
<td>Unemployed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>Mechanic</td>
<td>Unemployed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>Shopkeeper</td>
<td>Shopkeeper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>Carpenter</td>
<td>Taxi Driver</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>Arabic Teacher</td>
<td>Unemployed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Unemployed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>Unemployed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mr Rida is 60 years old, married with three children: two boys and a girl. He came to Australia in 2003. He has a Diploma in Education and was a student in Al Hawza Al Ilmmiya in Qum, Iran. He worked and did unpaid work in writing and publishing and as a lecturer in many Islamic Iraqi organisations in Iran. He is unemployed. His religious knowledge helps him deal with tough situations. His only focus is his community and he has to make sure that it is doing well.

Both of these men have endured a lot of oppression in the countries in which they have lived, including alienation, marginalisation, isolation and poverty. That kind of endurance was due to the Arabic-Persian difference in values. Conflict of values is where every culture recognises a limited sort of these values and norms, and therefore neglects, marginalises and suppresses others (Parekh, 2000 as cited in Meer, 2010).

Another interview was conducted with an Iraqi intellectual. Mr Ali, 47 years old, holds a BA degree in Arabic Literature from the college of Education, University of
Baghdad, 1988. He worked in Iraq as a writer, a poet and editor at some Iraqi newspapers. He came to Australia along with his family, his wife and four children, one boy and three girls, in 2005. He is unemployed. He is quite self-confident. This self-confidence is reflected in the way he speaks (his arguments are strong and his discourse is well-structured) but also in the way he looks.

Dr. Hadi, 61 years old, is a dermatologist. He came to Australia in 2005. He is married with three children: two boys and a girl. He is unemployed. He has a very quiet manner and an extremely low voice; one has to really focus to be able to make something out of what he is saying. He has a particular impression about him; he attracts attention when he talks, always looking sharp.

Mr Jamal is a 42-year-old man who arrived in Australia in December 2000. He is married with three boys and he finished high school in Syria. He was a mechanic for more than 15 years. He is unemployed. He had caught the attention of the researcher when they had met in the Australian Ahl Al-Bait Islamic Centre: although they had not talked much then, the sadness in his voice could be felt.

Mr Haidar is 51 years old, arrived in Australia in 1997 and is married with four children: one boy and three girls. He finished Year 11 in Iraq. He worked and still works here as a shopkeeper. It was felt that everything seemed to match when he and the researcher spoke: his big black eyes were kind and fit the calmness of his speech. His clothes, although casual, reflected his inner balance in a way. He has an optimistic outlook on his family’s future.

Mr Furat is 38 years old. He arrived in Australia in 1994, and is married with five girls. He finished Year 9 in Iraq and worked as a carpenter, and is working now as a taxi driver. He actually came to Australia hoping he and his family would go back to Iraq one day, but things turned out differently.

Sahar and Zahra are two educated Iraqi females. Sahar has a BA degree in Arts of Arabic from the College of Arts, University of Baghdad, 1991. She is married with three girls and a boy. She arrived in Australia in 2005. She worked as an Arabic
language teacher and she is unemployed now. Although small of stature and remarkably slim for her 45 years of age, Sahar has been through quite a lot in her life. She teaches Arabic classes and religion to children: these are just some of the activities meant to guide and help the people who attend the mosque and their families.

Zahra is 20 years old, a university student, studying arts and law. She arrived in Australia along with her family in 2003. She is single and unemployed. She is a very ambitious person and very enthusiastic when she speaks of her life here and in Iraq. She instantly starts to smile when she talks about her ‘other’ life, and she is slightly melancholic.

Noor is 36 years old and arrived in Australia along with her family, her husband, three boys and two girls, in 2002. She finished Year 9 in Iraq. She is unemployed. She looked confident when talking about her crucial role of mother and wife for the family. Bringing up five children proved to be as challenging as any other job for her. On top of that, she manages to deal with other engagements. She chose to stay with her children and dedicate her life to her family.

Fatima arrived in Australia in 1998. She is married with three boys and a girl. She finished Year 6 (primary school) in Iraq. She is unemployed. She is an energetic, cheerful 25-year-old girl who does not need to be asked any questions. She tells her story openly, without any constraints or fears, fixing her big brown eyes on the assistant. Growing up in a conservative cultural environment influenced Fatima’s personality and shaped her character.

4.6 Ethical Issues

Because qualitative research ‘is carried out in ways that are sensitive to the nature of human and cultural social contexts’ (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994, p.488), it requires the application of a set of values and ethical principles. Those who imagine that the research process is just understanding a set of principles and procedures relating to the identification of the research problem, the research design, data collection, handling the statistical process of the data analysis and writing research reports are
wrong: there are ethical standards that accompany each stage of the process. Ethics are the ‘search for rules of conduct that enable us to operate defensibly in the political contexts in which we have to conduct educational research’ (Simons, 1995, p.436, as cited in Basit, 2010, p.56). Thus, these standards and values should be familiarised because research deals with human beings who have their rights and dignity, which must be preserved and protected from all apparent or potential harm.

Research is, then, an ethical process and a systematic process that leads to gaining more knowledge about different phenomena and solving problems that are faced in different aspects of life. So, the researcher must be armed with moral standards and a code of ethics side by side with the cognitive and methodological standards (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994). These ethical standards include honesty, truthfulness and objectivity.

Most ethical problems emerge in the period where data is collected from participants in the study. That stage is considered a difficult one where balance is required between many decisions that seem to be inconsistent with each other, especially those related to potential harm that may occur to individuals participating in the study.

In fact, the participants should be fully informed about the purpose, methods and intended possible uses, features and conditions of the research, what their participation in the research requires and what risks, if any, are involved. These risks include protecting the participants from any physical or mental discomfort and any pain or danger to which they may be exposed. When there is a potential for the occurrence of such risks, the participant should be informed about that in order to get his or her approval and all possible measures should be adopted to reduce those risks to a minimum (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994).

As well, the confidentiality of information the participants supply and their anonymity have to be respected, they should be informed that their participation is voluntary and free from any force, and any harm to participants must be avoided (ESRC, 2005, p.1 as cited in Basit, 2010, p.58). These issues could have an impact
on the participants’ decisions in relation to their desire to participate in the research. All the questions of the participant in relation to those features which might have an impact on his or her desire to participate must be answered. Openness and honesty are considered two essential characteristics of the features that govern the relationship between the interviewer and the participant in the research. The freedom of the individual if he or she decides not to participate or continue in the research at any time must be respected because of responsibility for the dignity of the participants and their happiness (Basit, 2010).

After the research is deemed morally acceptable and before conducting interviews, is the time to begin to prepare a clear and just agreement or ‘informed consent’, which assures the capability and freedom of the participants to make a voluntary decision about participating or not participating in the research (Basit, 2010). The participant signs it in advance in order to participate in the research. That ‘informed consent’, the consent form (Appendix 6), has to carefully and truthfully inform the participant about the nature of the research and that they have the right to withdraw from the research project at any time (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994). The consent form clearly determined the responsibilities and obligations to respect all the promises and obligations contained in the form, while not misleading the participants. It also assured the participants that their identity would be concealed, seeking their consent for recording the interviews, and reminded them of the importance of answering questions related to them frankly and truthfully to ensure the validity and reliability of the research.

The research addressed the National Research Priority of promoting and maintaining good health, and the goal of strengthening Australia’s social and economic fabric, as part of the ethical data collection process. One outcome that should be avoided is ‘re-traumatising’, especially when conducting research with refugees. So, questions such as ‘Will the research make life even harder to cope with because sad memories and thoughts are revived?’ (Dyregrov, et al., 2000, p.413) should be taken into consideration. Although any questions regarding their prior lives as refugees should be avoided and their experiences of living in Australia should be concentrated on, some questions might connect their present lives to their past lives. Where
procedures of the research may lead to undesirable consequences for participants and participants become upset, such effects, including potentially long-term effects, should be avoided. In these cases the conversation topic must be changed and a break must be taken where necessary, or the participant should be referred to the New South Wales Service for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma Survivors (STARTTS), in Auburn, which is a service provided by the Centrelink office, if a participant should become distressed.

Finally, all of the recordings were to be anonymous and pseudonyms were used, the names chosen, where possible, by the participants themselves. Additionally, all the data obtained from participants in the research for the duration of investigation was kept securely and confidentially (Bulmer, 1982, p.225 as cited in Denzin and Lincoln, 1994, p.91) and used for research purposes only.

A detailed proposal of the research accompanied the ethics form, specifying how the research would be conducted in an ethical manner and that methods emphasising the ethical issues related to the research were taken into consideration (Basit, 2010). Compliance with the ethical requirements and standards advised by the University (Ezzy, 2002) led to the approval of the research by the University of Western Sydney Human Research Ethics Committee.

### 4.7 Analysis Strategy

The responses to the interviews were coded in order to decide the procedures to be taken in the case of missing or contradicting values and for data reduction (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994; Saldana, 2009). The resulting dataset was saved and data analysis subsequently undertaken. In order to analyse the interviews, a descriptive analysis of the data obtained from the open-ended interview questions was carried out through recording responses, transcribing and categorising similar responses together.

However, during the interview and analysis more themes were developed according to the answers to probing questions raised within the interviews, which aimed to obtain more targeted information and fill the gaps left by earlier questions (Maryns, 2006; Denzin and Lincoln, 1994). These related to the role of religion in Iraqi
refugee life in the Diaspora. Yet, in terms of the theory of civic integration (Kymlicka, 1995) more themes emerged, such as issues relating to social justice and equity, perspective towards the host community and knowledge of laws of the country of refuge. Under education experiences and aspirations, several themes have been explored, such as the relation between the Iraqi education system and education of Iraqis in Australia. Finally, under the category of ‘role of education and language in integration,’ many more themes were discovered, including learning the English language, education and employment.

4.7.1 Personal narrative

It can be argued that every person or group is the product of his or her own special experience. These experiences are the materials which provide building blocks for future experience:

*Personal experience is an integral part of the research process. Personal experience typically shapes the definition of the research problem and the method used to collect and analyse data. Personal experience is also a source of data about the research problem.* (Ezzy, 2002, p.153)

In this sense, the working experience of the researcher, his deep immersion in the researched scene, and experienced eyes, helped ambiguous and hidden matters to be seen in a better way than could be achieved by an outsider researcher.

As a result, in the current study, the personal experiences of the researcher, including those of his home involving five years in Iraqi refugee activities in Lebanon and Australia, familiarised him with the problems faced by refugees and their needs in their new country. It also provided ‘data, ideas for theories, contacts for research subjects, ... shap[ing] the methodology, conduct of fieldwork and data analysis, and [was] an important part of the research report’ (Ezzy, 2002, p.154).

By virtue of that, his concern for integrating refugees into the broader Australian community first arose in the context of his own professional experiences over five years as a refugee and refugees’ case manager. These experiences revealed the limitations of Iraqi refugees’ interaction with the Australian community. Lofland and
Lofland (1995, p.176) refer to the importance of the researcher’s voice, which should be ‘front and center’ in research reports. It should be the case that, in revealing personal responses to the people studied, the researcher’s role and the researcher’s view of life and existence in general is transparent.

Further, what researched people believe and wish to communicate about their condition should be reported. In this respect, the researcher was compelled to ‘try to move public conversation about researchers and responsibilities toward a sense of research for social justice’ (Fine, et al., 2000, p.108). Moreover, previous experience as an English language teacher in various Technical Institutes and secondary schools since 1988, in Iraq, Yemen, Lebanon and Jordan, helped the researcher to understand the different obstacles that refugee students face in their new learning environment.

Full membership of the researched group, being a refugee in Lebanon for five years, and conducting the research within his own community and culture (Merriam, et al., 2001) was a motive to participate in widening the scope and knowledge related to refugees’ problems, endurance, intentions, needs, goals and desires. That was a stimulation to work hard to get the truth, and a help to overcome doubts, confusion and any sense of weariness. As well, it was of interest to the researcher to be acquainted with the best methods and tactics in conducting, behaving and talking to the participants and to develop loyalties. The ability to understand the mentality of a community requires knowledge and understanding of the social psychology of that society because the field of work of the social researcher is to study the challenging phenomena in society. Further, becoming associated with the group (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994) is a benefit to the research in contrast to a situation where foreign researchers may exercise harassment and cause trouble during their social research and field work. In many ways the narratives from questionnaires and interviews that were analysed in this study are intertwined with the researcher’s own biography.

4.8 Research Limitations

The borders of the human study (the study population) involved spatial borders which are represented by the Iraqi Muslim Shiite refugees in Sydney, being the
community of research. Specifically, the community of the study was taken from the residents of Auburn, Granville, Fairfield, Liverpool and Bankstown. The temporal boundaries of the study reached from the time of registration in the subject at the University of Western Sydney in early 2010, and extended for a period of three years from that date in accordance with the university regulations. The research unit is Iraqis who have obtained legal residence in Australia, and an age range of 18 years and older, including both genders. Of the participants in the questionnaire, 18 were male and 12 were female and of the participants in the interviews, 7 were male and 4 were female. The gender balance was difficult to achieve for a range of reasons for both groups. The gender imbalance was felt to be related to the cultural issues related to male and female interactions.

The conclusions reached in the field study could be generalised to all the Iraqis and all centres in Australia.

One limitation was presented in the difficulty of the availability of Arabic sources in Australia, which has a role in the complexity of the issue of discussing the current subject, since it specifically relates to an Arabic community in Australia. This resulted in more of a reliance on references and sources available on the internet, which may greatly compensate for a lack of traditional (classical) library-research. This added to difficulty arising from the expanding volume of the researched community in terms of its geography and number. Difficulty interviewing and distributing the questionnaire form to participants in different places led to the employment of modern methods, taking advantage of internet technologies to distribute numbers forms electronically to participants.

4.9 Data Analysis

Data analysis and interpretation is considered the most important and final stage of social research, because it changes the unprocessed data obtained through the data collection process into meaningful information. As well, it can provide rich insight into human behaviour (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994). Through data analysis,
hypotheses or opinions which have been formed during the research preparation or writing may prove to be correct or incorrect.

According to Holliday (2002, p.99), data analysis is the process of making sense of, sifting, organising, cataloguing, selecting, and determining themes for processing the data. The present study is organised in themes which are related to the research questions, in the sense that themes are the basis upon which argument and the data extracts are organised, providing headings for discussion and stages in the argument in the data analysis chapter (ibid, p.99).

After completion of data processing and classification, the study has moved to the stage of analysis, interpretation and hypothesis testing to draw conclusions and assess the possibility of generalisation. Therefore, a number of technical processes are performed that constitute together the stage of data analysis or interpretation, in order to reach the results of the study. However, the hypotheses of the study must be checked for their agreement or disagreement with reality, links between them and the theoretical framework, and for their validity or sincerity.

4.9.1 Questionnaire

In the questionnaire, data processing is considered the first step in data analysis and has several stages including checking that the participants understood all questions and answered them and then deleting wrong answers (Cohen, et al., 2007). That stage is called editing, which ‘is intended to identify and eliminate errors made by participants’ (p.37).

The comparison method based on the principles of the grounded theory was used to derive the codes from the data (Basit, 2010). The data collected from the completed questionnaires was entered into the computer as ‘Computer-based code-and-retrieve will do this better, because computers are good at working with structure, not content’ (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994, p.447). The data that was entered was saved so that the data analysis stage could be carried out.
The processed data needed to be reduced and responses to the questionnaire coded. In other words, the main sentence in a text which best describes the whole text is identified; that chosen sentence is called a ‘code’. Coding is ‘the translation of question responses and participant information to specific categories for the purpose of analysis’ (Cohen, et al., 2007, p.480). It also consists of arranging things in a systematic order and labelling the data into groups according to what they are about and what they contain (coding or indexing) (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994; Saldana, 2009). These groups are labelled according to gender, employment, educational level and age. Then a way of collecting identically labelled passages together (retrieving) should be provided. Codes that lay under each group were gathered, classified and listed into four major categories related to the research questions. These categories are educational, religious, social and cultural issues.

Every category contained a number of codes that were related more closely to each other, and those comparable codes were gathered together in two stages. The first stage included grouping the main code with all entries in that group. The second stage was re-examining the entries so that similar ones were put together, and that lead to the creation of another code.

4.9.2 Interviews

In order to analyse the interviews, a descriptive analysis of the data obtained from the interview’s open-ended questions was carried out. The process started by recording responses, transcribing and categorising similar responses together. Because some responses were too long, the exact wording was not considered; rather the general meaning of the responses has been taken for granted (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994).

All of the interviews have been transcribed and translated by interpreting what is believed the participants were communicating. Therefore, readers should be cautioned that some of the concepts were not easily translated due to difficulty in interpreting cultural contexts.

The first important step in data analysis is managing and organising the collected data. Interview transcription was completed and labelled after conducting all
interviews or during the process of data collection. After each interview, memos, where key themes and patterns that seemed evident can be documented, were written. These memos reflected additional information and views that arose from the interview (Crowl, 1993). Then the data was recorded, reviewed, tested and checked for its validity and a database created containing various types of scales.

Because qualitative data analysis is a repetitive process (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994), the transcripts and the associated notes were repetitively read and checked and the tapes repeatedly listened to in order to ensure complete familiarity with the material. Then the data was broken into segments to discover meaning units and themes in the segments and compare the meaning units and themes across the segments (Gall, et al., 2003).

The answers were divided into separate headings before identifying categories using the comparison method. The comparison method is a logical instrument to look for views, especially contradictions, and to compare them with the rest of the data to identify clear or hidden similarities (ibid). New emerging codes were compared with existing codes and a theoretical relation between them established through using this method.

At a very general level, comparison between levels of integration and different types of integration is used in identifying similarities and differences and in providing the key to understanding, explaining and interpreting diverse outcomes and processes and their significance for integration. This comparison is useful through using Hamdan’s typology, related to the levels of integration, to analyse the data collected in the research. Comparisons were employed to develop the concept of integration and ascertain the application of these levels of integration in the daily lives of the participants. This stage contributes to producing a wide range of codes.

Coding makes use of the computer in order to decide the procedures to be taken for missing or contradicting values and for data reduction (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994; Saldana, 2009). This stage involved using a different colour for every participant. Using the computer, data was coded, transcripts corrected and subgroups of
interviews, based on various features such as age, gender, educational background and other features, created (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994). The entered dataset was saved and data analysis subsequently undertaken. Further, one of the important features of computerised data analysis is that more than one code to a particular section of the transcript can be easily applied, thus numerous themes were found in one passage and could be captured without duplicating the transcript.

In that sense, the more interviews that were coded, the more the coding categories would increase. After coding all transcripts, reports which included all the quotes that emerged from each category or theme were written. These categories or themes were used to manage and comprehend the interviewees’ opinions and experiences.

Subsequently, when writing the results of the research, the themes were revised and the analysis process refined. Through the process of refining the analysis, positive and negative points of view on the same social phenomenon by the same participant were found and differences and contradictory views among participants identified. Therefore, it was necessary to unpack contradictions, dualism, and structural restrictions facing the society in order to precisely describe the views, feelings, and experiences of the participants.

4.10 Conclusion

This chapter has examined the significance of methodology in relation to the study subject, citing the distinctive situation of Iraqi refugees as an important factor directing the line of enquiry. The study relied on many assumptions, variables and tools to test them, via questionnaire and interview, on topics that included: educational and socio-economic level, age, gender, time of settlement in Australia and trauma. The qualitative data was drawn from two sources, semi-structured individual interviews with 11 Iraqi refugees, and a specially designed questionnaire for a sample of 30 Iraqi refugees.

The next chapter will present the results of the documents analysed from the thirty participants that were included in the questionnaire phase of the study.
CHAPTER 5:
QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presented the methodology used to collect the required data. This chapter reports the results of the questionnaire completed by thirty Iraqi refugees. The sample ranged across age and gender, providing a representative sample of the area of population. A questionnaire was chosen as a data gathering tool because it can create a picture of people’s understanding of the integration process in the Auburn, Fairfield, Liverpool, Granville, and Bankstown areas, where there is an immediate access to resettled Iraqi Muslim Shiite refugees.

Although the concentration was on closed-ended questions because they are easy to analyse and quick to answer, open-ended questions were also included, where sufficient space was left for detailed responses. Some participants were embarrassed when answering some questions related to their age, qualifications, the reason behind their leaving school and other personal questions.

The chapter reports participants’ responses about the economic, educational, political, cultural, social, and religious influences on their integration into the broader community, as well as the influence of their knowledge of the English language. Furthermore, participants specified the problems and obstacles in the way of their intention to integrate. The responses to the open-ended questions provide further evidence of participants’ views.

5.2 Demographic Background

In order to achieve gender equality of participation, about forty questionnaires were distributed to males and thirty five to females, according to the addressee (discussed in Chapter 4), but only thirty completed questionnaires were received.

Eighteen male and 12 female participants completed the questionnaire (Table 5.1). Nine out of 30 participants were less than 30 years of age, 12 were in their forties.
and another nine participants were 50 or over 50 years of age. The average age of the female participants was much younger than the average age of the male participants. In regards to the participants’ marital status, 25 participants were married and five of them were single.

Table 5.1: **Number of participants and age average**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Average Age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As there is a significant difference in social status between the rural and urban areas in Iraq, participants were asked to identify if they came from a rural or urban area. Nineteen of this group of participants were from rural areas, and 11 of them were from urban areas (Table 5.2).

Table 5.2: **Participants’ social background**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Rural Inhabitants</th>
<th>Urban Inhabitants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It has been noted in Chapter 4 that there are a number of factors which set refugees apart from other immigrants. Of these factors are the circumstances of their displacement from their homeland. Participants were asked whether they had lived in a refugee camp or not. As reported in Table 5.3, 15 out of 24 did not live in a refugee camp. Five of those, who lived in a refugee camp before coming to Australia, lived in Rafha refugee camp on the Iraqi-Saudi Arabia border, while three of them lived in Kurten camp, Manus Island, in Australia, and one lived in Esfahan camp in Iran. Six of the participants did not answer this question.
Table 5.3: Number of Iraqi refugees and their experiences in a refugee camp

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Males living in a refugee camp</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Males not living in a refugee camp</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females living in a refugee camp</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females not living in a refugee camp</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Further, 13 out of 15 participants responded that they had lived in another country before coming to Australia. The other two participants did not live in another country before coming here; both of them came to Australia as holders of family reunion visas.

To ascertain their current economic situation, participants were asked about their employment (Table 5.4). The results indicated that 11 out of 18 male participants were unemployed and all female participants were unemployed. A female participant ascribed her unemployment to her ‘responsibility for childcare and meeting family needs’. Although the findings of the questionnaire could not be generalised, and two of the participants were educated, England, et al. (2004) attribute significant sex differences in employment to female refugees’ lower educational achievement prior to migration.

Table 5.4: Number of employed and unemployed participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employed Male</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed Female</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed Male</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed Female</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Examining the participants’ levels of education (Table 5.5), it is evident that one participant held a PhD degree, seven males and five females held university degrees,
one female and three males held a diploma degree and five males held a postgraduate certificate or were continuing postgraduate study. Additionally, five females and two males finished Year 12 or were continuing Year 12 or intermediate school and one female finished primary school.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>PhD</th>
<th>Postgraduate Certificate</th>
<th>BA</th>
<th>Diploma</th>
<th>Secondary School</th>
<th>Primary School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is important to conclude that the majority of the participants are married and from rural areas. Most of the participants lived in a refugee camp or in another country before coming to Australia. Although nearly all of them had finished high school, at least, most of them were unemployed.

5.3 Economic influences

Employment is considered the primary source of achieving some security, developing social interactions, and gaining some cultural skills, which are essential to integration and developing a standard of living necessary for resettlement. Employment also helps refugees to penetrate the broader community and encourages a mentality of social interaction. Consequently, integration is more viable when individuals move towards sound economic goals.

In the area of employment, the participants were asked if they were currently working in their own business, on a farm or if they work for wages or a salary with an employer. Seven out of 18 participants were employed, while 11 participants were unemployed. One participant commented:

Although I have BA degree in education and because I could not recognise my university certificate, I preferred opening a small supermarket selling Iraqi and Arabic goods in my own community in Auburn.
Another stated:

*Unemployment is just like a nightmare it overwhelms me. It is better to work. It is a sign of masculinity. It makes you feel as if you are part of the community*. Yet another participant stated that ‘the failure in acquiring a job, because of English language, has forced me to stay indoors.’

The data shows a significant difference in the number of males or females in employment, with none of the female participants in full time paid work (Table 4).

The reasons given for not working by female participants were: family responsibilities, lack of time to join English language courses available for refugees, and cultural barriers. As one participant mentioned, ‘Some employers reject Muslim women because of wearing hijab on the grounds that it is against the rules of safety inside the workplace.’

As a result, local communities or ‘ethnic enclaves’ can assist their members in achieving economic mobility through increasing employment opportunities and other services necessary for refugees’ resettlement. If living in enclaves, refugees do not need the social and cultural skills of the host country because they remain within their own language and cultural background. Consequently, refugees’ own communities, or ‘ethnic enclaves’, contribute in offering an alternative means of reducing the economic cost of integration that some refugees may face (Chiswick and Miller, 2002).

Participants were asked if work helps integration into the Australian community. The statements were rated based on a 1-5 Lickert scale, one being the best rating and five the worst rating (Appendix 2). Eighteen out of 27 participants thought that it helps a lot, while two participants negatively answered the question. One of those who answered ‘no’ prefers to work with an Arabic employer and thinks that working with a person of the same ethnicity will not help in integrating with others. The other one was a female who did not have any experience in the field of work, as she was not working, so it is possible that she did not appreciate the impact of work on the process of integration. Four participants said that it sometimes helps in integrating
with others; three said that they did not know, and another three did not answer the question.

From the data, it is evident that the majority of participants were unemployed. Their lack of employment was attributed to multiple causes, including language, inability to transfer qualifications, adaptation to the new culture, lack of work experience and employers’ reluctance to either employ someone from a different cultural background or to take a ‘risk’ with someone they knew little about. It can be said that Iraqis value working, since they seize the opportunity to work within their community limits. Overall, nearly all the participants expressed agreement that employment helps in facilitating the integration process.

5.4 Educational Influences

In order to get a picture of how education influenced the participants’ integration, it was important to obtain details about their previous educational experiences and how these influenced their views of education in Australia. The first specific questions regarding the education process referred to the participants’ age and the time since they had left school or stopped studying. Nearly all of the participants indicated that they had finished studying; only three had not finished yet because they were still studying in tertiary institutions, TAFE or universities.

Of those who had left or finished school, 15 out of 27 participants left school more than 15 years ago and 12 did not know exactly when they left school. Of those who had finished studying, one participant finished his study in the late 1950s, two participants finished study in the late 1960s and five of them finished in the 1970s. Additionally, six participants finished their study in the 1980s, three finished in the 1990s, and five finished their study in the beginning of the current century. Eight participants are still studying.

In order to explore the precise reason for leaving school, the participants had to select from 19 choices, and they could choose more than one reason. Four out of 15 participants said that they left school because they wanted to get a job and earn their own money. Three attributed leaving school to their intention to study or to go
training that was not available at school or because having a Year 12 certificate would not help them to get a job. Another three participants stated that they left school because of the financial situation or the social rank of educated people in Iraq, since the monthly salaries of teachers dropped dramatically, to about ten dollars a month, and did not keep pace with high inflation rates and the cost of living (Al-Ali, 2007).

Furthermore, six out of 15 participants affirmed that they left school because they already had a job, the methods of teaching in Iraq had influenced their intention to study, or they were not doing well at school. Two said it was because they did not like school, the teachers’ behaviour and treatment forced them to leave, their social background or psychological situation stood in the way of their study, their parents wanted them to leave, or their parents’ level of education stood in the way of their study. It is not surprising that no one chose religion or the co-educational environment as a reason for leaving school. Half of the participants did not answer this question.

The reasons given in the open-ended question for stopping or still studying also varied. One female participant stated that ‘the worst mistake I ever made was to drop out of my apprenticeship’. Additionally, one participant said that it was six months since he had stopped study, because he was ‘the only one working in the family and of course I have a lot more responsibility’. Seven participants confirmed that they have never stopped studying, with one stating, ‘I may have not continued my studies, but I took courses to be able to speak English and I have learned to educate myself’. Five participants did not respond to this question.

It can be noted that the reason for some participants not studying may stem partially from their long break from study. The longer the period a person does not study, the more difficult it is for him or her to return to school, especially if that person is a refugee (Brennan, 2003; Casimiro, et al., 2007).

When the participants were asked an open-ended question about the subjects they found difficult, 11 out of 27 participants found English the most difficult subject
because of not practicing it enough times, methods of teaching and ‘because of British colonialism’ which creates ‘a complex of hatred to English language inside me’, as one participant stated. Four participants found mathematics the most difficult subject and three stated that chemistry and physics were the most difficult subjects because of ‘rules, complexity and chemical equations’. One participant said that scientific subjects, history, geography, and literature were the most difficult subjects, while seven participants stated that there was no difficult subject. Four participants did not provide any response.

A more controversial suggestion to arise from the previous question, however, was the majority of the participants who expressed their dissatisfaction and anxiety caused by English which can be explained as a ‘learning English complex’. That complex is due to two factors. The first one relates to the methods of teaching followed in Iraq. Foreman (1998) affirms that all teachers and schools in Iraq follow traditional methods, resisting any change, and are reluctant to agree on innovation. Al-Ali (2007) attributes the refrain of Iraqi students from study to the strict and rigid rules at schools. The second factor is the Australian educational system. The existing Australian educational system lacks sufficient resources, funds and tools to provide an effective teaching and learning environment for English as a second language (Mathews, 2008).

Further, the Australian educational system does not take into consideration:

... the historical and cultural backgrounds of new refugees and the effects of pre- and post-displacement factors such as interrupted schooling, lack of literacy in the mother tongue, trauma, torture, immigrant status and reception, radicalisation, acculturation and resilience. (ibid, p.31)

The more distant the two cultures are, the more difficult second language learning is.

An open-ended question was asked to see if the participants missed any schooling and the reason for this disruption of schooling. Six out of 28 participants mentioned that they had missed one or more years of schooling. The reasons given for missing one or more academic years were ‘imprisonment in Iraq owing to political reasons’
and ‘in order not to join the compulsory military service’: the day an 18-year-old-
male student finishes school, he should join the military service. Two participants did
not answer this question. Thus participants did not have a complex about or fear of
school, which might prohibit them from learning in Australia.

To ascertain participants’ educational experiences in Australia, they were asked
about joining courses in Australia and whether they would like to do any kind of
courses in the future. Of the 26 participants who answered this question, 13 did
courses related to English language at ACL, TAFE, AMEP or Adult Migrant English
Services (AMES). Two of them did computer courses and five did courses in
accounting, hairdressing, real estate, childcare, agriculture, and flower making, and
one did a diploma course, without naming its type. Nine participants said that they
did not join any course. One said, ‘One of the most difficult things for me was to
learn the language. I attended some language courses but I never could grasp the
grammar’, and another said, ‘Yes’ without specifying a course, while four
participants did not give any response.

A related question was asked about the kind of course they would like to do in the
future. Five out of 24 participants confirmed that they would like to do an English
course in the future and two said that they would like to do a computer course.
Fourteen stated that they would like to do one or more of the following: psychology,
hairdressing, childcare, accounting, fitness, a PhD and a Masters Degree, a business
course, methods of research, building and construction, a social course, or aviation.
Three participants confirmed that they would not like to do any course in the future,
and six did not respond.

The conclusion can be reached that despite education and training being known to be
important goals among refugees (Gifford, et al., 2009), there are numerous barriers to
Iraqi refugees’ access to and experiences of education, including lack of knowledge
of the new education system, language, methods of teaching, especially English
language teaching, family responsibilities, missed academic years in Iraq, long
breaks in study, and dropping out of school. However, although many obstacles stand
in the path of Iraqis’ education, nearly half of the participants were interested in studying or joining courses in Australia.

5.4.1 Education as a refugee

In order to further explore the relationship between the long break from study and the difficulty of returning to school, especially after participants escaped their homeland, participants were asked whether or not they went to school while in a country other than Iraq.

Thirteen out of 15 participants went to school while they were in a country other than Iraq, four while in Syria, two while in Saudi Arabia and another two while in Holland. Though five out of 13 participants went to school while they were in Iran, they did not finish their study, because, as one participant explained, ‘It is not allowed for Iraqi immigrant students in Iran to join Iranian universities after finishing high school’. Further, two participants said that they did not go to school while they were in a country other than Iraq, and 15 did not answer this question.

According to participants, some neighbouring countries do not allow Iraqi immigrants to join their educational institutions ‘because of financial reasons, as they allege’, a male participant said. Abdul Jabbar (2002) states that the reasons behind the prohibition of Iraqi refugees joining school in other countries, especially Jordan and Iran, are of interest, since the prevention process was specifically built on political and racist grounds. However, despite prohibition, nearly all the participants joined schools while in a country other than their homeland. Thus education plays a significant role in Iraqi refugee life.

5.4.2 Iraqi refugees and their views about education

It has been argued that education enables refugees to develop their own capabilities as individuals, so that they are able to take decisions in an effective and influential way to solve the problems they are facing, and that it helps them shouldering the responsibilities of family. Education assists them in becoming educated in their lives,
providing opportunities for them to criticise, imagine and be independent; and it provides better opportunities for employment.

In order to perceive the role of education in Iraqis’ lives, the next question was about what the participants thought their parents wanted them to do after finishing school. Seventeen out of 24 participants indicated that their parents were most willing for them to join university and pursue their study. Six of them confirmed that they did not know what their parents wanted them to do, due to their old age, and they did not remember exactly their intention in those days. One participant stated that his parents preferred him to do training or an apprenticeship and look for work or get a job, six participants did not respond to the question.

Similarly, an open-ended question was asked to see whether and why participants preferred or encouraged their children to pursue study. Although the reasons behind their preference for or encouragement of their children to pursue study varied from one participant to another, all participants did prefer or encourage their children to follow a path of study. Twenty one out of 24 participants demonstrated that they preferred or encouraged their children to pursue study in order ‘to get high certificate and accordingly get a good job’, as one female participant stated; another one said that ‘an educated person is better than an uneducated one and therefore can best serve his or her society and country’. One of the male participants connected a certificate to ‘high social rank and value’. Another participant commented that because ‘the future lies in the hand of the young generation ... they have to pursue their study’. Three participants said ‘Yes’ without giving any explanation, and six did not respond to the question.

It is clear that Iraqi refugee parents perceive the importance of education and value the role it plays in life. The most common attitude of Iraqi refugee parents is their desire that their children receive a good education and pursue study to obtain a decent job (Collins, 1991, p.187). They believe that educational attainment is a means to upward social mobility for their children and the best way to achieve high social rank in society. Parents on average place high store on education for their

However, although the Iraqi refugee parents were enthusiastic about their children pursuing study, once resettled in the new community, a number of factors worked to reduce refugee access to and participation in education. These factors, which include English as the language of communication and instruction, and a lack of knowledge of the new educational system (Hunt, 2003, p.112), will be discussed next.

5.4.3 Barriers to pursuing education

Since the participants valued education and knew the role it plays in life, an open-ended question was asked about the reasons behind the refrain of Iraqi refugees from pursuing their study.

Three participants affirmed that they did not pursue their study because of family responsibilities and age (health problems). A male participant said that ‘I am eager to pursue my postgraduate study, but the enrolment procedures close all the gates of achieving that dream’. Another participant attributed his refrain from pursuing study to the ‘English language proficiency test’. Only one participant said that he was pursuing his postgraduate study, and another one had already achieved his PhD degree in Iraq. Seventeen refrained from answering the question.

Similarly, because English language is the official language in Australia, an open-ended question was asked to see whether it was a barrier to the participants’ study or not. Fifteen out of 26 participants indicated that they would like and were eager to pursue their study, but English language stood as an obstacle in the way of achieving that purpose ‘because, it is difficult to be learned’, a male participant declared. Another participant attributed his non-pursuit of study to a lack of English language skills and the consequent ‘lack of interacting with the Australians’, while another one said it was ‘because researches need a high level of English’. A female participant confirmed that ‘Iraqi English curriculum and methods of teaching English language create an English language learning complex inside me which influenced my intention to learn English in Australia’. On the other hand, 11 participants believed
that English language was not an obstacle towards pursuing their study. They said so because they are still students, while the others were postgraduate students. Four participants refrained from giving an answer.

Speaking the main language of the host community is perceived to be necessary to effectively study and, in turn, integrate into the broader community. Not being able to speak the English language is seen as a barrier to social interaction, economic integration, full participation (Home Office, 2006) and, in turn, integration into the broader community.

In addition to the influence of English language upon Iraqis’ intention to study, the teachers of the Australian educational institutions might have an impact upon Iraqis’ intention to study, too. So, the participants were asked their views about teachers in relation to their impact on interest in studying, their teaching level, knowledge of the subject matter, ability to explain things clearly, whether they were well prepared and organised, their ability to communicate with students, ability to maintain student interest and their management of student discipline. The statements were rated based on a 1-5 Lickert scale, one being the best rating and five the worst rating (appendix 2).

Twelve out of 17 participants said that teachers’ teaching levels and ability to communicate with students ranged between fair and very weak. Three said that teachers’ knowledge of the subject matter, ability to maintain student interest, and preparation and organisation, were very poor. Two said that managing student discipline, knowledge of the subject matter and ability to explain things clearly ranged between fair and poor. Thirteen participants did not give any answer.

So far it has been argued that key concepts in the present study are education and learning the English language. Since the participants demonstrated an eagerness to pursue their study, it can be concluded that the majority of Iraqi refugees value education highly and believe a good education is the key to success. However, many factors impacted upon their intention to or pursuit of study, including the hard
circumstances they endured over their asylum journey, their English language proficiency and teachers’ teaching abilities.

5.5 English Language and Integration

The participants were asked if learning the language of the host country helped integration. All the participants strongly agreed that learning the language of the country of immigration helped in achieving the process of integration, while two participants did not give any response.

Since English language plays a key role in the integration process, and in order to examine the participants’ level of speaking the English language, they were asked how well they could speak English when they arrived, and at present. They had to choose from the options: a) very well, b) better than average, c) about average, d) not very well, e) very poorly or f) not at all.

Six out of 28 participants pointed out that they could speak English very well. Seven participants confirmed that their English language ability was better than average, five said that it was about average, eight stated that they could not speak the language very well, and, finally, two of said that their English language ability was very poor. Two did not give any response.

The findings confirm that the adoption of the dominant language has beneficial effects in the integration process regardless of how long a person has been settled in the host country. Even though most of the participants rate themselves as having poor levels in terms of their skills, some of them seemed determined to succeed: ‘I am not able to join ACL, so I self-study. I bought a dictionary and study myself’ explained a female participant.

An open-ended question was asked, relating to English proficiency and dealing with agencies, to see how the participants could deal with others and with the different government and non-government offices. Based on the participants’ answers, it can be noted that almost all 19 participants who answered this question depended on the translation services available in most offices. One participant said, ‘My ability to
speak English is very poorly, but officers of different offices assist me drawing words out of me’. In addition, these participants also mentioned their feelings when dealing with these agencies and when using other means of getting their message across. One male participant expressed his resentment, saying:

I feel like a dummy who depends on others tongues to explain what he wants ... It is very uncomfortable because I cannot say what I want and ... I feel I am more down than the other people.

Another participant said, ‘What he knows is sufficient’ and added that he ‘deals with them with difficulty’; while another one stated, ‘I deal with non-Arabic speakers with my children’s assistance’.

Language barriers are a fundamental hurdle for Iraqi refugees and appear to stop them from making vital connections with their host community. Even daily tasks like taking a bus or grocery shopping can be overwhelming. Language issues also cause frustration around access to some services, especially health care services. A female participant described her incapability to ask an employee a simple question, saying, ‘I cried ... because I was unable to express myself in English’.

Huge familial problem were created by the dependence of some Iraqi refugees on their children, as interpreters, when dealing with different offices, since their children tended to be more proficient in English than they were. It created a crack in the familial fabric, as parents could not control their children’s behaviour or discipline them, even though they feel that they are a vital corner of the family structure. Accordingly, refugee children have to cope with changes in familial relationships, when their parents become more vulnerable and depend on them (Candappa, 2000; Rutter and Stanton, 2001).

The widespread provision of translation and interpreting services has been criticised as an inhibitor of language learning and thereby integration (Easton, 2006). However, translation and interpreting supports are crucial in the early stages of settlement and are likely to be of ongoing significance. Yet, it is clear that all of the
participants valued English language learning and were concerned about their ability to speak English.

Because Iraqi refugees expressed their concern about learning English and to explore the importance of English language, a question was posed relating to the role the learning of the host community language plays in the integration process. Though, 21 participants indicated that learning English would facilitate the process of integration into the Australian community, there were a number of reasons why participants had not learnt English in Australia. Nine out of 21 participants thought that their age and the methods of teaching English and the curriculum in Iraq stood as obstacles towards learning English. Seven participants thought that English language teaching in Iraq and English language learning difficulties stood as obstacles towards learning English. Additionally, three attributed the difficulty in learning English to their social rank and the ACL or TAFE English language teacher’s citizenship. Two participants believed that their spouses and family responsibilities impeded them from learning the English language. A female participant pointed out, ‘Upbringing my children hinders me from learning English’. Nine participants did not respond to this question.

By virtue of that, nearly all the participants strongly agreed that being able to speak the main language of the host community is central to the integration process. The majority of the participants lacked English language skills, so that they depended on translation services or their children. Other factors including age, methods of teaching in Iraq, the nature of the Iraqi English curriculum, English language teaching in Iraq and Australia, and English language learning difficulties stood as obstacles towards learning English in Australia. Therefore, in order to deeply connect with the host country and learn more about it, a refugee has to take ‘the first step in ... learn[ing] its language. Without that, all remains opaque and skewed by the problem of translation’ (Hage and Couch, 1999, p.246).

It has been noted that learning the English language through joining different language institutions in Australia is difficult, due to some factors mentioned above.
So following Australian media may play a role in facilitating the learning of the English language and, in turn, strengthening a sense of belonging.

### 5.5.1 Australian television or radio, and a sense of belonging

Interaction with Australian citizens plays a vital role in acquiring English language. As Hassanpour (1994) argues, ‘[t]he technology of satellite broadcasting has its own dynamics’ (p.3) in empowering and establishing the state’s cultural and linguistic borders. So, following different kinds of media in general, and following Australian television or radio, in particular, may contribute to facilitating learning and developing confidence in speaking the English language. It can offer refugees a better method of picking up conversational English skills and new words, and assist in properly pronouncing, practicing and applying new phrases and words. Although this method may improve the individual’s English, it is important that he or she puts that knowledge and skills into practice by interacting with the host community and speaking in English as often as possible.

Participants were given five choices related to motives behind following Australian television or radio. Of all the participants, five out of 28 participants did not follow Australian television or radio, because of language difficulties. Eleven participants sometimes followed Australian television or radio, in order to deepen the relationship between the refugee and the custodial community, learn language and identify the habits and traditions of the Australian community. A female participant said that ‘we always follow the Australian television ... but sometimes especially during the weekend ... we turn the Australian television off ... because of the bad scenes’. Nine participants followed it for the purpose of learning language only, while only one participant watched it for the purpose of identifying the habits and traditions of the Australian community only. Finally, two participants said ‘Yes’ without identifying the reason, and two did not give any response.

Thus, a high percentage of the participants followed Australian television or radio for the purpose of learning the English language and to deepen the relationship between the refugee and the custodial community. Consequently, the television and radio as kinds of media succeed in playing a major role in establishing a constructive
dialogue between refugees and the host society. Furthermore, they also succeed in creating an environment full of cohesion, and strengthen the relationship between refugees and the host community, through providing a major vehicle for public discussion and shaping the refugees’ perceptions of the public. This illustrates the importance of a constructive involvement of the media and a well-informed and balanced way of reporting.

In this way, because refugees also rely heavily on in-language television and radio for information and entertainment, a question was raised relating to whether the participants follow Arabic television or radio. Although their motives for following Arabic television or radio were different, it turned out that nearly all participants, 29, followed them. Twenty four participants followed Arabic television or radio for the purpose of following the news of the mother country and promoting and strengthening the connection with the homeland. Three participants followed it for the purpose of promoting and strengthening the connection with the homeland only: one participant said that ‘they take you right into the home’. Two participants followed it for the purpose of following the news of the homeland, promoting and strengthening the connection with it and because it is the most important way to spend leisure time. One participant explained:

*Arabic television is my homeland eyes where my children watch through them their country and society ... it is my homeland tongue where my children can talk Arabic through it.*

A female participant commented:

*The Arabic radio and the television are the best entertainment tools, because it is difficult for most of the Iraqi women to attend some religious, social or political lectures, seminars or presentations.*

Only one participant did not follow Arabic television or radio, but did not give any reason. Therefore, the conclusion can be drawn that nearly all the participants follow Arabic television or radio in order to keep themselves and their families in touch with their roots, culture, traditions, customs and mainly maintaining the Arabic language. For most, Arabic television is the main source of news, especially updates
on the political situation back home. Following Arabic television or radio may contribute to reducing the opportunity of speaking English language at home, which will be discussed next.

5.5.2 English usage at home

The well-known conflict between first and second generations in refugee communities is often centred on the varying degree of proficiency in the English language, which of course differs across generations. This point becomes particularly evident when second-generation refugees, many of whom were born and raised in the host country, leave their language and sometimes their culture behind, and take vast steps towards the host country language and culture. Perhaps the biggest strain on families is the growing gap between refugee parents and their children, who acculturate much more quickly. Acquiring the host country language could be the main reason behind this quick acculturation. Thus, in order to explore whether the participants’ children used English at home, through their interaction with each other or with their friends, an open-ended question was asked.

Fifteen out of 23 participants confirmed that their children sometimes used English at home. A participant noted:

*I think using English language at home creates a gap between the children and the parents in terms of certain issues, because it is not part of our way of life to use a foreign language inside home ... as we, the parents, cannot use or understand.*

Another participant confirmed what the previous one said, saying ‘*I guess ... there is a gap ... because there is not enough communication*’. Five participants said their children did not use English at home, one of which ‘*prohibited my children from speaking English at home*’, whereas three confirmed that their children often used English through their interaction with each other. Seven participants did not answer this question.

Most participants attributed the lack of English usage at home to a religious reason, because ‘*Arabic language is the backbone of all the religious worshipping from*
praying, reciting Quran to chanting supplications’ a male participant said, and therefore ‘I insisted my children speak Arabic at home’. Another participant affirmed that speaking English language instead of Arabic language at home ‘will produce a wearisome generation who will lose both the family traditions and the new home traditions’. In that sense, the participants did not separate cultural heritage and religion and considered them as a one block in the face of any potential step Iraqis may take in their endeavour to integrate in Australia. A participant confirmed the relationship between language and culture, adding that:

Immigration creates what we can call a culture clash between the first and the second generation, the difference, and the gap between the old and the young. The young want to become Australian and the old want to keep the tradition.

While this is something about which participants complain, their comments and insights show that they are under enormous pressure. These pressures lead to fractured relationships within families, increased stress, and serious health issues.

5.6 Political Factors

The process of political integration is considered complex because it consists of several dimensions involving participation in public affairs and social practices. On this basis, the individual is considered integrated if he or she takes part in the core activities of the society in which he or she lives, such as participating in the process of political elections to choose the right candidates to represent him or her, and participating in decision-making on a local or national level. Integration also appears in a high degree of willingness to achieve political interaction among the members of a community.

In order to seek the participants’ political opinions and their confidence in the political process in Australia and whether it contradicts their religious or social beliefs, a question was asked about their involvement in Australian political parties. Twelve out of 23 participants expressed disagreement with joining a political party; one of them saying that he ‘hates to join any Australian party because of restrictions [in the political process]’. Another participant said that ‘coming from Iraq, we would
have this negative view of politicians’. Others attributed their disagreement with joining any party to lack of ‘English language’ and to ‘no familiarity with Australian laws and systems and the problems of political work before coming to Australia’. Eleven participants expressed their agreement with being members of an Australian party, and seven did not give any response.

The Iraqi refugees in this study lacked participation and interest in local political life. The reason behind Iraqi refugees refraining from political participation may be ‘because our immigration is quite recent, and there may have not been enough time to develop political interest’, one participant noted. However, second generation Iraqis may have similar political attitudes to local Australian citizens.

With the purpose of further investigating Iraqi refugees’ political attitudes, the participants were asked whether they were members of any Iraqi or Australian association or intended to join in the future. Twenty one out of 24 participants indicated a negative response and answered with ‘No’, because they, as one participant commented, ‘cannot trust or depend on these institutions for support, as they do not pay attention to our problems and concerns’. Another participant said, ‘We are not interested in these organisations because they interfere in the political affairs, as they used to do in Iraq’. Three of them said that they might join an association in the future and six participants did not respond to the question.

It seems that the majority of participants expressed resentment towards organisations; they were likely to be engaged in the political arena when they were expected to assist and support their community members. However, Malkki (1995) believes that community organisations have come to play a large part in the resettlement and integration process of refugees. The work these organisations do is therefore important to the successful resettlement of refugees. Moreover, the interaction between these organisations and refugees is considered the first link the refugees have with their new environment and culture, so they become an important connection.
In a related vein, participants were asked if they attended cultural activities held by Australian authorities. Seven participants stated that they never attended cultural activities, three participants said ‘Yes’ and 18 participants said ‘Sometimes’, especially ‘Australia Day and New Year’s celebrations’, as an 18-year-old male participant said. Two did not give any response.

Despite the importance of the political factor in the integration process, the majority expressed their refusal to join parties or participate in political life.

Although community organisations play an important role in overcoming discrimination or insensitivity in the provision of statutory services, and in rebuilding community life and a sense of belonging, which have been disrupted by exile, most of the participants had negative attitude towards them.

5.7 Cultural Factors

‘Culture’ indicates language, traditions, and material creations of people, as well as tensions of different opinions, struggle among competing persons within and outside it, and dynamic change. According to this definition, culture comprises the beliefs and customs of a group of people that are transmitted from generation to generation by means of a language. Each human society has its model of social life.

5.7.1 Sense of belonging and integration

Mee and Wright (2009) argue that ‘it is clearly possible to belong in many different ways at many different scales’ (p.772). For refugees, belonging means integrating into the host country culture through learning the dominant language, which has been used historically as a way to mark certain ethnic/cultural groups (Hughes, 1993), and being acquainted with, respecting and abiding by the laws of the host country, which stem from the culture of the country. So, laws and culture are complementary.

To explore the relationship between their knowledge of the host country laws and culture and their sense of belonging to that country, the participants were asked about their level of knowledge of Australian laws and customs. Twenty seven out of 29
participants expressed ignorance of Australian laws and customs. One of the participants said:

Many Iraqi refugees think that they can do the same things here and that is where problems start. The culture is different and laws are stricter and both of them should be respected. In Iraq you just need to know how to drive a car, but here you need a licence to drive a car.

Two participants claimed knowledge of the laws and culture, because, according to one of the participants:

Knowing the laws means not falling into practices that violate these laws and violation of laws require punishment and a painful rejection from the society and its perception of inferiority to those who violate laws.

A female participant confirmed that knowledge of laws and culture is important:

They reduce the errors that we fall in and hurt others without knowing that we hurt others or even feel that we hurt them ... We constantly learn new things, which enhance our integration and our understanding of the laws.

One participant did not give any answer.

Moreover, social justice and equality may contribute to create a sense of belonging, and facilitate the integration process. Equal treatment and equal opportunity means that all have equal social, cultural and economic opportunities regardless of their race, religion, beliefs or other characteristics. Equal treatment presupposes a minimum of equal status among those who are treated equally. Thus, the participants where asked whether they felt equality before the law in Australia or not. Almost all the participants, 25 out of 27, pointed out that they did feel equality before the law in Australia. One participant noted, ‘Although there is discrimination concerning recruitment and job opportunities, I can perceive equality in many corners of the Australian reality’. Two male participants said that they did not feel equality before the law in Australia ‘because of the spread of racial discrimination’, according to one of them. Three participants did not give any response.
The majority of participants believed that they are treated as equal citizens before the Australian law. The aim of equality is to achieve equal opportunities, rights and duties of participation for all, irrespective of origin or social or cultural background.

When the participants were asked if they felt that they belonged to Australia or not, 21 participants indicated that they did feel that they belonged to Australia, while three said that they did not feel that they belonged to Australia, because ‘hostility against Moslems or Islamophobia creates inside me discomfort and that affects my sense of belonging to Australia’, as one male participant explained. Five participants stated that they did not know, and one participant did not give any response.

Iraqi refugees, as a new part in the whole Australian social structure, may face a number of problems in dealing with legal issues. Some Iraqi refugees’ lack of English skills and knowledge of the Australian legal system may compound the negative experience, which will cause them ongoing and continuous stress. Therefore, that can negatively influence their sense of belonging and the extent to which they participate in the host society. Nevertheless, the majority felt that they belonged to Australia despite these obstacles.

While a sense of marginalisation and isolation may be attributed to Iraqi refugees who have recently arrived, it is anticipated that some day they will feel a sense of belonging and of being a part of Australian society, and be accepted by the broader community. Participants were asked if there was a relationship between the length of residence in a country and a sense of belonging to it. Of the 28 participants who answered, 24 believed that there is a positive relationship between the length of residence in a country of refuge and a sense of belonging to it, four said that there is no relationship, and two did not answer the question.

Moreover, a sense of refugees belonging to the host country may awaken their spirit of integration. Therefore, an open-ended question investigated the participants’ intention and desire to integrate into the Australian community. Nine out of 29 participants said ‘Yes’, because ‘I feel that its (Australia’s) culture coincides with my inclinations and views towards humanity, life and universe’, as a male participant
stated, and, as an 18-year-old male said, ‘Yes, because I was born and live here’. However, 17 participants said ‘yes, but on conditions’, and three said ‘no’, as a female participant stated, ‘Because of the difference in customs and traditions in addition to the religious obstacle’. Only one participant did not give any answer.

In view of these responses, there appears to be a noticeable desire of Iraqis to integrate into the Australian community, but on conditions. One of these conditions is that ‘they have to respect my culture, my religion and my characteristics ... I am free to wear hijab’, a female participant stated. ‘Integration is not a program, it is a feeling. We have to feel that we share this land, air, water and the sky’, a participant said. Another participant commented that ‘integration is a mutual acceptance ... Australians should consider us as a separable part of the Australian community and not foreigners’.

It could be noted that living out of the circle of traditions and customs might change an individual’s views towards life and their anticipations. Thus, participants were asked if their outlook on life in general changed as a result of immigration to Australia. The participants had to choose one or more out of six options. Almost all the participants said ‘Yes’, although the kind of changing outlook on life differed from one person to another. Of the 27 participants who responded, 23 indicated that their outlook on life changed in terms of respect for the freedom of others, punctuality, and food timing, or the disappearance of having dinner when assimilating to the Australian way of life: a participant objected to the disappearance of having dinner, since ‘assimilating to the Australians ... we have to wait lunch for our children return from school at about 4:30 pm ... So dinner automatically disappears’.

Additionally, two participants stated that their outlook of life changed in terms of respect for women, a more positive view of religion, and change in appearance, particularly in clothing, since most Iraqi women get rid of wearing the black gown and are satisfied with wearing hijab only. Another two participants indicated that their outlook had never changed, especially related to the respect of women, because ‘my culture and religion teach me to respect women and to respect others’ freedom’,
as one participant said, adding that his ‘view of religion was and is still positive’.
Three participants did not respond.

In conclusion, while it may seem that there is a relationship between knowledge of
the laws and culture of the country of refuge and the sense of belonging, nearly all of
the participants expressed a sense of belonging to Australia despite their ignorance of
the Australian laws and culture. The majority also expressed their agreement that
there is a relationship between the length of residence in a country and a sense of
belonging. Further, almost all the participants expressed their eagerness and desire to
integrate into the Australian community, but on conditions, such as respect for their
religion and culture.

5.7.2 Barriers to Cultural Integration

Another important factor that impacts Iraqis’ intention to integrate is fear for their
children’s moral character due to differences between the Iraqi and Australian
cultures and religions. Therefore, an open-ended question was asked related to the
participants’ fear for their children’s moral character in Australia. Twenty
participants commented positively on this question expressing their fear for their
children’s moral character: ‘legal and social systems impact negatively by providing
too much freedom for the children ... so parents’ ability to discipline their children
has been limited’, a male participant commented. That loss of authority and control
by parents and the freedoms afforded to children by Australian social and legal
systems have forced ‘some parents [into] sending their children back to Iraq to
escape the risks here’ one of the participants said. A female participant stated that
children would lose their moral character, if ‘they live out of their parents’ custody’.
Four participants responded negatively, one participant expressing that ‘good
parenting skills will be of advantage’. Six participants did not respond to the
question.

Participants’ responses demonstrated that the family within the immigration context
is the centre of social existence and a main place in which cultural heritage is
maintained (Hage, 2002; Collins, 1991). As a result, since parents and family are the
main pillars of society, and marriage, especially intermarriage, is considered the first
brick in that familial structure, it may be feasible for this to be a vehicle for
penetrating the broader society and consolidating cultural integration. Thus,
participants were asked to consider the relationship between marriage to an
Australian, or ‘intermarriage’, and the process of integration. Twenty three out of 27
participants did not encourage the marriage of Iraqis to Australians, because of
‘difference in traditions and customs’, as one of the male participants stated. Another
male participant attributed it to the ‘social pressures and what is known from social
and religious traditions ... that may be achieved in future’. One participant noted that
‘it is impossible to consider an Iraqi Australian marriage to a Greek Australian one,
as intermarriage, because we both belong to the same country ‘Australia’. Four
participants encouraged such marriage; three did not respond to the question.

According to Song (2009), marriage between a Japanese American and an Indian
(South Asian) American is not regarded as intermarriage, because they belong to the
same country and share the same land. In that case, group boundaries are not
identified by the country of birth of marriage partners and their ethnicity or race, but
rather their status of holding the same nationality.

The majority of participants’ objections to intermarriage might be clearly explained
by their preference to endogamy, that is, marriage within a social group. Thus,
another part of the question sought the participants’ opinion relating to the possibility
of endogamy, or arranged marriage. Twenty out of 27 participants who responded
confirmed the necessity of such marriage ‘because of complete ideological and
moral coincidence’, as one male participant said. Another male participant
commented:

\[ Because of the cultural, religious and linguistic correlation between the couple,
the nature of the relationship between them will be clear ... and this kind of
marriage is socially accepted. \]

Seven participants believed that it is not necessary for an Iraqi to marry an Iraqi, and
they encourage the marriage of an Iraqi to an Australian, ‘because we are all the
same’, as one participant said. Three participants did not reply to the question.
Many participants valued proximity to family through arranged marriage because this enabled them to share cultural practices and maintain familiar patterns of relationships. Such connection played a key role in their endeavour to settle here.

It is important to notice, in conclusion, that the majority expressed fear for their children’s moral character owing to their interaction with the host community. Additionally, almost all the participants showed their objection to intermarriage and considered it as a means of influencing a child’s moral character since the child would live in a climate contradicting their culture and religion. Accordingly, they encouraged arranged marriage as it contributes to maintaining Iraqi social heritage in general. These two factors, especially intermarriage, might stand as an obstacle to the integration process instead of contributing to facilitate it.

5.8 Social Factors

It could be argued that ‘social factors’ involve the inclusion of individuals in a system, the creation of relationships among individuals, and their attitudes towards society. They are the result of the conscious and motivated interaction and cooperation of individuals and groups; and they play a significant role in the integration process as they contribute to creating interaction between minority communities and the host society.

According to the participants, it is clearly evident that cultural integration patterns play an important role with regard to integration in the domain of public life. Social relationships, such as social networks and friendships, and local interactions through exchanging visits and gifts with neighbours, between refugees and local people, may open the gate towards integration. In an effort to find whether there is a relationship between the integration process and friendship, fellowship, and working with and exchanging visits and gifts with Australians; and to find whether integration is considered a positive or a negative matter, an open-ended question was asked.

Of the 29 participants who responded, 20 said that they had a relationship and exchanged visits and gifts with Australians. A female participant considered it as an indication of ‘good behaviour and manner’, but the problem is in ‘the other party
[who] has the concept of the white Australian and it always avoids such relation’ a male participant added. A female participant stated that she ‘exchange(s) gifts and ha(s) a good working or fellowship relation with them’. Another male participant indicated that ‘I do not mind visiting my Australian neighbour ... but because everybody has his or her own problems, he or she lives individually’. Nine participants maintained that they did not have a relationship or friendship or exchange visits or gifts with Australians. Of those who responded, one participant did not give an answer.

The high rate of participants who encouraged having social interactions with Australians, emphasised that these externalities may be positive, as repeated and multiple social interactions across group boundaries favour social integration. De Palo, et al. (2006) indicate that social interactions are considered determinants of immigrants’ social integration into the host country.

Thus, in response to a question related to what participants regarded as the most important elements of integration into the Australian community, participants were able to choose more than one option out of seven choices.

Of the 28 participants who answered, 21 stated that mastering the language of the host country and knowing the laws and customs of the host country are regarded the most important factors of social integration into the Australian community. While four participants selected working with Australian community members and making relationships with host community members, three considered following the news of the country, marriage to an Australian and constant contact with them, and obtaining citizenship of the country as the most important factors of social integration into the Australian community. Two participants did not respond.

The stronger and deeper the roots of a person to his or her mother country, the more difficult it is for him or her to integrate into his or her new community. For that reason, an open-ended question asked the participants if they had a serious inclination to return to Iraq. Eighteen out of 27 participants, who answered, confirmed that they would return to Iraq when the country’s circumstances change.
While one participant stated that ‘I am so eager to return to Iraq in order to serve my country with my specialisation’, another participant said ‘I might think of returning to Iraq, when stability and peace return’. An old male participant contemplated his situation here, saying that ‘despite the bad situation of my country, I always think about returning to Iraq, because I fear being a burden on my family and feeling of loneliness’.

Nine participants stated that they would not return to Iraq. One female participant said ‘I do not even think of returning to Iraq ... because of the sectarian violence and bad conditions’; another added ‘because I never live in Iraq’. Another participant stated that ‘I do not have intention to return to Iraq as I am happy here and I prefer to live here’. Three did not give any response.

In a related vein, a question was asked inquiring whether the participants believed that their decision to come to Australia was correct or not. Twenty six out of 28 participants, who responded, confirmed that their decision to come to Australia was right, though their reasons differed from one to another. A female participant stated that she came here in search of a ‘better life and without government oppression’, and a male commented that he came here ‘to avoid wars and tensions’. Another male participant said that ‘... I came here to protect my life and freedom of thought’. Another female said that she came here in search of ‘clean environment’. Two participants regretted their decision to come to Australia and two did not give any answer.

The confirmation of the majority of participants that their decision to come to Australia was right should be measured against their satisfaction and contentment towards the Australian people, because a person’s identity lies in its relation to others and cannot make sense without the other (Burr, 1998). Accordingly, the participants’ satisfaction and contentment towards Australians was sought.

Of 27 participants who answered, 25 expressed their satisfaction and contentment towards Australians, but ‘not all of them, there is good and bad’ one participant said. Another participant said that ‘despite my contentment and satisfaction towards the
Australians, the negative feeling is more than positive’. While two participants responded negatively, three did not give any response.

Despite differences in morals, values, norms, standards, beliefs and attitudes between refugees and the host society, the majority expressed their satisfaction and contentment towards Australians. This high rate may be used as an instrument for measuring attitudes and perceptions towards the host society. It may also contribute to promote harmony between the host society and refugees. However, there is a need to carefully consider the perception of participants with regard to government integration programmes. So, the participants were asked to consider their acquaintance with the programs of integration held by Australian authorities.

Twenty out of 27 participants, who responded, stated that they were not familiar with integration programs or even had any idea about them. Seven participants said ‘yes’, but that ‘they failed because they did not concentrate on both sides’ one participant believed. In the same way, another participant said:

I think if these programmes are found, they are failed … because they did not take into account the rest of the refugees and only concentrate on the community leaders.

Another female participant said, ‘Yes, it is good although it needs some time to be more realistic than being only formalities’. Finally, three participants did not give any answer.

Despite the majority of the participants’ intentions to return to Iraq, their choice to settle in Australia and their satisfaction and contentment toward the Australians may promote their integration. The majority of participants’ ignorance of government integration programs raised a lot of questions about the usefulness of such programs.

5.9 Religious Factors

Religion is an ideological spiritual divine belief, containing moral and cultural values and principles which cross geographical boundaries. It has the ability to bring about a
social order either by integrating society in terms of certain values and social directions or by effecting harmony or compatibility among diverse cultural manifestations. Such integration and harmony rest on definite postulates concerning the supernatural as well as on the institutions which are deemed sacral in character.

Religion may provide an important source for friendship development and social interaction and work as a unifying factor bringing people of multiple ethnicities together. It may also serve as an important function in providing a place for socialising. So, participants were asked to comment on whether or not religion was an obstacle to friendships or social interactions with Australians.

Nine out of 15 participants did not consider religion to be an obstacle. A male participant said that ‘we did not reach to the psychological and social adaptation yet to have social interaction with the ‘Other’, while another one attributed less social interactions to ‘language and traditions’. Six participants considered religion to be an obstacle to having friendship or exchanging visits and gifts with Australian people. One participant noted that ‘mixing with those who are culturally and religiously different is uncomfortable and even exhausting because of religious differences’. ‘Because we have the same views, emotions and goals in life ... I like to socialise with my own nationality’, another participant said. Fifteen participants did not respond to this question.

Furthermore, because religious organisations, especially mosques or places of worship, provide spiritual and sometimes material support to Iraqi refugees, they may contribute to strengthen Iraqi community relations and ties and, accordingly, create a state of alienation and isolation. Thus, a question was raised relating to the participants going to places of worship.

Of the 29 participants who responded, 27 confirmed that they go to places of worship in order ‘to morally educate myself and to see my friends’, one female participant stated. A male participant said that ‘praying is my sole motivation to visit the mosque and also to make new acquaintances and some sort of a friendship’. Another male participant observed that ‘when I am in the mosque I feel just like I am
in Iraq, because of the spiritual and familiar environment I feel’. Two participants said ‘no’, one female participant adding that ‘because I have young children and they may make noise especially at the times of praying’. Only one participant did not respond to this question.

Nearly all the participants affirmed that there is a positive influence of religion over the integration process and they did not consider religion as an obstacle to integration. Religion urges all human beings to interact with each other, apart from their ethnicity or religion, on the basis of tolerance and harmony (Al Sistani, 2002). So a mosque, as a religious meeting place of all Muslims, breaks the constraints and barriers of the old-fashioned norms and traditions that bind the society (Wardi, 2008) and gathers under its roof different people regardless of their origins, races, colours and tongues. Accordingly, Iraqis going to places of worship, especially mosques, might contribute to strengthen their interrelations and clustering together and might contribute to bridge the gap between them and the host community.

5.10 Conclusion

In this chapter a wide range of factors that influenced the integration of Iraqi refugees in Australia were covered. These factors include economic, educational, English language, political, cultural, social and religious factors. These factors and their influence upon the integration process have been discussed according to the participants’ views and comments.

It is of significance that despite the large number of people interested in the questionnaire, some questions were not answered. One possible reason behind the low response to some questions of the questionnaire above, especially those related to work, is because some of them may be working in cash paying jobs, in what is sometimes called the informal or Black Economy. Although the participants value employment and know that it helps in facilitating the integration process, most of them are unemployed due to lack of English language skills. Consequently, some of them accept work at hard, risky and low-paid jobs.
The questionnaire results show that Iraqis in general still value education to a great extent as they encourage their children to pursue their study. This is explained by the participants’ awareness of the fact that education is considered a necessary and essential way of exposing their children to the English language, contact with other immigrants and the majority culture, and developing their academic skills and acquiring lifelong knowledge, all of which influence integration into their new environment.

Despite the fact that nearly all the participants strongly agreed that mastering the English language facilitates the integration process, a lot of them did not join English language learning courses. Some obstacles stand in the path of their English language learning, such as dropping out of school, teaching methods, teachers, health problems, trauma and age. Further, because most participants suffered difficult circumstances within their asylum journey or lived in a refugee camp before coming to Australia, they stopped studying for long periods, making it difficult for them to return to study.

Therefore, a high percentage of participants used different kinds of the Australian media to learn the host community language and deepen the relationship between the two parties. They also used different kinds of Arabic media to maintain their language, their culture, traditions, and customs.

Lack of English language skills, the high rate of unemployment and the political situation in their homeland influenced their political views. The majority expressed their refusal to join the political process in Australia. However, that did not hinder them from participating in the cultural activities held by Australian authorities.

The results also explored some important factors that might influence a sense of belonging and, in turn, impede the integration process. Of these factors is mastering the English language, the length of residence in a country of refuge and knowledge of the laws and culture of the country of refuge. Despite the participants’ ignorance of Australian laws and culture, many participants expressed their sense of belonging
to Australia and their eagerness and desire to integrate into the Australian community.

Other factors that might impede the integration process are the fear of their children’s moral deviation owing to their interaction with the host community, which is very different in terms of culture, religion and language. As well, Iraqis’ connection to their homeland in terms of their intention to return to Iraq and their ignorance of government integration programs might hinder the integration process, even though they considered their choice to settle in Australia as the right choice.

Iraqi refugees in this study were eager to make social connections through having friendship or exchanging visits and gifts with Australians, where religion, as they confirmed, does not represent an obstacle towards making such relations. Additionally, their feeling of social justice and equality in Australia and their satisfaction and contentment toward Australians may contribute to facilitate the integration process.

The next chapter of the study will present the results of the transcripts analysed from the eleven participants that were included in the interview phase of the study.
CHAPTER 6:
INTERVIEW RESULTS

6.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, questionnaire findings highlighted the Iraqi refugees’ settlement problems and their endeavours to integrate in Australia. From the thirty participants who completed the questionnaire, eleven agreed to a follow up interview.

This chapter reports the results of interviews conducted with eleven Iraqi refugees. The interview questions focussed on the factors that hindered Iraqi refugees from integrating in Australia. These included religious and cultural differences, unemployment, social exclusion, prejudice, lack of knowledge of social and legal systems and lack of English language skills. The chapter also provides the participants’ views about the factors that they consider important to their integration in the Australian community.

6.2 Interview Findings

6.2.1 Role of religion

It is important to recognise that religion needs to be placed at the forefront of other factors in achieving integration. Iraqi Muslim refugees in this study are dealing with the reality of Western life so this has emerged as a key factor to their integration. Peoples’ understanding of religion and the way of life they have lived according to their heritage, traditions and folklore are different from one country to the other. In this study key themes emerged and will be explored in this section. They are non-Muslim misunderstandings of Islam; the treatment of Muslims by non-Muslims; and the amount of interaction between the Iraqi community and the host community.

Non-Muslims’ misunderstandings of Islam

In order to explore the role religion plays in Iraqi refugees’ lives, a question was raised to investigate whether or not religious differences create social divisions and
weaken integration among different social groups. Some participants were reluctant to discuss misunderstandings of Islam by non-Muslims, while others expressed their eagerness to indulge deeply in the matter.

When Ali was asked whether religious differences create social divisions and weaken integration among different social groups, he said:

Maintaining religious faith cannot be achieved through isolation, because isolation leads to more complex issues, such as fanaticism ... however, this can be maintained through social participation and openness with the other, since these two elements provide an opportunity of self-discovery, and subsequently, the discovery of identity as clearly and precisely defined value ... this discovery of identity leads to a more diversified environment more than it leads to a homogeneous environment.

The importance of this comment is that, from Ali’s perspective, religion works as a bridge between two cultures through reinforcing the bonds of trust between the religious, moral and spiritual values. However, it is not that simple, as Furat said in response to the same question: ‘The events of September 11 and the subsequent consequences have created a very negative image of Islam and put all Muslims in one basket’. Thus a shadow of unease and suspicion towards Islam and Muslims deepens the gap between non-Muslims and Muslims. It also results in religious and cultural tension between those who share the same community. The consequences of this gap are discrimination ‘linking terrorism with Islam and Muslims caused a crisis of trust, and made many Australians feel suspicious of making relationships with Muslims’ (Jamal). Jamal’s comment implies prejudice against Muslims or ‘Islamophobia’ – a term used to describe feelings and sentiments towards Islam and its adherents – a kind of misunderstanding of Islam. Islamophobia leads to marginalisation and exclusion of Muslims and decreases opportunities for full participation in the host society (Noble and Poynting, 2004; Dreher, 2005). It has not only contributed to widening the gap between the host community and Iraqi community in the eyes of Jamal, but it forces Muslims to retreat into their own communities.
According to another participant, Muslims’ retreat into their own communities is not only attributed to the non-Muslim’s hostile attitude towards Islam and Muslims, but also to ‘the acts of some Muslim extremists and the destruction resulted from terrorist operations [which] are always generalised and attributed to Muslims’ (Hadi). These terrorist cells are the result of Muslims’ misinterpretation of religious teachings, as Haidar argues:

> Religious differences were exaggerated and brought to the surface because of fundamentalism not because of the religion itself. The religiousness of people is not caused by religion, and it is not commensurate with its concepts and objectives. (Haidar)

In this explanation, fundamentalism accentuates feelings of caution, suspicion and fear on both sides, giving rise to feelings of threat from Islam and Muslims, without distinction between Islam as a message and divine religion and the false reading of it by some radical Muslims. This has increased the escalation of hatred between Muslims and non-Muslims.

Furthermore, the hatred between the two parties was so complicated, because:

> Due to terrorist operations, a lot of western policies were mainly a reaction to these operations, without deeply understanding and studying the real motives behind such poor acts. Alternatively, it [the West] has to establish appropriate mechanisms to handle such terrible acts through implementing rational policies to contain these groups, and emptied them from their violent destructive content. (Fatima)

Another participant was able to look beyond the two sided debate at other factors that might contribute to creating obstacles among people and cause ‘the lack of harmony within the Australian community’ (Hadi). Of these obstacles is ‘globalization [which] created these differentiations, not religions’ (Hussein).

Globalisation portrays religion as being incapable of co-existing and creating dialogue with any other religion or culture, calling the situation the clash of civilizations. This perspective tries to exclude religion and weaken its power with legislation, including education and ethics, to make room for the systems, laws and
values derived from materialist philosophy and secular pragmatism (Fadhlullah, 1998).

On the contrary, religion in general and Islam in particular view human diversity as a basis for understanding and peaceful coexistence (Fadhlullah, 1998, p.57). The important point in human life and for coexistence of people with different attitudes, cultures and religions is that nobody should ignore another person’s rights and all should fully respect those rights.

According to Hamdan’s theory (2003) coexistence will result in ‘reduced prejudice within the multiethnic society at large. It is an agent of integration as it gives an adequate picture of interracial relationships’ (p.113). It is also seen as a way to gradually ease the transition into integration. This theory postulates that coexistence may lead to an agreement between different religions and cultures, and later may include the need to negotiate between two systems of beliefs and behaviours. This multidimensional phenomenon (coexistence) is important in an exploration of Iraqi refugee integration.

**Treatment of Muslims by non-Muslims**

Mutual trust and understanding between members of the same society is important for promoting and strengthening the bonds among the members of that society. They are key to positive engagements and a sense of wellbeing in communities. Mutual trust and understanding pave the path toward people understanding each other, and define the sort of common ground upon which people can appreciate their shared fate or futures (Commission on Integration and Cohesion, 2007, pp.46-47).

For nearly all participants, it appears that a lack of trust and understanding, or mistreatment, will lead to a crisis of confidence – an important source of disunity. Fatima put it this way: ‘Yes, there is a problem or a crisis of confidence with the other which deters the process of integration and it has not been discussed yet in an open, clear and direct way’ (Fatima). Fatima’s view is similar to that expressed by many of the participants in the interviews and even the questionnaires. However, Fatima thought the problem lies on the ‘Australian side’, which erects an iron wall of
mistrust in the other (Iraqis). Ali threw the ball into the host community field saying: ‘there is a significant proportion of the Australian community that refuse to accept the Muslims and Jews – out of a religious factor – and Aborigines and Asians – out of a non-religious factor’ (Ali). Australians may consider refugees as a minority group or out-group and this is reflected in how the problem is constructed. For example they ‘sometimes … focus … on the mistakes committed by some Muslims and deal with them as Islamic, not as Australian citizens’ (Sahar). So who is Australian and not Australian emerges in these attitudes, that are the consequence of stereotypes towards Islamic communities. They create a kind of religious intolerance toward Muslims more generally and this impacts on Iraqi refugees specifically. This stereotype is in opposition to the reality according to Ali:

Islam is the religion of peace and coexistence and it respects the non-Muslims, as the Quran says: O mankind! We have created you from a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes that you may know one another. (Quran, Al Hujurat: 13)

All the above shows that the crisis of confidence has stemmed from ideas and perceptions based on the actions of some groups. These perceptions have been generalised to include Islam and all Muslims. So some Australians need to recognise the difference between Islam as a religion and the offences committed by some extremists, in order to create a climate for interaction between people, which will be examined next.

**Amount of interaction**

The participants were encouraged to share their opinions related to the possibility of interaction and dialogue with other cultures. Furat pessimistically eradicated any idea of mutual dialogue:

[Exasperated] the West exterminates any hope of doing that through their contempt of the Prophet of Islam and its teachings and their dealing with Islam in a biased way. Also, they stand against the nation … as in the case of Palestine, which is considered the core of controversy between Muslims and others and it is the essence of all the crises of relationship between the Islamic world and Christendom.
Furat’s comment is an example of how the local is impacted by the global. Supranational relations between the West and other countries, including Islamic countries, shape possibilities. In a sense then, interaction itself is a negotiation which reveals the manner in which group members define the boundaries of the group, the attributes they associate with it, and the meaning of the group itself (De Andrade, 2000).

Noor also considers that a commitment to dialogue is a basis for the development of the relationship between Islam and the West and would help eliminate a lot of misunderstanding and contribute to the solution of a lot of problems between the two parties.

Islam calls for understanding the ‘Other’ and urges Muslims to establish dialogues with other religions and cultures. Western Muslims are encouraged to put forth joint projects with their Western counterparts to oppose the ideology of extremism, trends of racism and resist the tendency of ethnic cleansing … so that religion … becomes a cultural bridge between Muslims and non-Muslims.

Communication and interaction, as expressed by Rida, are not limited to linguistic communication, but they extend to include, ‘social interaction and communication through mutual relations and exchange of visits and gifts on special occasions by both parties’. So, in order to determine readiness to interact with those who are different in terms of religion, a question was raised related to accepting, for example, an invitation from an Australian or even an Iraqi Christian or Sabaean Mandaean friend. The majority of participants agreed that there is no objection to their invitation:

... because our relationship has been built since we were in Iraq, which did not influence differentiation by religion. In addition, Iraqi sects and ethnic groups lived, and have been still living in harmony. (Hadi)

But on one condition:
Mohammad believes that socialising with non-Muslims gives him an uncomfortable feeling as the non-Muslim hosts provide non-‘Halal’ food. Surprisingly, it is well known among Muslim scholars that to drink or eat ‘Halal’ with non-Muslims is not forbidden in Islam. Al Sistani (2002) argues that when living in a Christian or Jewish country, Muslims have the right to drink and eat all kinds of different food except meat, lard and alcohol (pp.150-51). In accordance with that, Sahar said:

*When I am invited to a barbeque and although I do not drink at all, I cannot be in a place where there is alcohol*, because *‘the Muslim … should not eat at a table, where alcohol is served’*. (Al Sistani, 2002, p.155)

For that reason Muslims choose not to accept invitations where alcohol is involved and avoid being in a place where alcohol is involved. Furat explained that when invited to a party he *‘prefers sitting around all other people, and not mixing with them. Therefore I sit alone in a remote corner of the house’*. That appeared to be an essential barrier to the socialisation between Muslims and non-Muslims.

However, that barrier forced some other participants to reject such invitations and they gave a detailed account of how religion and ways of life prevent Muslims from accepting others’ invitations. In her experience, Sahar connected the refusal of an invitation to religious and social factors, *‘because I am Muslim … I cannot accept an invitation of a Christian or Sabaean friend in order not to embarrass them and myself related to the kind of food offered’*. As can be seen from Sahar’s words, such invitations can create a feeling of burden and, in turn, an inclination to avoid such situations in order to avoid social embarrassment. She believes that her refusal is stemming from an Islamic concept, but in fact it stems from a personal misinterpretation of the teachings of Islam. This misapprehension may be generalised to include the relationship of the Iraqi with the host society in general.

Indeed, Islam urges the Muslim to take colleagues and friends from non-Muslims, and he or she has to be sincere and loyal to them, and ask for assistance in case he or
she needs to. If investments were made in such friendships, they would guarantee to make the non-Muslim friend, neighbour, companion, and partner acquainted with the values and teachings of Islam (Fadhlullah, 2000). Noor admitted that ‘although Muslims and non-Muslims have a great level of interaction … religious differences create social divisions and weakened interaction among different social groups’. Noor’s comment implies that religious differences seemed to be an essential barrier to greater levels of social interaction between Muslims and non-Muslims. Such situations can cause a social discomfort, where invitations from non-Muslims are refused. Other situations may also result in a state of disunity and dispersion, such as:

... indecent dressing, mixing between opposite sexes during family gatherings, dancing, boisterous singing and the freedom of the children to go out of the family home and build sexual relations with anyone or invite whoever they want to the family home. (Furat)

These are considered by some Australians an essential part of socialising with others according to Furat. Hence, these matters, to some extent, may explain Iraqis’ reservations to joining in the ‘Other’ cultures, because it is an interaction which may carry the seeds of death for their culture of origin. So it is a matter of cultural and not religious differences, since ‘religion or doctrine is a very special relationship between human being and God and no one can impose it on others’ (Noor). That means that religiosity is something between the man or woman and his or her God and ‘No person earns any (sin) except against himself (only), and no bearer of burdens shall bear the burden of another’ (Quran, Al-An’am:164).

By way of conclusion, it seems that each explanation reflects the participant’s personal experience and no two experiences were identical: like travellers, their paths were often different but their destination was one. According to some participants social interaction and harmony govern the relationship between Iraqi refugees and the host community. That matter, however, is the purpose of all religions, as they endeavour to eradicate inequalities, such as racism and discrimination, encourage interactions and improve perspectives towards those who are different in terms of religion and ethnicity. Those perspectives will be discussed next.
6.3 Perspectives towards Australian Society

6.3.1 Belonging

Belonging means the individual connection to his or her homeland or even the country of refuge, spiritually, physically, ideologically and emotionally (Fadhlullah, 1998). It is one of the important necessities that links individuals to other members of the community, strengthens the feeling of belonging to the country an individual lives in and makes him or her proud of belonging. Belonging also includes the value of the individual’s love for his or her community and interaction with all its members and highlights the value of national unity (Meer, 2010, p.8).

Belonging means a ‘personal, intimate, feeling of being “at home” in a place’ (Antonsich, 2010, p.645), where someone feels ‘familiarity, comfort and security, and emotional attachment’ (p.646). Consequently, ‘[w]here you belong is where you are safe; and where you are safe is where you belong’ (Ignatieff, 1994, p.25, as cited in Antonsich, 2010). When Ali was asked if he feels that he belongs to Australia, he admitted that ‘the reason why I believe I am at home is because there are a lot of Iraqis and Arabs live next or near where I live’. This sense of familiarity and similarity was often related to finding a sense of comfort and belonging in places and with people of the same or similar cultural heritage, because according to Hedetoft (2004, p.173) ‘our native culture provides us with a sense of being at home in the world’.

Likewise, Rida’s favourite place in Sydney, somewhere where he feels he belongs, was ‘when I go to Fairfield, I feel like I was in my country’. Though the majority of Iraqis who live in Fairfield are Iraqi Christians (The Assyrian Resource Centre, 2008), similarity of cultural origin was important for Rida. Therefore, the multicultural aspect was a prime reason when talking about places a person feels they belong to. Hamdan’s theory (2003) affirms that the explanation for such similarity is found primarily in the particular characteristics of the immigrant groups, simply because the national or local context in which they are being integrated is the same.
These opinions reveal that Iraqi refugees’ preference for an ethnic enclave (Chapter 3) is due to their search for familiarity. In this way, the participants stressed the importance of ‘... social networks with people of the same ethnic or religious identity’ (Spicer, 2008, p.491). Living in a neighbourhood with those who are ethnically or religiously similar can ‘... mitigate some of the more extreme forms of social exclusion’ (ibid, p.507). However, those with ethnic similarity may cluster together as this offers the promise of shared culture and perhaps a shared language. Such shared characteristics can generate ‘... a sense of feeling ‘at home’ (Antonsich, 2010, p.648).

The familiarity within the refugees’ own culture could be interpreted as a protective measure, but at the same time could act as a barrier between Australian society and their own cultural origins. Zahra generalised the insight and included all the country with its entire people: ‘Loving this country is truly found in our souls because this country gave and still giving us a lot, but without trying to compare the national feelings toward the mother country.’ This love may exceed the material, belonging to the emotional or spiritual (Yuval-Davis, et al., 2006), which is one of the greatest and most powerful types of belonging, and may lead the individual to sacrifice his or her spirit and what he or she has, to defend what he or she loves; this is what Islam urges its followers to do. Thus, defending the country is not limited to the homeland, but also includes the country in which the Muslim lives, whatever the ethnicity or religion of that country (Fadhlullah, 1998).

On the contrary, when refugees realise that they are different from the dominant population and they are frequently disallowed and deliberately disrupted, they do not feel that they belong. Fanon (2008) maintains that ‘as long as the black man is among his own, he will have no occasion ... to experience his being through others’ (p.109) who are different culturally and religiously. When getting out of the cultural circle, a refugee may be overwhelmed with a sense of being an outsider.

However, opposed to the opinions of others, Mohammad provided a more nuanced understanding ‘sometimes you feel like you belong to this country and then there is another point when you will not feel that’. Mohammad felt like he could not belong
to Australian society because, by birth and ancestry, he is excluded from the national narrative. So, the integration of excluded people into society, and their solidarity with others, is reduced (Spicker, 2000). A probe question was raised relating to the reason behind that shift:

[Pause] You know when you look at everyone else, and you know you are different. Then you just ask yourself ‘who am I?’ ... I just feel that I do not belong, because I have a different background. (Mohammad)

In this way Mohammad comes to know himself through the realisation that he does not know himself among these others. That matter relates to the sense of ‘not knowing what he is because that is what he is’ (Macey, 1999, p.8). Such insights reflect the complexities of belonging both ‘here’ (Australia) and ‘there’ (Iraq) (Suarez-Orozco, 2001; Peteet, 2005). So, ‘the politics of race and identity are important themes … in understanding processes of belonging’ (Mee and Wright, 2009, p.775).

Similarly, Hadi expressed the strongest feeling of non-belonging, which seemed to stem from a sense of dislocation and difference:

[Long pause] I feel like a stranger in this society; for that reason, I cannot integrate into it as fast as I expected ... It is secluded ... I accuse Western societies as secluded communities and not as they seem from outside as open societies to all people ... They are secluded societies to the extent that they cannot be easily penetrated by a man coming from the East, even if he married to an Australian woman.

Hadi raised an important point: non-recognition by the host community. Malkki, (1995, as cited in Lewis, 2010), admits that when refugees do not adopt practices similar to the dominant culture, such as dress, they might become less visible or not recognised by the dominant society. This point was also confirmed by Fatima, who stated:

[Exclaiming] Through meeting with a number of Australians, I noted that their views towards us is suspicious and sometimes insulting ... We do not have a problem in integrating into the Australian society, provided that they respect our identity, and our taboos ... I may not understand the other party, I do not
understand his or her indications, face expressions, language, and suggestive expressions that send signals, such as: Am I accepted to them? Do they respect what I wear, my Islamic clothes, hijab, as a milestone saying, ‘I am not from your religion’? Or they look at us as inferior and consider us intruders on their country. In short, the problem is in the other party and to its view towards me; the problem is not me and my view toward them.

That viewpoint has been confirmed by Ali who believed that alienation was not the Iraqi community’s choice, but was ‘a result of the old legacy within the minds of Westerns and their looks to the Easterns with inferiority’. Ali’s comment is an example of how non-recognition and inferiority, where someone is ‘rendered invisible by means of the authoritative, representational, communicative, and interpretative practices of one’s culture’ (Humpage and Marston, 2006, p.114), have shaped the relationship between refugees and the host society.

Spicker (2000) states that people who have inferior status have not only limited access to social resources and opportunities, but their integration into society and their harmony with others are lessened. As a result they are excluded from full participation in civic and social life and are constrained to live lives that are shaped by isolation and denial of rights.

In addition, lacking the language skills of the host society may also contribute to such non-recognition. Jamal was frustrated as he could not always express himself in the way he would like. He said

*I feel like I am not a part of the Australian society, but I want to be … I hope one day being an important part of this democratic society … the problem is that you need to speak like a bit of the Australian language.*

Jamal expressed a desire to mix with the Australians, but he implied that there were barriers. One of these barriers is the different language, because ‘language is a situated practice … you are what you speak, and what you speak is where you are’ (Valentine, et al., 2008, p.385). Likewise, Jamal felt like he could not belong to the Australian society and that he was excluded from the national narrative, because language represents an ‘institutionalised belonging in the form of … ethno-national versions of historical memory’ (Hedetoft, 2004, pp.25-26). This suggests how
important identification with people who speak the same language is, in the process of developing a feeling of identity and belonging in a new culture, which, in turn, ‘contribut[es] to a greater sense of feeling ‘at home’ (Antonsich, 2010, p.648).

Despite the fact that the majority of participants had a sense of belonging to Australia, that inclination at times was tested by processes of social exclusion.

6.3.2 Participants’ Understandings of Integration

It has been noted that the best way for minority communities to live within a country of refuge is through integration and participation in social, political and economic life (Zimmermann, 2008). The scheme of integration into the host community often faces opposition and resistance from some of these minorities, because of their concern to uphold their cultural identity; but this does not mean self-isolation and alienation from the host community. So, when Ali was asked if he preferred to integrate into the Australian community without any conditions, he said:

*Participating in scientific, social and economic development, helping to build the host country, and defending it, as a religious and social duty, which are determined by Islam, are considered a kind of integration.*

Ali’s view is similar to that expressed by many of the participants in the interviews. However, Ali believed that full participation in the civic life of the host country is considered as integration. Such participation is fundamental to the normative framework that determines integration policy and understanding of successful outcomes (Collins, 2003). In this way, policy reflects an understanding of integration as the process that takes place when refugees are empowered to achieve their full potential as members of the Australian society, to contribute to the community, and become fully able to exercise the rights and responsibilities that they share with other residents. Jamal expressed integration as partial:

*[Enthusiastically] I like the Australians and I really like to integrate with them but on conditions. The Australians should respect this diversity and encourage the revival of traditions and private practices of each group, because Australia is a multicultural country and each community has its own privacy. As long as I respect their privacies, even those contradict with the Islamic teachings and our
Jamal’s opinion affirms the importance of a two-way integration, which implies a mutual accommodation by all refugees and the host society. That means that not just refugees but also the host society have to change, the latter being mandated to create:

*The opportunities for the immigrants’ full economic, social, cultural, and political participation ... [and] full respect for the immigrants’ and their descendants’ own language and culture.* (Council of the European Union, 2004, pp.19-20)

Fatima’s opinion is the same as that of Jamal. She said: ‘I do not prefer to integrate with Australian people without any conditions because I do not want to have a relationship with people who do not know my religion and believes’. Fatima’s comment is an example of how the people of different faiths cannot actually be expected to share religions. Therefore the host society needs to expand its horizons in relation to refugees’ religions and values, in order to contribute to building mutual understanding. Nevertheless, knowing more about different religions, by accommodating different religious practices and values, can help to promote meaningful interaction that is more inclusive (Fadhlullah, 1998). Mutual understanding, respect, and knowledge of others’ culture, as well as social justice and equality, which will be examined next, are considered necessities and conditions of integration into the broader community because culture and history are an integral part of an individual’s personality and independence.

### 6.4 Social justice and equality

Social justice is ‘the right to all Australians to equality of treatment and opportunity, and the removal of barriers of race, ethnicity, culture, religion, language, gender or place of birth’ (Castles, et al., 1995, p.180). Social justice cannot be achieved without equality (Kymlicka, 1995). Equality is ‘[a]ccess for immigrants to institutions, as well as to public and private goods and services, on a basis equal to national citizens and in a non-discriminatory way [as] a critical foundation for better integration’ (Council of the European Union, 2004, p.21). Equality is the individual’s enjoyment
of all political, economic and social rights without discrimination due to religion, colour, gender, language or social rank.

When the participants were asked if they felt equal in Australia, the majority stated that they did not have the same opportunities or rights to access services as Australians have. According to one male participant,

No, I do not think so ... Officers always tend to follow what is written in the law, but in reality it is quite different ... I think reaching equality is something unattainable ... Even our children will suffer from this discrimination.
(Hussein)

Hussein’s comment implies that refugees are not fully enjoying equal rights and opportunity to the Australians. Fatima said that in some cases the system gives priority to Australians, so ‘it is impossible to say that we have the same rights ... it is perhaps right to say that we have the same duties, but not the same rights’. Fatima reports prejudice and discrimination that refugees face, as well as the cultural differences that may deter them from seeking and receiving services. In that sense, refugees feel discriminated against because they do not have the same opportunities for social participation.

However, some participants think they have the same duties and rights or opportunities as the Australians: ‘I think we are not treated differently from the Australians, everybody is taken care of, but all depends on the person who is looking after you (Rida). Hadi shared satisfaction and a similar view to Rida, mentioning that they share the same rights and duties as the Australians, especially those related to:

... the type and quality of education available, such as accepting Iraqis in universities and schools without discrimination ... the assistance given by Centrelink, public housing, and official dealings in government departments, language schools, and police stations.

According to Hadi, rights and duties are the same for all Australians, regardless of their ethnic background, gender, or religion.
Another participant said:

As regard the material rights, I feel equal with others. In some cases or occasions there are people who do not look to us comfortably, that may be expressed in their views about us, which is full of annoyance … Still, there are some people who express their annoyance by words and actions. (Hussein).

Despite the fact that the law in Australia is so hard towards racism and injustice, in practice some Australians’ behaviour is racist. Despite the smile on the face, there is a continuing reality of racism in the media, the labour market, education and even in multicultural policies themselves (Vasta and Castles, 1996). Discrimination between people that is based on merit and efficiency is generally legal in all religions and international norms. As regards inequality in treatment on the bases of belonging to certain ethnic group, religion or sect is something abhorred and rejected by all (Fadhullullah, 1998).

Although Fatima thought that the government has succeeded in achieving justice in the material sense, she felt that there was some distance still to go. According to her personal experience: ‘sometimes, before some of the shops or supermarkets or even some Centrelink staff, we feel we are like second class citizens and we are; sometimes we are treated as outcasts. Haidar thought that there are some situations where a sort of lack of social justice appears at the level of personal manners and could not be generalised:

It is not right to generalise this case and that all the Australians have the same situation towards the new arrivals, but honestly, those bad situations are found. (Haidar)

Hadi, on the other hand, attributed social injustice and inequality to Iraqis’ lack of knowledge in terms of:

... language, customs, and traditions and the feelings of the Australian society that refugees and immigrants are intruders and they compete with them in jobs, housing, scholarships, financial grants, assistance and other matters.
To conclude, social justice and equality is not simple. On the one hand, it can be responded to materially, but on the other, moral issues such as racism and prejudice are much harder to regulate and are felt on a daily basis. The attainment of social justice and equality may coincide with other factors which may contribute to facilitating the integration process, such as education and learning English.

6.5 Role of Language and Education

6.5.1 Language duty

All methodological strands of the present research identified key areas of cultural competence that were perceived to be necessary for effective integration within the broader community. Being able to speak the dominant language of the host community was identified as central to the integration process. Thus, the inability to speak English was seen as a barrier to social interaction, economic integration and full participation in the host country. With a ‘two-way’ understanding of integration, the issue of language capability is considered a challenge for host communities. Language barriers are a problem for many refugees since they cannot effectively communicate with others outside their native counterparts. Here, an open-ended question was raised about the relationship between learning English language and the integration process.

Hadi stated that there is a relationship between acquiring English language and the integration process, using education as a key tool for acquiring language. He said:

*It is very important to learn the language for the purpose of integration. Education is also important in building the future of the individual … it is one of the principle means to strengthen the ability of speaking English language.*

Hadi’s remark implies that through language one can cross the bridge to the other and create a state of communication and openness about the other’s civilization, culture and literature. According to another participant:

*Language is the main key to open many doors for those who cannot speak the language and everything is done through language. We lose many opportunities when we do not know the language.* (Sahar)
Sahar, therefore, values the role language plays in penetrating broader cultural knowledge and in enabling integration processes and outcomes. This includes both refugees’ knowledge of national and local customs and facilities and, though to a lesser extent, the host community’s knowledge of the culture of refugees, through interaction. Hussein, drawing on the Quran, explained the necessity to speak the host community language, saying:

_The multiplicity of languages from the viewpoint of religion is one of the major miracles of God, as Allah says in Holy Quran. And among His Signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the difference of your languages and colours. Verily, in that are indeed signs for a people who listen._ (Quran, Ar-Rum: 22)

From an Islamic perspective then, mastering the language of the host community is considered to be an implementation of the orders of God, who orders humanity to open channels of communication between multiple groups. That is realised only by learning and mastering the language of the society, in the case of permanent settlement in a host country.

### 6.5.2 Language and interaction

As discussed, the more an individual is capable of speaking the language of the community in which he or she lives, the more he or she will be acquainted with the culture of that community. Subsequently, interaction with the host community will be facilitated since ‘*mastering the language of the community we live in strengthens the issue of familiarity with it*’ (Jamal). In this way, refugees will gain practical information about the culture of the community in which they live, and be able to share their own culture with others. Thereby, they could promote mutual understanding, and also contribute something of value to the integrated community.

On this topic, Ali said:

>[Exclaiming] _How can I integrate with the other and how can I know what he has and he knows what I have while I live the case of isolationism? Accordingly, the movement towards interaction between civilizations and religions begins through language._
Ali’s comment implies that learning the host community language enables refugees to widen their vision of the host community’s reality, to share their ideas, their feelings, their agreement or disagreement, in conversation with others. According to another participant, language constitutes a determining factor of social and economic integration for refugees and widens their scientific, social and economic perspective:

*Learning English opens up wide horizons for knowledge and experiences as we are in an urgent need to understand the cultural, scientific, intellectual and modernist achievements of the West, reap the fruits of achievements in Australia and contribute in building it, as we are Australians and we enjoy rights as we have duties.* (Haidar)

Haidar believes that mastering the host society language will open the closed doors of the labour market. Furthermore, refugees need to master the host community language to avoid being marginalised, because marginalisation leads to unemployment. The participants were challenged more strongly regarding the issue of the influence of not mastering English on Iraqi refugee employment. Thus, because of the language barriers, they were asked whether they preferred working with Iraqi or Arab employers or with non-native employers. Hussein said that the preference of working with an Iraqi or Arab employer was due to:

*The simplicity and ease of understanding and dealing with each other, due to the commonalities from language to religion to history and some traditions and customs in addition to the language barrier as someone cannot speak English language or he or she is in the first levels of learning English which it does not satisfy his or her needs.*

Jamal’s opinion was similar to that expressed by Hussein. He said:

*Because working with Australians needs many qualifications and it also needs English language which may not be available in many refugees, we prefer working with the Iraqi or Arabic employers which does not require a lot of qualifications and language.*

Therefore, despite the benefits refugees might obtain when working in sectors primarily staffed by their native counterparts, language acquisition may not be a natural product of labour market participation. Since, in this situation, refugees are
surrounded by others who speak their native language, they do not have a desire to learn English. So, there may be less opportunity and motivation to learn English.

6.5.3 Barriers to learning English

After acquiring the necessary English language skills, some participants turned to further studies either at graduate or postgraduate level in order to gain better jobs. Other participants, upon arrival, took employment as a priority over English learning in order to pay off their transportation loans before they became interest-bearing loans (as observant Muslims, they cannot pay interest on a loan). So, the participants were asked the reason behind preferring working over learning English.

All the participants attributed their preference to work over learning to financial matters. Furat attributed the inclination of most Iraqis to work and desert learning to the economic factor. He indicated that ‘a new arrival does not dislike learning English language, but because of his urgent need to earn money, he turns towards working. So, it is an economic and not a social issue’. Ali’s view is similar to that expressed by Furat, who said:

*Because most of Iraqi refugees cannot speak English language well and they are old ... they see that the path of study is too long, especially with the lack of English language, which means that they have to start from the beginning. As well, they feel that they are in an urgent need for money and to compensate the years of deprivation and misery. Also, the long residence in the detention centre is one of the different reasons.*

Ali thought that the environment the Iraqis lived in – in refugee camps or in countries of residence prior to their arrival here, which was characterised by poverty and destitution – had created inside them the complex of fear for the future. Moreover, most of them saw themselves as too old to start thinking of joining language institutes, as ‘it takes time to learn English ... The number one priority is work and support our families’ (Mohammad).

Therefore, long work hours and busy lives, establishing a new status for themselves, can keep new refugees from participating in English language programs. Overall, the majority of participants suggested that the idea of ‘sacrifice’ is common among the
first generation, who hope their hard work, often at dirty, risky and low paid jobs, will reap benefits for their children. In this manner, refugee women preferred to sacrifice any education opportunity and take on the burden of home responsibilities in order to see their young children become productive members of the society.

6.5.4 Gender

In an attempt to research variations in the educational and occupational aspirations of Iraqi refugee women, the participants were asked about the rights of women in Australia and Iraq. Furat noted:

*Islam does not oppose women education and employment ... Islam impels and encourages Muslims, regardless of their gender or age, to learn, as the Prophet Mohammad says that it is incumbent for every Muslim, whether male or female, to search for knowledge ... literate women are better than illiterate women in dealing with different kinds of issues within their daily life and in upbringing and guiding their family and children.*

According to Furat, the Quran emphasises the self identity of the Muslim woman as an autonomous spiritual and intellectual being, contrary to the second class status and complementary relationships pictured by traditional cultural and dominant interpretations of the Quran (Barazangi, 2004, p.120). However, women refraining from going to school is not necessarily an indication of women’s marginalisation due to gender biases and discrimination, but might be for other reasons, as Noor stated:

*I plan to go to college and work hard to achieve goals I have set for myself ... but education ... takes a lot of time and I cannot balance between college and family responsibilities*. In a similar vein, Zahra said: ‘I value education ... no matter it is a co-educated institute or not ... it opens a wide gate for employment.

Zahra’s view is the same as that expressed by Noor that educational achievement is in the refugees’ best interests. It is considered as an indication of acceptance of the dominant culture, ensures job security and gives a chance for better social rank. Although participants highly valued educational achievement, some participants worried about ‘educational colonialism’, due to the culture clash with Australian schools:
Australian educational institutes try to ‘Australise’ us, and they try to seed the norms, traditions and morals of the Australian community into the conservative Iraqi Islamic community ... it is difficult to adapt with our new environment and the culture of the host country and the life with millions of people of different cultures, languages and religions. We go to schools with all these and we have to struggle adjusting and our mindset changes. (Mohammad)

According to Mohammad the problem of Iraqi refugees’ reluctance to study is associated with serious cultural and patriotic dimensions. Refugees consider these educational institutions as a strange intruder which teaches students the Western (evil) foreign teachings (Wardi, 1996). Wardi argues that although education, in its various institutions, is the key to work, some religious clerics, in the twenties and thirties of the previous century, banned Iraqi’s joining public schools, because they learnt illegal sciences that could affect the faith of the child and set him or her apart from his or her religion (p.10).

However, some participants refrain from study due to ‘gender relations and the gender-mixed education, not just in terms of learners but also in terms of the teaching and academic staff’ (Rida). Rida referred to an important point: different types of host country educational systems may interact differently with the Iraqi educational background. Since most Iraqi schools are one gender schools, which start after the primary school until university life, when students from both genders attend the same classes, the participants see these schools as a strange and deadly seedling planted inside the conservative Iraqi Islamic community. As a result, they refrain from joining these schools because of their different methods of teaching, subject materials, co-educated environment and even the new Western uniform of their teachers and students (Wardi, 1996).

The participants raised additional challenges related to their linguistic abilities and interactions with colleagues from a refugee background, which affected their school performance (Driver and Beltran, 1998). Social rituals and language barriers made it difficult for the participants to engage in meaningful interaction with speakers of another language. According to Fatima:
Although I spent more than a year in ACL and I learned some grammatical rules and arts of communication with some non-Iraqi students, I could not speak English fluently ... I try to talk English, but it is hard ... so, [due to cultural obligations] I always sat, met and talked with some Iraqi refugee females.

Fatima’s adherence to her culture of origin, which implies separation between opposite genders, has influenced her ability to interact with other students, especially male students. The problem is that they are aware that interaction and communication with students other than Iraqis will contribute to strengthen their ability to speak English. Further, it can be embarrassing for someone whose English is limited to engage in a dialogue with an English speaker. Accordingly, gender plays an important role in the refrain of some Iraqi refugees from studying, especially in co-education institutions, so these present as an obstacle rather than a resource.

Thus, it is wrong to attribute the failure of refugees to acquire the dominant language to resources, such as the ACL or AMEP institutions, although, as Sahar stated, they are not as useful as TAFE: ‘According to my experience, I did not get significant benefit from the study at ACL, but I think the matter is different in TAFE’. Sahar confirmed a position on the positive side of the Australian educational environment, despite the negatives mentioned above. This positive view may encourage Iraqi refugee women to attend different educational institutes, which can:

... open the gate widely to meet colleagues at work and make friends. My English will be improved, then I can progress socially and financially ... It will also expand my knowledge of people and the society, help me to settle better here and integrate with the broader society. (Noor)

Noor’s comment implies that Iraqi refugee women are highly motivated and have overcome many barriers and thus have strengths upon which they can build. They desire to participate in the labour market rather than staying on welfare. They also value employment, as it is one of the most important aspects of the Quranic social revolution and was seen as central to settling in Australia.

Despite this enthusiasm, there were high rates of unemployment amongst female participants. This was partly because:
Not all kinds of work are appropriate for Muslim women, such as the police, army, working to late hours in the night, or those places which are not appropriate for a Muslim woman, such as nightclubs. In other words, religion and/or traditions and customs do not allow some kinds of work – even for a man – but not all kinds of work. (Fatima)

According to Fatima, the direct reason behind the prohibition of women from working in such professions is perhaps due to the violence accompanying these jobs. Also, it is because of:

... the fears among conservative families that woman’s going out to ... work may cause her problems ... They fear of the outsider’s influence more than fear of her self-inclinations ... the fear of exploiting them emotionally and being driven to adversities remain ... a lot of conservative families and even some ultramodern families are still far from involving their daughters in ... such professions. (Ali)

To conclude, the role of language and education in consolidating the spirit of interaction and paving the way towards a bright future in terms of employment and settlement is important. Despite all of the obstacles, refugee women are inspired not only to improve their English language skills but also to further their academic training.

Furthermore, the current status of Iraqi women coincides, to a large extent, to the old days, where there were no restrictions on women attending classes and they were active in the work force, and were encouraged to combine lives at work and at home. Women also taught classes that included men (Al-Ali, 2007). Those who look at the modern Islamic way of life will see that women are neither imprisoned nor isolated, as had happened at a time of Muslim backwardness. They play a positive role in literacy, labour force participation and training, health and education (ibid).

According to Hamdan’s theory (2003), language is the vehicle of our thoughts and culture and a communication tool in general. Language is one of the keys that both refugees and the host community use to open doors for cooperation and participation in different fields of life and to consolidate social cohesion. Therefore, the more the dominant language is mastered the easier social integration becomes.
6.6 Educational Experience and Aspiration

6.6.1 Motives towards education

Education is an important factor for refugees’ settlement in their new society, as it helps to bridge the gap between them and the host community, through interacting and learning the new language and culture, in order to achieve social stability. It also helps in achieving financial and psychological settlement for refugees through opening up employment prospects and improving employment status and earnings.

A simple but powerful epistemological question was asked about the relationship between the Iraqi educational environment (Appendix 1) and refugees’ aims to study here in Australia. One male participant for example stated that:

*The huge numbers of Iraqi university degree holders here, who cannot speak English or work … the negative views about teaching methods and educational environment in Iraq, have influenced my desire to study in Australia. (Furat)*

Furat’s comment implies that the differences between Iraqi refugees’ previous educational experiences and those in Australia have influenced the participants’ academic abilities and desires and their value of education. Their educational background maximises their dissatisfaction but also decreases their level of satisfaction with education. According to Ali:

*The Iraqi curriculum was old-fashioned and had no innovative change and the same books have been used repeatedly over the years. Although education was free, as tuition fees were waived and books and stationary were free, the level of teaching was lower than before … English started from year five and was taught as a second language only … Science laboratories were ill equipped to carry out experiments as the government strictly prohibited the use of chemicals in schools … Computer was not introduced in schools, and even university students were computer illiterates … At the end of secondary level, students were evaluated through Baccalaureate examination and only meritorious students could get admitted in colleges and universities.*

Ali believed that there was a close relationship between the whole educational environment in Iraq, including the teaching methods, curriculum, teachers and exams, and his intention to study in Australia. Accordingly, educational background has emerged as an important factor to consider when explaining academic
performance and achievement levels of Iraqi refugees living in Australia. Deteriorated educational background can cause refrain from study, which in turn, may complicate matters for Iraqi refugees, who are already struggling with language barriers and cultural changes in their new environment. According to another participant:

*There is what I can call, the terrorism of teaching, formed in physical and intellectual violence, even during the weekend, which is one day, Friday only, it is a nightmare. The student spends the whole day doing his or her homework and thinks of the next day at school. If the student did not do his or her homework, he or she would be subjected to corporal punishment. Thus, inside every student there is an atmosphere of psychological conflict of fear to face the teacher, whether doing his or her homework or not ... The student becomes a subject of fear as the teacher practiced dictatorship over students, the same as the dictatorship of Saddam Hussein, which he practiced over all the Iraqi people. He planted it in our souls and we used to demonstrate it at home, school or community over those who are more vulnerable than us. [Therefore] We work hard in order to perform well in our classes and to avoid being forced to repeat a grade while our friends are promoted to the next grade. We work hard at this stage to be recognised in front of the entire school and at the same time to please our parents.* (Rida)

Ali’s and Rida’s comments are examples of how educational achievements are mainly influenced by factors other than academic abilities. Among these factors is the whole educational system-student relationship in general and teacher-student relationships in particular. At best these factors in the student’s educational life led to the best academic achievement and future insight, otherwise his or her academic achievement and future insight could be the worst.

In conclusion, although Iraqi refugees highly value education, the deteriorated climate surrounding education in Iraq in terms of lack of minimum standards in the form of teaching methods and teaching-learning materials (such as textbooks, libraries, laboratories), and the feeling that there was no benefit of education, as well as outdated curricula, which will be discussed next, led many students to drop out of school.
6.6.2 Curriculum

On the other hand, the curriculum may play a vital role in preparing and introducing a new arrival to the new culture and community, and in facilitating the integration process, through using close or similar images and ideas to his or her previous environment. As well, the curriculum exposes refugee students to the common cultural heritage of the society in which they live, despite the diversity of their life-experience, in order to ensure a fundamental level of agreement.

The participants were asked their opinion about the impact of the Australian curriculum on encouraging or hindering study here. Jamal stated:

*The [Australian] curriculum contributes significantly in pushing immigrants to social life and learning the culture of the country and how to work and deal with its citizens.*

According to Jamal, the curriculum is a functional promotion of study through the window of the host community culture. Though Sahar expressed her overwhelming recognition of the social, professional and cultural level of the curriculum, she criticised the teachers’ manner and accent and methods of teaching:

*The curriculum at TAFE is better than that at ACL and it covers topics we need and the study was useful. I am greatly concerned about the teacher’s accent which affects my comprehension ... I mean the rapidity of comprehension ... some Asian teachers have different methods in dealing with the subject matter or with students or they lack attention to some details of the lessons.*

A similar response was expressed by Furat:

*They teach without giving us proper vocabulary which enabling us to fully integrate in the society ... and enable us to catch up very quickly with the language. They teach us in their strange accent and we cannot understand most of the lesson content.*

A female participant for example objected to the content of the curriculum and asked for change:
The curricula do not contain any model of integration between Muslims and others in learning activities … it is not succeeding in the treatment, controlling and creating development frameworks in facing the problem. (Noor)

Noor’s comment implies that more focus on vocabulary which enhances the social interaction between minority communities and the host community, particularly simple conversational skills, should be taken into consideration. According to Mohammad,

*English curriculum content lack subjects dedicated for the overseas students … there should be subjects in occupational English language for different specialised professional people who came from overseas … all refugees who arrive in Sydney are given 510 hours to help to interact with the new environment … it is general English … it is not enough to learn English. This is a difference in English teaching.*

Mohammad confirmed the limitations of the curriculum in English courses in preparing refugees for entering the labour market. He noted that these courses need to concentrate on developing professional vocabularies and not only offer general English classes. The lack of professional vocabulary was identified as a major reason why this particular participant felt he was having difficulty getting a job in his field. He also felt that 510 hours was simply not enough to achieve a good command of the English language. In general, issues surrounding the English language curriculum were highlighted as a serious settlement concern and as an obstacle towards further education.

### 6.6.3 Obstacles to education

It could be argued that education provides skills that enable people, especially refugees, to become more constructive and active members of society. Furthermore, different educational institutions are considered to be the most important place of contact with members of the host community and to play an important role in establishing relationships supportive of integration.

As Mohammad noted (above), and some of the university graduate participants who had prior knowledge of English agreed, the English language courses offered for
refugees were not specialised enough. They wanted more advanced English courses and a need for more modified programs, based on student’s abilities. According to Zahra:

*After starting English classes ... I felt that the level of these courses has been designed for immigrants in general ... they were not designed for graduates of universities ... So, attending these courses did not help me that much ... I think they were designed for being able to follow the daily conversations.*

Similar sentiments regarding the benefits obtained through the English classes were expressed by Rida. He criticised the Australian educational system from another corner, saying that because the vast majority of Iraqis have completed their university studies in Arabic, therefore, they

*... cannot complete postgraduate study for not being able to pass the proficiency test ... How can I study at university and I do not have the tools, the language, to pursue the study; how can a bird fly with two broken wings, as the desire to fly alone is not enough.*

Rida observed that, though some English courses provided special language classes for refugees in seeking to meet their needs, they did not help them pursue their study through preparing them to pass the English language proficiency test. The wave of English language proficiency tests are a barrier and may also adversely affect settlement. The refugee experience of education is impacted by insufficient support for educated refugees to pursue their postgraduate study and accordingly learn the host society language. Yet, because they are academics and cannot serve their community through their work as academics, they suffer isolation and exclusion even within their own community.

It could be argued that, while the participants acknowledged that there were some English courses offered to refugees, they stressed the need to provide more long-term English training opportunities. This was considered essential for those with significant disruptions in their educational pathway pre-arrival. Zajda, et al. (2008) argue that dropping out at any schooling stage will have its consequences on school attendance in the future. As a result, a question was raised concerning the
relationship between the length of time between dropping out of study and returning to it. According to a male participant:

*The longer the period of interruption from the study is, the less chances of returning to it, because of lack of harmony with it and preoccupation with other things, such as work, family responsibilities and the like. (Ali)*

Similar sentiments were expressed by Hadi:

*I mean by the relationship between leaving school and returning to it, those who were forced to leave school because of the hard circumstances they endured and consequently, left their country to neighbouring countries and settled, sometimes for several years, until they have been granted a refugee status.*

Ali’s view is similar to that expressed by Hadi that previous traumatic exposure in refugees’ homelands, such as war, torture, oppression, and discrimination and detention in refugee camps for long periods, as well as the process of refuge itself, can lead to increased risk for emotional disturbance and dropping out of school. Such circumstances can lead to social and educational problems, such as a lack of engagement with school and anti-social behaviour. Al-Ali (2007) indicates that ‘early school leavers have more negative attitudes towards school than those that stay longer’ (p.26).

A different attitude was expressed by Fatima:

*The majority of those who pursue their studies after resettling in Australia are those who drop out of school for a long time … I think that Iraqis have the ambition to pursue study and to obtain university and higher degrees regardless of their age.*

Fatima attracts attention to another impediment to education: the age of the refugee. She suggests that age does not stand in the path of older refugees’ access to education, since their gender and marital experiences and those in parenting and occupational roles help to solidify their perception about the necessity of education for a positive future.
On the contrary, Ali attributed to age, the refrain of some refugees from study. He remarked:

*Getting older reduces the chances of returning to study, because of the feeling of alienation since their colleagues – or most of them – may be younger than them, sometimes at the age of their children. So, their sensitivity will be so high that they often leave school.*

According to Ali, age is not a beneficial factor in immigration. Perhaps older refugees face the greatest vulnerability for mental health problems due to trauma, particularly post-traumatic stress disorders, depression and anxiety disorders, as a result of their long physical and psychological journey (Keyes, 2000; Fox, et al, 2001; Hermansson, et al., 2002; Maddern, 2004; Mollica, et al., 2001; Steel and Silove, 2001). So, the efforts of older people to learn the host community language and familiarise themselves with their new social structure may become extremely stressful. A female participant said:

*I did not feel the illusion of age as an obstacle towards learning as a fait accompli. Its impact is on the health only, in terms of attendance and commitment to school and other duties. So, I do not have motivation and determination to learn.* (Zahra)

Although Ali attributed the abstention from study to age, Zahra’s reasons centred on matters of punctuality, commitment to daily going to school and the necessary duties and homework needed. Nonetheless, some old refugees sometimes felt that they were psychologically or mentally unable to continue their study.

To conclude, the participants exposed a lot of factors that may face new arrivals in Australia relating to the concept of education. These factors include the Iraqis’ educational background, the Iraqi and Australian curriculum, the Australian co-educated learning environment, English language proficiency tests and age. These factors might result in refugees dropping out of study. Further, those who spent years in refugee camps or in countries at war usually have serious interruptions to every aspect of their lives, particularly their education.
6.7 Conclusion

This chapter discussed the results of interviews with eleven participants. The interviews demonstrated that there are various factors influencing the intentions and possibilities of Iraqi refugees integrating into the broader Australian community. These interviews explored the perceptions of integration among Iraqi refugees and collected examples of the problems impeding integration. They revealed that some religious teachings, economic difficulties, educational barriers, prejudice, social exclusion and social traditions affect Iraqi refugees’ intention to integrate in Australia.

The participants valued the role of religion in strengthening the bonds among different segments of the multicultural community, consolidating cohesion, interaction, and integration, calling for tolerance, cooperation, and open channels of dialogue with different religions.

Furthermore, education proved to play a key role in consolidating a spirit of interaction and integration through providing values-based and morals-based education, effective discipline and quality teaching. The results indicated that Iraqi refugees are eager to study and learn the English language, but due to their financial difficulties they rode the wave of working to achieve self-sufficiency. Further, the different natures of the Iraqi and the Australian educational systems in terms of curriculum, teaching methods and co-educational environment forced many Iraqis, especially women, to leave school. Some other factors including the English language proficiency test, dropping out of school and age at arrival, to some extent, influenced intentions to learn the English language or study in Australia. Social justice and equality and being acquainted with the host country laws and culture were also considered an important contributing factor for integration.

Overall, these findings provide a baseline for the present research, establishing a sample of participants with significant experience and insight, which can be drawn upon with some confidence, while exploring their perspectives. Consequently, the next chapter will answer the research questions while providing discussion of the findings from the study’s participant questionnaires and interviews.
CHAPTER 7: DISCUSSION

Through meeting Australians, especially within my educational career, I note that their view towards us is suspicious and sometimes insulting. We do not have a problem in integrating into the Australian society; provided that they respect our identity and taboos ... I may not understand their ... indications, language, face and suggestive expressions that send signals, such as: Am I accepted? (Fatima)

7.1 Introduction

The above quote by Fatima epitomises the view of the participants in the study in relation to integration. The questionnaire, interviews and literature reviewed in this thesis suggest that Iraqi Muslim Shiite refugees face a variety of obstacles to their successful integration into Australian society. The main findings of the study are that Iraqi refugees have a desire to integrate, but there are different types of integration. These include social, religious, civic, linguistic, economic and political integration. Moreover, there are a number of different levels associated with types of integration, including coexistence, participation, adaptation, cooperation, commitment and appreciation (Hamdan, 2003). These different levels in relation to the different types come about due to barriers, including maintaining religion, wider racism, lack of English language, sense of belonging, social and cultural difference, civic understandings, and employment.

First of all, it is important to note that this study yields limited results. The findings of this study cannot be generalised to include all Iraqis; it is a qualitative study designed to develop deeper understanding. Further, it cannot be generalised like quantitative data due to the non-random selection of participants, the small number of participants and its basis in very specific geographic and demographic contexts. Thus, the findings are limited and do not by any means reveal the whole range of issues faced by refugees or even refugees who arrived in Australia from Iraq.
7.2 Iraqi Community Situation

The first question the research asked was about the historical and contemporary situation of Iraqi refugees in Australia at a general level. Understanding the difference between Iraqi customs and traditions and Australian customs and traditions helps to understand the dynamics shaping cultural, social and civic integration (Hamdan, 2003).

It is clear from the findings that participants in this study decided to come to Australia for secure shelter and protection; the main motive for their immigration was to request humanitarian asylum. They escaped conditions stemming from the nature of the former regime, successive wars and the economic embargo imposed on Iraq at the beginning of the 1990s, which lasted for about a quarter of a century (Al-Ali, 2007).

The findings of this thesis also show that despite the social, religious, and cultural differences between the Iraqi and the Australian communities, and the resentment related to the racist spirit of some Australians, nearly all participants have a sense of belonging to Australia.

However, according to the participants, some factors strengthened the sense of belonging to Australia. One such factor, which was identified by a high percentage of the Iraqi refugees surveyed and interviewed and is supported by other research (Sim and Bowes, 2007), is the length of residence in the country of asylum. The experiences of some Iraqi refugees who had been in Australia for a longer period of time, revealed that their situation had become a lot easier as they became familiar with the language, laws and culture in Australia. According to Markus (2010), Mathews (2008) and Meer (2010) knowledge of the country’s laws and culture contributes to facilitating the sense of belonging to a host country and consequently refugees’ integration into it.

The deep religious, cultural and social differences between Iraqis and Australians can make it very difficult for Iraqi refugees to adapt to their new surroundings. Subsequently, few participants were semi or fully acquainted with Australian laws
and culture. Dealing with these differences can be very unsettling and cause many problems that might raise obstacles in the path to integration. These differences between Iraqi and Australian cultures could be lessened through following different kinds of Australian media, as media, especially television, is one tool which identifies the culture, way of life and language of the host community (Fadhlullah, 2000). Although many participants had a desire to follow Australian media, to learn the host community language and to deepen the relationship between the two parties, the media concentrates on race discrimination and racial prejudice and on picturing ethnic minorities as a problem for the Australian community. It often presents refugees as a threat to the country’s economic situation (Pickering, 2005) such as by using hostile images of refugees that increase the likelihood of local persecution of individual refugees. In other words the media is ‘used to demarcate internal cultural boundaries and thereby sanction treating people differently’ (Hage, 2002, p.219). In that sense, this study showed that the media lost its position as a mediator between the refugees and their new community.

Alternatively, Demers (2007) states that media content or programming includes entertainment content and can reach even the most isolated of the community, especially elderly and female refugees, both of whom tend to spend most of their time in the home. For that reason, the majority of the participants involved in this thesis followed Arabic television. Participants believed that Arabic television plays a pivotal role in providing Iraqi refugees with cultural and social activities, maintaining their own customs, language and religion, promoting and strengthening the connection with the home country, and celebrating their traditions. These findings are similar to those recorded in literature, which state that although Iraqi refugees are eager to integrate into the Australian community, it is important for them to maintain cultural integrity and identity (Phillimore and Goodson, 2008; Warriner, 2007; Brettell and Sargent, 2006; Feldman, 2007).

In relation to the level of social, cultural and civic integration, the situation is complex. Almost all the participants expressed their commitment to the host country culture through taking into account the general order of society from customs, traditions, systems, ethics, laws, and regulations, through to working and life in the

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family or job, school, market or street (Hamdan, 2003). However, there were a number of barriers to successful integration on levels or in domains such as participation and cooperation (ibid). These barriers were education, gender, English language, employment and values.

7.3 Education

The second research question asked about the importance of education in Iraqi refugees’ lives. It was one of the major issues, because it includes concerns about gender segregation, English language pedagogy, previous educational experiences in Iraq and in the Australian educational environment, dropping out of school, age, financial considerations, and lack of English language skills. The importance of this question stems from the role education plays as a stabilising feature in the refugees’ lives by providing them with learning opportunities and facilitating interactions, social participation, settlement and intellectual and personal development (Mathews, 2008).

The questionnaire was useful in examining the issue of education, because it was possible to see a pattern of experience across the participants, which it was then possible to follow up in interviews. These patterns related to age, dropping out of school, and the educational environment and system.

It appears, according to the participants, that males had more education than females. First, female refugees’ lower educational achievement prior to immigration may explain the significant differences between the sexes in employment and life satisfaction while in Iraq (England, et al., 2004). It is evident that such disparities in education prior to immigration continued to impact upon female refugees’ vocational development in Australia.

Second, it is essential to consider gender roles and male privilege. Females are often responsible for childcare and meeting family needs. These multiple demands may limit the educational opportunities available to females. Consequently, female refugees in the study felt that they had less educational opportunities and felt decreased satisfaction with their educational level.
The other educational factor that had negatively impacted upon most of the participants’ intentions to study in Australia, and forced the majority to drop out of school, was the nature and status of Iraqi educational settings, systems and processes. Thus, participants’ negative attitude to schooling could be attributed to Iraq’s educational system, which has been debilitated due to the eight-year war with Iran in the eighties, and a decade of United Nations sanctions. The socio-economic conditions and rapid deterioration of educational facilities forced some students to drop out of school at an early stage, to work and earn their living. In addition, the salaries of educated people, especially teacher salaries, dropped from $500–1000 per month to $5 per month, in 1995-2003 (Al-Ali, 2007; Timperly and Robinson, 2000), creating a feeling inside many families that there was no benefit in education, because of the lack of good salaries for the educated.

In addition, Iraqi refugees’ experiences in detention centres and refugee camps, where they spent years in tents suffering extremely difficult living conditions, influenced their learning route (Al-Ali, 2007, p.39). Some Iraqi refugees came from disrupted backgrounds and were exposed to torture and trauma, along with long periods of being far from education. As a result they lost self-esteem, and this consequently affected their ability to concentrate and so pursue their study or learn English (Brennan, 2003; Casimiro, et al., 2007). These findings are consistent with those recorded in research literature, which stress that there is a strong relationship between students’ socio-economic background and their academic achievement (Zajda, et. al., 2008). Further, those who drop out of school have a negative attitude towards study (Al-Ali, 2007).

The findings affirmed that students who live in an environment where there is oppression and hostility may suffer long-lasting effects on the way that they perceive themselves and socialise with others. This may decrease their motivation to complete schoolwork along with other negative consequences (Portes and Rumbaut, 2001).

The findings also showed that there was a relationship between the desire to study here in Australia and the age of a refugee; which had implications for opportunities through education and contact with the host society. More than half of the
participants in the questionnaire and the majority of interviewees attributed their refrain from study to being too old to study. They were unable to study because of their vulnerability to different kinds of health and psychological problems. This vulnerability resulted from interaction between their traditionalism and cultural inflexibility, linguistic barriers, lack of family and social support, and physical sickness. These findings confirm what is well documented in the literature, that age has an impact on adult learning and is an important factor in discontinuing education (Blakemore and Frith, 2005; Mitchell and Myles, 2004). Blakemore and Frith (2005) and Mitchell and Myles (2004) refer to the possibility of decreasing human intellectual abilities during advanced age due to change in the brain and physical ability. Other studies attribute the low rate of older refugees’ education to their high risk for depressive symptoms and disorders, and a variety of traditional culture-bound syndromes (Black, et al., 1998; Mui, et al., 2003; Stokes, et al., 2001; Tran, et al., 2000). Age of refugees at entry affects academic performance, educational, and career aspirations (Fuligni, 1997; St. Hilaire, 2002; Suarez-Orozco and Suarez Orozco, 2002).

Overall, many factors may influence the older Iraqi refugees’ capability to study or learn the English language. These factors include their enduring health problems as victims of warfare and torture. Other factors affecting them include war-related depression, fear of being a burden on their families and different language learning strategies (Collins, 1991, p.164).

According to the questionnaire and in-depth interviews, there was a close relationship between the whole educational environment, in Iraq especially, the curriculum and the participants’ intention to study here. The majority of participants completing the questionnaires and interviews considered the Iraqi curriculum, especially English language curriculum, as one of the significant factors that stood in their path of studying here. Research literature supports these findings, showing that curriculum has a great influence upon the educational process as a whole (Marginson, 1993). Alwan (2004) affirms that the main Iraqi teaching method in general, and the curriculum in particular, are characterised by memorisation without understanding, where a student learns by heart a set of words and some grammar,
sitting for a test every semester, then he or she forgets most of what he or she learned by heart. The curriculum is old-fashioned, politicised and reflects the policies and the views of a despotic and dictatorial government; it also lacks basic training and skills in communication and information (ibid). So it is important to note that negative educational experiences contribute to the educational aspirations of Iraqi refugees.

In a related vein, the majority of participants acknowledged the added benefits of being taught not only basic language for reading, writing and speaking, but also skills which applied the gained language to everyday life. However, the schooling environment in Australia raised other concerns. Suarez-Orozco and Suarez-Orozco (2008) argue that the educational environment exposes new arrivals to their new society through connection with other immigrants, and coming to know their teachers and peers from the majority culture. Nonetheless, nearly all the participants expressed their opinion that the Australian educational environment, especially the co-educational situation, had a negative effect on their academic career.

The majority of Iraqi educational organisations are gendered, where all intermediate and secondary schools and even some institutes and universities are girls-only schools or boys-only schools (Al-Rubai, 1994). Even the teaching and academic staff are single-sex, according to the nature of the school. If they are co-educational, they almost always separate the genders in teachers’ rooms, classrooms, and sport activities (Alwan, 2004). Therefore, a great number of the participants were not used to the co-educational settings in Australia.

Although some programs have been designed to assist teachers to meet the needs of refugees (Kyle, et al., 2004; Cassidy and Gow, 2005), several studies have shown that the whole Australian educational environment, from informal or casual dress to behaviour of female teachers, impacts on Muslim refugees’ desire to study here (Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford, 1997; Coelic-Peisker and Tilbury, 2007). Thus, while Iraqi Muslim Shiite refugee women (and even men) are eager to study, they abstain from studying because of the uncomfortable, unacceptable and embarrassing co-educational climate (Casimiro, et al., 2007), as it is culturally and/or religiously offensive to some students.
The findings of the current study are similar to those of previous studies. It is clear that Iraqi refugees strongly value education, yet, because of the factors outlined, such as age, previous educational experiences, dropping out of school, English language pedagogy and lack of English language skills, some of them may refrain from joining the educational life of Australia. Moreover, some female students refrain from studying due to the Australian co-educational environment – veiled female students are embarrassed to participate in sports and swimming lessons, and they may feel more comfortable in the presence of a female teacher, especially when asking for help (Zajda, et al., 2008).

It is important to conclude that it is too difficult for refugees who have experienced interrupted education (Rutter and Stanton, 2001) to study in Australia, due to experiencing both displacement and trauma. In order to prepare themselves for the new education environment and a new school culture (Marland, 1998; Rutter and Stanton, 2001), they have to adapt to their new environment, be involved in the acquisition of new language (Anderson, 2004, p.1), cope with displacement, and develop a familiarity with and attachment to a new place (ibid).

Education is an essential corner of the human capital structure, and it is a place where integration may take place. Basu (2011) argues that host communities based on common schools foster the integration process. Yet, despite the importance of education, education and official language proficiency are lowest among immigrants arriving as refugees (Hiebert and Sherrell, 2009). Nevertheless, the value placed on education as a means to upward mobility is often high among refugees (Taylor and Krahn, 2005). They know that lack of education and in turn, lack of language skills not only creates barriers in terms of articulation and communication of ideas and concepts, but also reinforces feelings of exclusion and marginalisation.

7.4 Gender

Despite their ultimate freedom within their homeland, the Iraqi women interviewed identified some obstacles to study or work in Australia. The majority of female participants attributed this to the mixed environment. Some of this was due to having
to frequently deal with harassment and taunting and the ways in which Australian schools undermine traditions, especially those related to the status of women and religion.

Muslim clothes, especially ‘hijab’, have been identified by a number of participants as a significant barrier to mixing with non-Muslims, in addition to racism and sexism (Coates and Carr, 2005; Dumper, 2002). Another barrier identified by them is that women take the full responsibility of supporting the household in the sexual division of labour.

Although the majority of female participants face formidable barriers in gaining employment and, consequently, are unemployed, women involved in this study did not represent the majority of Iraqi women: a significant number of Iraqi or Muslim women are actively participating in the Australian workforce. McCue (2008) argues that ‘Muslim women’s workforce participation according to the ABS shows the national percentage of Muslim women participating in the labour market as 26.3% in 1991 up to 30% in 2001. The figure for 2006 is 31% and 85% of that workforce are employees’ (p.53).

7.5 English Language Acquisition and Employment

Participants told many stories about the problems they have encountered in Australia due to language barriers. For instance, a female participant went to the hospital emergency department after she fainted, and came home without treatment or medication because she could not communicate with doctors about her health condition. Others reported facing language barriers when they went to the public library, saw a doctor, went to their children’s school, and when lost and seeking directions.

The fourth research question asked about the relationship between acquiring English language competency and the integration of Iraqi refugees into Australian society. The significance of this question relates to the role language plays in refugees’ lives as a main channel and social tool for communication, as well as a meditational and a
cognitive tool for thinking. It is also important because through language human beings can express their thoughts, desires and inclinations.

It is of significance that the findings revealed that most participants have a moderate level of English language proficiency. A great number of participants attributed their refrain from learning English language to teaching methods and teachers, as has been found in other studies (Mitchell and Myles, 2004; Garcia, 2002), whereas others attributed it to their preference for work rather than attending language classes, because of the pressing need to gain employment as quickly as possible (Chapter 6). They also believed that employment would contribute to improve their English language skills through interacting with people from other communities.

The findings of the current study were similar to those of previous studies. They demonstrated that integration into the host society requires learning the host society’s language (Casimiro, et al., 2007). In turn, learning the host society’s language requires meaningful interaction in the native tongue, in naturally flowing communication, where speakers focus on communication and not on the form of pronunciation. Coilic-Peisker and Tilbury (2007) point out that most if not all refugees recognise that learning English language is the best and quickest way of gaining position, autonomy, and power. Thus, it is impossible to do without language because of its importance in the course of social life and because it forms structural elements in the community.

Some participants gained the potential for linguistic integration at the level of ‘coexistence’, as they lived, worked and settled within their new society. There is a requirement ‘to coexist with their new environment’ (Hamdan, 2003, p.76) for direct interaction and dealings with the host society to occur. Yet, since language is considered the main tool for interaction and meeting with the host community, refugees are in an urgent need to learn the dominant language. Furthermore, a lack of competency in English language and literacy represents a major barrier to Iraqi refugee employment, which, itself, represents the most fertile area of integration (Castles, et al., 2001). The findings from both the questionnaires and interviews showed that almost all the participants were unemployed. Although some
participants were highly educated in comparison with other groups of immigrants (Muus, 1997), securing employment was difficult for them due to lack of English language skills and previous work experience. Some refugees are unable to produce proof of previous qualifications and even when they can, employers may not recognise them (ECRE, 1999b). Consequently, underemployment is a common factor in the experience of Iraqi refugees in the labour market and when they did find employment, it was largely low-skilled, risky and poorly paid work. So, while some of the participants spoke English, the level of English literacy was not adequate for the workplace. By undertaking education, through ‘adaptation’ courses, which ease the transition to work (Somerville and Wintour, 2006), refugees may acquire better opportunities for employment.

Accordingly, because of language barriers, the majority of participants preferred working with employers who were culturally similar to themselves and not from a different group (Coates and Carr, 2005). So, without English proficiency, refugees were readily excluded from many aspects of life, including employment, education, access to services and social interaction.

7.6 Social Interaction

As noted above, English language proficiency enables refugees to become participants in different sectors of society, such as education, the labour market, the welfare system, and political representation. Links with members of the host community would also make Iraqi refugee integration into Australian society more likely, since such linkages make refugees feel less separation from their new environment and help them to keep in touch with the everyday life of the host country.

The fifth research question asked about the impact on integration of social interaction between the Iraqi community and the Australian multicultural community. The significance of this question lies in the necessity to bridge the gap between the Australian community and Iraqi refugees through engagement in a wide range of social activities or relationships.
It is important to mention that the findings clearly showed that nearly all participants believed that social interaction requires active engagement in social activities or relationships as well as a sense of communality and identification with the host community (Al Sistani, 2002; Brissette, et al., 2000). They also strongly indicated that relationships and the exchange of visits and gifts with non-Muslim Australians strengthened the spirit of social interaction (Al Sistani, 2002; Fadhlullah, 1998). Furthermore, they pointed out that the first step towards integration is encouraging interrelations among different segments of the host community. Such externalities are positive, as repeated and multiple social interactions across group boundaries create a kind of communication and a mutual language between the two societies, which will favour the integration process.

Research literature affirms that interrelations among different segments of the broader community represent a continuation of traditional Iraqi customs (Wardi, 1996; Balcavage, 2003; Al Rashid, 1998; Fichter, 1981; Kalman, 2005), creating solidarity inside the host community. Making close friendships and relationships, visiting non-Muslims and eating their food, which the Islamic Shiite faith strives to achieve, would strengthen links and connect the Muslims to non-Muslims, and could be seen as a solid step towards integration (Al Hassani, 1995; Al Sistani, 2002; Fadhlullah, 1998, 2000). Interrelations will find a base for mutual language shared by different members of the host community, which will create a purposeful dialogue, a sense of unity and solidarity inside the broader community, where all its members are able to speak the same language (Battle, 1998; Singer, 1998).

Such purposeful dialogue between the Iraqi community and the wider society was confirmed by the majority of participants. The literature emphasises the establishment of dialogue between minority communities and the host community as a stage in the process of recognition and understanding of minorities (Foster, 1999). Dialogue enables minorities to gain a voice or hearing which is an essential part of dialogue and a challenge to the monological and authorial voice (Clifford and Marcus, 1986, p.15). Bauman’s theory (1992b), too, emphasises the ‘formation of a dialogical, not monological sociology’ (p.85), which will contribute, in turn, to establishing a purposeful dialogue between minority communities and the host.
community. Opening channels of dialogue provides excluded communities with recognition and understanding (Bauman, 1993). The present thesis agrees with this theory, since most of the participants revealed that establishing dialogue and communicating effectively with the host society provided contact opportunities between Iraqi refugees and the broader society. Such dialogue contributes to reducing tension and prejudice against the Iraqi community (Adida, et al., 2011). As well, it enables Iraqi refugees to widen their vision of the Australian reality, to share their ideas, their feelings, their agreement or disagreement with each other, and achieves a two-way process of mutual interaction between the two sides (Spencer, 2003; Korac, 2003).

Simultaneously, in order to strengthen these social interactions and build refugees’ capacities to maximise their participation within the broader host society, there should be a connection which links the refugees with their new environment. These connections are represented in ethno-specific institutions. However, few participants encouraged establishing Iraqi institutions although they might be capable of creating productive social resources, including social interactions, shared experiences, knowledge and profitable avenues of job search for refugees. They accused these institutions of political involvement (Maloney and Rossteutscher, 2006a), even though they are an indication of the determinants of refugees’ social integration into the host country.

However, it should be noted that Iraqis are used to such associations, which are established in various parts of Iraq in order to preserve a broad vivid image of Iraqi culture and traditions. One of the best examples of such multi-structured Iraqi associations is ‘Mudhif’\(^5\). Mudhif as a traditional organisation promotes the concepts of social unity and it is a tool of social cohesion within the community (Balcavage, 2003).

\(^5\) A guest house that is decorated with carpets and pillows. It is the place where the clan members and guests meet. It is the main centre of the clan or tribe and it has several social, religious and educational functions and builds the relationship between the members of that society on the basis of values derived from religion and authentic social customs and habits.
Institutions play a role in civil society, some of them being of particular relevance for integration, including those that are specifically of and for refugee groups, such as religious institutions. These religious institutions could act as potential partners in integration policies, making use of ongoing relations between these institutions and Iraqi refugees in order to consolidate the religious factor, which plays a key role in Iraqis’ lives.

7.7 Values

It has been noted that refugees’ participation in the educational institutions of the host society will pave the way towards their familiarity with its culture and values. Some refugees faced that transition, trying to maintain their traditions and values, because Iraqi culture is totally different from that of Australia with all its details, relations, traditions and values. Resistance to transition creates cultural conflicts among all the sections of a multicultural community. These conflicts may contribute to deterring the integration process, especially between Muslims and non-Muslims, since the world described Islam as the enemy of the West during the period following the Cold War (Mathews, 2008). Thus, it is important to study different aspects of life, especially when studying minority and ethnic groups that are struggling and fighting for survival in order to maintain their religion, faith and identity.

Therefore, the third research question asked about Iraqi refugees’ negotiation of different values systems. The significance of this question stems from the problems of asylum, which come to light through the change of some habits and the emergence of some new habits, which are effected by the new social environment.

The interviews provided rich information regarding this question, because after analysing the questionnaire, many loose ends, contradictions and problems were evident. The interviews provided clarification about the significance of maintaining the participants’ own culture while trying to integrate into the Australian community.
The majority of participants identified Australian culture and values as a significant challenge, particularly in terms of the open Australian climate. Another feature of cultural conflict is Australians’ negative perception of Islam and Muslims.

Relevant research literature emphasises what the findings have revealed: that Australian openness forms a challenge to ethics and values that the Iraqis are used to in their homeland (Fadhlullah, 1998). Furthermore, disrespect and hatred towards Islamic values and Muslims (Anthais, 2002; Anyon, 2005; Fadhlullah, 2000; Fredman, 2001; Hayes and Humphries, 2004; Mathews, 2008; Meer, 2010; Milner, 2007) and portrayals of Islam as the religion of the terrorist, ‘Islamophobia’ (Morgan and Poynting, 2012; Said, 2003), contributed to sow distrust in the souls of Iraqis and led to some Iraqis refraining from joining Australian public life. As a result, the majority of participants preferred the company of their own ethnic community and lived in ethnic enclaves (Chapter 3) to meet their religious, social, welfare, cultural and other needs (Coilic-Peisker and Tilbury, 2007; Hale, 2000; Duke, et al., 1999; Portes, 1995; Birman and Trickett, 2001; Menjivar, 1997; Funkhouser and Ramos, 1993; Portes and Leif, 1992).

The participants’ preference to live in ethnic enclaves stemmed from their feelings of inequality, prejudice, and discrimination, as well as cultural differences. Meer (2010) argues that some Muslims still face racist and discriminatory reactions from the majority culture. And because of prejudice, discrimination, racism, drinking, swearing, family breakdown, not to speak of the lack of English language (Bouma, 1996), Muslims flock together and form ethnic gatherings to promote ethnic pride and a sense of belonging in the face of such danger. In that sense, Muslims seem to be caught between two worlds. One world that identifies them as a people separate from the host community and its values, while the other requires them to settle and assimilate into the majority culture and let go of some of their traditional heritage.

The practice of flocking together in ethnic enclaves consolidates the isolated and marginalised status of Iraqis if they never try to actually go ahead and do anything in the community, and accordingly they will never integrate. So they remain invisible from the broader community, because they live in their own island.
Although the majority of the participants tended to prefer ethnic clustering for religious and cultural reasons, some participants’ views in relation to levels of integration amounted to commitment. They inclined to a level of commitment as they took the host society’s traditions, ethics, laws, and daily life into consideration in order to live together in cohesion and stable life, regardless of their different ethnic or religious backgrounds (Hamdan, 2003).

7.8 Key Barriers to Integration

The combined analyses of participant interviews and questionnaires, the literature, and relevant theories have shed light on the way in which the problem of integration is constructed. The purpose of the present thesis was to understand the barriers to integration of a specific group of people, Iraqi Muslim Shiite refugees, and to reveal examples of the problems that impact upon their integration.

Since minority communities are confronted by new requirements, emerging from a new and different environment in terms of culture, language, values and sometimes religion, they must respond in more active ways through adopting multiple levels of integration, such as coexistence, adaptation, cooperation and participation (Hamdan, 2003, p.71) in order to reach social integration into the wider community. The key barriers to social integration are English language skills, discrimination, unemployment and religious and cultural differences. Moreover, maintaining cultural heritage remains a challenge for minority communities in that the host society has some negative attitudes and concerns towards cultural traits.

Participants in both the questionnaires and interviews emphasised on maintaining their culture while integrating into the broader community. They also affirmed that the host community has to respect their traditions, customs and values.

According to Kymlicka, when minor communities maintain their cultural identities, they promote rather than discourage the integration process as this opens channels of communication between different civilisations (Kymlicka, 1995, p.177). On the other hand, others argue that maintaining cultural identity may be seen as a refusal to participate in the broader community or refusal to integrate. This stimulates political
opinion to consider immigration as a threat to social cohesion, despite the huge economic benefits Australia has obtained and still obtains from immigration (Hugo, 2011). Thus a sense of racial and ethnic discrimination and prejudice is created, against minor communities in general and Muslim communities in particular (Fredman, 2001).

7.8.1 Barriers to civic integration

In terms of this study, civic integration is represented through narrowing the cultural distance between immigrants and the host society as it enables refugees to increase their understanding, change perceptions and respect the host society’s culture, as well as its common shared values and way of life.

According to participants, civic integration, in terms of political and economic integration, is difficult to be achieved due to lack of English language skills, non-recognition of experience and academic accreditation and the ethnic isolation of the Iraqi community. In addition, although some participants are educated or professionals, the majority of participants are unemployed since they are low-skilled, have no skills or have very little schooling. These are the most important barriers that the civic integration policy was designed to address from the start (Kymlicka, 1995).

Kymlicka’s theory of civic integration emphasises the necessity of enabling immigrants’ integration by providing language training and knowledge of the laws of the host country, and by fighting patterns of discrimination and prejudice. Thereby, immigrants may transcend their cultural and religious differences and think about the common good of the host community. This study revealed that although Australia is a multicultural society, refugees felt that their cultural values and practices were devalued through a process of ‘cultural imperialism’ (Fozdar, 2009; Tilbury, 2007b; Tilbury, et al., 2005).

7.8.2 Religious barriers to cultural integration

The majority of the participants believed that religion played an essential role in their lives and therefore religious integration is difficult to achieve due to the marked
differences between Iraqi and Australian religious beliefs. Religion may dictate why they do things differently and the way they view the world around them. It takes time for individuals to realise that their way of doing some things may not necessarily be similar or acceptable in the new environment.

Religion according to the majority of participants encourages and urges its followers to interact with all human beings even those who are religiously and ethnically different. The findings also indicate that when refugees feel well plugged into a field of interaction in Australia, a sense of confidence to engage with other people may well ensue. If, on the contrary, exclusion from interaction is felt, this may work to lessen inclinations to engage further (Jayaweera, et al., 2007, p.22).

Research literature coincides with these findings and asserts that religion promotes the idea of interaction and cohesion among different groups of society (Al Sistani, 2002; Wardi, 2008). Islamic holy texts enjoin Muslims to have mutual interaction with all human beings (Fadhlullah, 2000) as they are equal to Muslims with respect to all rights and obligations related to social life. Religion can bring social order, harmony or compatibility among diverse cultural groups through encouraging mutual relations (Al Sistani, 2002).

Some participants said that mutual relations could be achieved through ‘intermarriage’ since Islam always takes the prospect of starting a family as a priority. However, the majority of participants opposed intermarriage and encouraged endogamy, or arranged marriage. They believe that intermarriage may contribute to the deletion of cultural identity and loss of all original characteristics and language.

Although Fadhlullah (1998) considers intermarriage to be a tool for changing the individual, especially children, into a third person who would be far away from both cultures – his or her own culture and that of the host community, Alba and Nee (2003), Kalmijn (1998) and Berman (2008) consider intermarriage to be a sign of integration. Yuval-Davis (1997), on the other hand, argues that arranged marriage or endogamy strengthens familial ties and structure.
Overall, the findings of the current study were similar to that of previous studies. Religious attributes and resources help new arrivals to settle and integrate (Foner and Alba, 2008; Hirschman, 2004), assisting them to protect and support their members and build bridges to others (Koleth, 2010). They also maintain transnational linkages that aid development back home and maintain family and religious connections (Baumann and Salentin, 2006; Foley and Hoge, 2007; Martikainen, 2005). Further, they cope with exclusion, pressures for assimilation, negative press and the emotional difficulties of migration, and build a future, connect the generations and transmit culture to the next one.

Nevertheless, the present investigation provides evidence to suggest that religion appears to be the overriding factor involved in integration. It is both a barrier to and an enabler of integration. In a positive way, it can promote citizenship, cohesion and integration among different groups of society. It also connects people to each other and to society. On the other hand, Constant, et al. (2006) argue that there is a negative correlation between immigrants’ religious activity and their integration and adaptation. Although religiosity does not imply isolation from the rest of society, it seems that non-religious individuals’ intentions to integrate are better than those of religious individuals (ibid). Consequently, religious activities can serve as a ‘balm for the soul’ (Connor, 2010a) for those who fail to integrate into the host society.

With regard to social and religious integration, some participants tend towards a level of coexistence, while others tend towards participation. Some participants coexisted with the majority through living, working or studying and talking and interacting with them (Hamdan, 2003). Others participated and were involved in different social and cultural practices of the host community, and through assisting the majority in terms of providing advice, knowledge or counselling (ibid). In that sense, they met part of the needs of the host community.

7.9 Barriers to Social Integration

It has been noted that social interaction enables refugees to retain powerful bonds to homelands and communities and maintain and enhance these feelings, and yet be
quite capable of developing a new life, livelihood, social ties and political interests in their places of settlement (Vertovec, 2007, p.5). This is based on the willingness of individuals to cooperate and work together at all levels of society to achieve collective goals (Jeannotte, et al., 2002, p.3).

According to the findings, there are many social and cultural differences between Iraqis and Australians in the family structure, values, attitudes, and means of expressing affection, grief, and embarrassment. For many Iraqis these differences may stand as obstacles to integration into their new environment.

Castles (2002) suggests that successful integration can only occur if the host society provides access to jobs and services, and acceptance of the new members of society in social interactions, so that they can become equal partners. Yet, this study revealed that providing suitable education and employment for new arrivals is important, but the process of integration does not only take place at the level of the individual refugee, as Castles supposed, whose integration can be measured in terms of his or her employment and education, and his or her social and cultural adaptation to the new society. Instead integration takes place at the level of reception they receive in the host country. Acceptance along is not enough, because refugees are fait accompli in the Australian society, regardless of the host society’s acceptance or rejection. Mathews (2008) believes that welcoming environments in the host community create a sense of security and belonging that encourages refugees to form new relationships and make new friends.

7.10 Conclusion

The findings of this study show that the participants found language problems to be one of the most important barriers to integration. There are many barriers in their paths to learning the English language, including the whole educational environment in Iraq and Australia, age, gender, teaching methods, teachers, and a preference for working rather than study, despite the availability of English classes. Subsequently, lack of English language skills, perceptions of discrimination and xenophobia lead to unemployment.
Other obstacles identified by the Iraqi refugees interviewed included religion. Although the majority of participants affirmed that religion enjoin Muslims to interact with all human beings, a few participants saw religion standing as an obstacle to integration.

With regard to social interaction, the findings demonstrate that active links and connections with different ethnic groups are required. Yet, the findings revealed that religious and cultural differences, the lack of English language, unemployment, prejudice, discrimination, suspicious opinion towards refugees and racism form challenges to social interaction. Furthermore, the social and cultural differences between Iraqis and Australians in family structure, values, and attitudes may represent an obstacle to Iraqi refugees’ integration into the broader community.

Thus, the lack of opportunities for social interaction caused a number of first and second generation Iraqi refugees who participated in this study to wander aimlessly for 20-odd years due to poor, or a lack of, productive relations with the wider Australian society.
CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSION

8.1 Introduction

This final chapter summarises the models and conclusions presented in each chapter as the basis for discussing the conclusions of the thesis. These conclusions have been obtained from an overview of the findings resulting from reviewing the literature, establishing a theoretical framework, designing the principles and procedures for the thesis investigation, and analysing the data that was collected through questionnaires and interviews.

In this study, the integration of Iraqi Muslim Shiite refugees in Sydney has been explored.

8.2 Summary of Aim, Methods and Findings

While this study answered the research question of what are the barriers to the integration for Iraqi Muslim Shiite refugees in Australian multicultural society, it has nonetheless raised further questions. These questions related to the historical and contemporary situation of Iraqi refugees in Australia, the importance of education to them, their negotiation of different values systems, English language related to their integration and the impact on integration of social interaction between the Iraqi community and the Australian multicultural community.

In this study, a variety of empirical materials have been used, including the findings of qualitative research studies, different social and historical materials, personal experience, questionnaires, and face to face interviews. Interviews provided a level of comfort between the interviewer and participants, because the interviewer was considered as an insider, so the face to face interviews technique provided more in-depth information and revealed insights about concerns of a personal nature. The questionnaire instruments, however, provided a heightened level of confidentiality and therefore possibly made participants more inclined to give detailed information about their experiences after they resettled. They also gave participants an
opportunity to provide their biographical information such as martial status, age, and social and educational background.

In the second phase of the thesis, the structural processes identified during the data analysis of participant questionnaires and interviews provided the logic for applying Hamdan’s levels of integration and theories of integration put forward by Kymlicka, Castle and Bauman.

One of the objectives in examining barriers to integration was to understand how Iraqi community and government might work together to celebrate diversity, improve community services, meet diverse community needs and address community problems. The study was also aimed at creating and sustaining a multi-ethnic, tolerant and democratic society.

The current study is an important step in bridging the gap, bringing the views and developing common ground for cooperation and coexistence between the Iraqi and wider Australian community. However, integration is not a simple process. The study has shown that Iraqi refugees’ desire to integrate is multi-layered. On the one hand, social integration is deeply desired but not always achievable. On the other hand, religious integration is, in the main, not desired by the participants in this study.

The achievement of integration is a task that falls upon the whole society, which can be met only by mutual action from refugees and the Australian people through a complex social process. Despite the semi-remarkable progress and success in the policy of integration, there are still many deficiencies. It is still necessary to make significant efforts towards improving life in common between the Iraqi and Australian people and to act decisively against hostility to refugees. Despite all the active efforts by the government, the host community needs to positively participate in the integration process of refugees. Therefore, it is essential for all citizens to effectively contribute to facilitate the settlement of new arrivals and prepare them to integrate into the broader community.
Despite cultural and religious differences, Islam encourages adaptation to the host country way of life. In that sense, religious dissimilarity and religious commitment in particular are not considered as obstacles to integration, instead there are some cultural concepts that are considered the main obstacles towards integration.

It appears clear from the data and literature that the second generation of the Iraqi community will probably be more likely to integrate than their parents and the first generation in general. The cultural, social, religious and financial circumstances of first generation Iraqis in Australia are considered a major reason for the slow and hesitant process of their integration, considering that most of them did not plan to immigrate to a country such as Australia.

On the whole – based on the collected, reported and analysed data and feedback – nearly all participants are eager to integrate into the Australian community, while some of them feel they are already socially integrated in the Australian community. The main factors that contribute to social integration of Iraqi refugees in Australia, according to them, are establishing good or strong social networks with Australians and mastering the English language, since lack of language skills can translate into lack of educational and employment opportunities. Thus, for those who do acquire language skills further educational and employment opportunities arise.

8.2.1 Significance of results

A significant finding of the research indicates that Iraqi refugees still need settlement support, assistance with English language learning, financial support and the creation of an atmosphere for better employment. The findings also stated that after more than ten years of settlement in Australia the majority of participants reported that they could not speak English well – older refugees had the poorest English language and literacy ability.

Employment rates were low for all participants. The main problem with finding work related to a lack of experience in the Australian labour market and English language skills.
Other significant findings in the study relate to the influence of age, ethnicity, gender and religion on integration outcomes. The greatest barriers to the integration of Iraqi refugee women are childcare obligations and family responsibilities, which influenced their opportunities to participate in English language classes, as well as issues related to their appearance and dress. Participants attributed the discrimination that some Iraqi refugees endure to negative media attention and to the more visible differences in dress and culture.

The findings also indicate that significant impact on the levels of integration of Iraqi refugees relates to issues such as ethnic and cultural background, English language, employment history, health status, the amount of time spent in refugee camps and Australians being ignorant of refugees’ culture and position in the community. Accordingly, adoption of a ‘two-way’ long-term integration strategy, rather than a ‘one-way’ strategy, is required.

### 8.3 Limitations of the Study

It is important to note that this first empirical study of Iraqi Muslim Shiite refugees provides limited results and it is not possible to use these results to address other immigrant populations. It is difficult to generalise the findings of this study, due to the nature of the discussion, the non-random selection of participants as well as the small number of participants. Thus, the findings are limited and do not reveal the whole range of issues faced by refugees or the issues faced by other ethnic groups who have arrived in Australia from Iraq (Chapter 2).

### 8.4 Recommendations for Future Research

There are some recommendations emerging from this study that are important. Iraqi refugees should be advised to benefit from the various Australian educational institutions since education is one of the prerequisites for gaining employment and becoming more integrated into the Australian community. Educational outcomes for Iraqi refugee students occur when they have strong official and social support from the state and from their community, who should influence and reward high educational outcomes and enforce students’ cultural obligations.
The Australian government needs to pave the way towards facilitating the integration process, as refugees’ interest in integration may depend on whether they see prospects for repatriation or resettlement in a third country. In order to achieve equality, cultural identity and social cohesion, it is essential that the Australian people have the opportunity to take part in community consultation as both individuals and members of ethnic groups.

Accordingly, the Australian government should also struggle for the creation of many more dialogic spaces in homes, schools, community centres, and workplaces. Providing these means would encourage communication among peoples, confirming the value of dialogue with others, openness to other peoples and coexistence among them.

Iraqi institutions could undertake many activities to facilitate the process of integration since the issue of Iraqi refugee integration into Australian multicultural society remains one of the main challenges facing them. One of these activities is to encourage integration among Iraqis themselves, since the Iraqi community is divided itself in terms of multiplicity of races, religions, institutions and organisations. Many of them belong to political parties and entities, some of which are illusionary and do not address the painful reality experienced by the community. Iraqi institutions should also create a harmonious climate by consolidating the idea of interaction with the host community, finding common purpose, to create a spirit of social unity and solidarity. They have to promote the relationship between their institutions and government institutions, whether on the federal or local scale, as this is of great importance in clarifying and strengthening the relationship between the two sides. Further, Iraqi institutions must play a key role in providing motivation for learning English language, by holding language courses and seminars and giving language instruction.

It is important to emphasise that the development of better intergroup understanding – and the complementary avoidance of intergroup conflict – does not happen automatically. Development of this understanding requires the allocation of resources by government to programs of community participation and education,
programs designed to smooth the path between ethnic communities, new arrivals and the host community. So, the Australian government should appoint Iraqi spokesmen to represent different Iraqi religions and races. These speakers should have a chance to voice their community’s problems and endurance in community debate which should be heard and taken seriously in high places.

In order to promote Iraqi community integration into the broader community, the government needs to look for the reasons which cause immigrants, especially refugees, to refrain from integration, and find better solutions to this significant phenomenon. Perhaps the most important way to do so is through ensuring suitable social, cultural, economic, and political circumstances for refugees. The government needs to hold strong links with refugees, and provide them language courses and job opportunities, in order to benefit from their expertise in various fields, especially for those with university qualifications, as this group faces problems of unemployment, underemployment, and employment insecurity despite their high-level qualifications and/or re-qualification in the host country.

As a result, Australia should modify some rules to enhance Iraqi refugees’ participation in the labour market, since employment plays a key factor in the integration process. The government must achieve equivalence of social outcomes despite social origins, especially in relation to competition for entry into the labour market and higher education, to create equality of opportunity. Moreover, in order to support learning of the English language or pursuit of study, employers should be given financial incentives to encourage employees to take leave to attend full-time or part-time courses while in employment. Such incentives would create a cooperative climate between refugees and employers, leading refugees to excel in their work, as study would qualify them to work in their current field of specialisation.

To facilitate integration of the second, and even the first, Iraqi generations, refugees must be considered full members of Australian society. To remove social and economic inequalities, conceptions of citizenship which identify cultural diversity need not be isolated from frameworks. Iraqi refugees’ social and economic participation depends, to some extent, on appropriate processes in public institutions.
and on impartial access to services. So, the institutional framework of the host society needs to be a starting point for the social, cultural and economic integration of refugee groups. In this regard, integration policy as represented in multicultural policy, which provides a framework for the cultural and religious rights that highlight access to refugees’ social rights, has paid insufficient attention to the significantly disadvantaged position of refugees in host societies. In this context, the study calls for a mechanism for comprehending and adopting flexible religious and cultural understanding regarding the issues that hamper the achievement of peaceful integration with the other. It is the responsibility of educators, scholars, heads of the community and scientists.

With regard to future research, this study has revealed that religious, social, cultural, educational, economic, and linguistic obstacles stand in the path of Iraqi refugee integration in Australia. This present research was designed and produced outcomes with regard to a small group of Iraqi Muslim Shiite refugees. Therefore, the findings of this research can be either supported or challenged with new studies where a larger sample would be useful, as would more analytic tests and socio-cultural evaluation, or where each focus group contained more participants. Further study would most likely give a better understanding of the obstacles facing refugees in their endeavour to integrate into the host society, by contributing to existing integration theories and further framing the particular issues faced by refugees.

Moreover, instead of self-selection, in a situation where participants come from the same country of origin and have the same religion, a different sampling strategy could be used to eliminate self-selection bias. Including other Iraqi refugees in a sample would help to identify whether similarities between participants in the current sample were responsible for the findings regarding the obstacles to integration faced in Australia.

New insights can also be gained from studying the integration process of refugees over time, or those that originate from other countries, or by comparing one ethnicity against another to find what commonalties refugees from different ethnic groups experience. Variability of refugees’ race and religion can also affect the integration
process. Additional research of comparisons between various refugee settlement sites in Australia can provide more extensive contributions about integration over time. It is possible that Iraqi refugees share many of the concerns of other different ethnic refugees. Further research should also be done to assess what the exact differences are between the experiences and perceptions of different refugees.

Finally, Iraqi refugees suffer enormous physical and emotional traumas from war, oppression, and living in refugee camps, and may have missed years of schooling, all of which can make it difficult to fully integrate in Australia. However, this might not be the case for other refugees: some refugees have migrated from their country to other countries having the support of their parents who had the means for this support before coming to Australia. It is therefore also recommended that further research be conducted to include refugees who have lived in refugee camps and those who may have suffered the horrors of war, mistreatment and oppression, to determine whether results would be the same for refugees coming from differing situations.
REFERENCES


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# APPENDICES

## Appendix 1: A comparison between the Iraqi and the Australian education systems

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Iraq</th>
<th>Australia</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education System</strong></td>
<td>The administration and management is highly centralized under two ministries: the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, a six-year primary level, the intermediate-secondary is also of six years, Bachelor degree lasts for four years, but five years are required for veterinary medicine, pharmacy and dentistry, and six years are required for medicine. Master’s degrees require two to three years, and doctorate degrees require three to eight years, the academic year (thirty weeks) begins on the first of October and ends in the first of June. Students sit for two examinations per year, proceeded by oral examinations for English and Arabic languages only, mid-year exams start in mid January, and final exams at the end of May. Students who fail in two subjects have a chance to resit exams in September. Preparatory stage male students onward, who fail for two successive years, join the compulsory military service. National Examinations are held for students in grade six, nine and twelve. There are two holidays, mid-year (spring) holiday which lasts for two weeks only and final year (summer) holiday which lasts for three months. Students attend school from Saturday to Thursday each week. School hours are generally from 8.00 am to 1.00 pm.</td>
<td>It is controlled and provided or funded directly by state and territory education authorities, universities are constituted by government legislation. They enjoy a high measure of autonomy in terms of course design, research programs, credentialing, student selection, and internal management. School starts with a kindergarten or preparatory year followed by twelve years of primary and secondary school, in the final year, year 12, the student can study for a government-endorsed certificate. The academic year is divided into four terms and runs from late January/early February until December, there is a short holiday between terms and a long summer holiday in December and January. Students attend school from Monday to Friday each week. School hours are generally from 9.00 am to 3.30 pm.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Methods of Teaching</strong></td>
<td>Teaching methods characterized mainly by teacher-centred methods, students are not given much opportunity to interact with each other or with the teachers in the classroom. Classrooms are so small with fixed double-seat desks which make it difficult to organize</td>
<td>The students learn in many different ways, the classroom teaching is characterized by interaction and excitement. Learning atmosphere is so positive and supportive that it attracts students to take part in</td>
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<tr>
<td>Iraq</td>
<td>Australia</td>
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<td>group work teams, so teachers are unable to carry this commitment into practice because of the nature of the workplace situation, crowded classes, and lack of resources. Teachers are not familiar with teaching methodologies, schedules are so tight and inflexible to creative and innovative methods of teaching, and teaching aids and materials are rare.</td>
<td>discussions and ask questions independently and in a group. A lot of teachers are unfamiliar with the historical and political circumstances of ethnic and cultural differences of refugee students.</td>
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**Teaching and Learning Setting**

The teaching methods, the curricula, the teachers and even the students are a useful means of propaganda in the hands of the government. The 1990-1991 Second Gulf War and the imposition of sanctions had a serious negative impact on the Iraqi educational institutions, such as lack of resources, politicization of the educational system, and corruption, a rapid deterioration of educational facilities, a critical shortage of teaching and learning materials, and the loss of qualified teachers (brain drain) due to poor remuneration, poorer families did not send their children to school or that children dropped out of school at an early stage to work and earn their livings. That situation made the educational planning and implementation process much more complicated, the shortage of qualified staff, lack of necessary funds and equipments, and political, economical and intellectual isolation of the country compounded the deterioration of the education system. Due to traditional and cultural reasons, a great number of schools originate on the basis of girls-only schools or boys-only schools, the teaching and academic staffs are only masculine or feminine according to the nature of the school. Corporal punishment or even canning was the favourable penalty for disorderly or discourteous conduct of students. Students’ teachers’ relation is governed by pragmatic concerns for efficiency, narrowly conceived, rather than by concerns to help students learn. It helps in the development of society and the cultivation and improvement of the learning outcomes; it is originated on the co-educated basis. The veiled female students are exposed to various problems concerning the hijab and participating in sports and swimming lessons.
Curriculum

Textbooks are an essential component and the main teaching method which is characterized by memorization without understanding and relies heavily on them; it is in a pre-modern fashion and politicized. It reflects the policies and the views of a despotic and dictatorial government and it is used and exploited to support the objectives and goals of the ruling regime. The absence of libraries makes the reading, writing and researching processes so difficult. The examination system does not encourage initiatives and innovation. The Shiites, Christians, Jewish and other ethnic groups and minorities’ views and beliefs were totally excluded; it concentrates on the Islamic Sunni sect teachings and connotations.

Its framework is to ensure high academic standards across the country. All schools provide subjects in the eight key learning areas: English, Mathematics, Studies of the Society and the Environment, Science, Arts, Languages Other Than English, Technology, and Personal Development, Health and Physical Education. It follows standards that all Australian students should be meeting, regardless of their circumstances, the type of school they attend or the location of their school. It also provides teachers and parents with a clear understanding of what needs to be covered in each subject at each year level, and teachers have the freedom to plan for their classes around the curriculum basics. It includes the necessary understanding, knowledge and skills that each subject matter needs for the sake of students’ progress and development. It also enables teachers to meet the expectations of each student to be set according to his/her levels of learning as well as his/her cultural and language backgrounds and socio-economic levels. It takes into account the requirements of second language learners in terms of additional time and support and knowledgeable teachers who clearly address their language needs and developing language proficiency.

Appendix 2: Questionnaire

1. Date and place of birth:

2. Sex: male female

3. Please circle the highest year of school completed:

   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23+

   (Primary) (High school) (College/university) (Graduate school)

5. Are you currently (check only one): Married Single Separated Divorced Widowed

6. Did you live in a refugee camp/s before coming here? If yes, which one/s?

7. Did you live in a country other than Iraq before coming here? If yes, which one/s?

8. How long have you been in Australia?

9. What is the motive behind coming to Australia?

10. How old were you when you left school?

11. Why did you leave school? For each one please tell me whether it is a reason for leaving school?

   A. You have a job? Yes/No
   B. You want to get a job. Yes/No
   C. You’re not doing very well at school. Yes/No
   D. You want to do study or training that isn’t available at school? Yes/No
   E. You don’t like school. Yes/No
   F. Financially, it is hard to stay at school. Yes/No
   G. Your teachers think you should leave? Yes/No
   H. Your teachers’ behaviour and treatment forced you to leave. Yes/No
   I. You want to earn your own money. Yes/No
   J. Your parents want you to leave. Yes/No
   K. The school doesn't offer the subjects or courses you want to do. Yes/No
L. The methods of teaching have influenced your intention to study. Yes/No

M. Having Year 12 won’t help you get a job. Yes/No

N. The financial situation and the social rank of educated people in Iraq have influenced your choice to study. Yes/No

O. Your social background stands in the face of your study. Yes/No

P. Your religion stands in the face of your study due to the co-educational environment in your school. Yes/No

Q. Your psychological situation stands in the face of your study. Yes/No

R. Your parents level of education stands in the face of your study. Yes/No

S. Other reason (specify……)

12. What year did you finish school? (e.g. 1975)

13. Where (which countries) did you go to school?


15. Did you miss any schooling because of health problems or for any other reason? Explain.

16. Have you done any courses since you left school? Please list.

17. What kind of course (if any) would you like to do in the future?

18. When did you stop from study?

19. Do you think that learning the host community language helps in integration?

20. Thinking now about your ability to speak English, how well are you speaking English – would you say you are speaking English?

   A. very well
   B. better than average
   C. about average
   D. not very well
   E. very poorly, or
   F. not at all
21. If you cannot speak English well, so how can you deal with others and the different government and non-government offices?

22. What do you think stands as an obstacle towards learning English language?
   A. your social rank
   B. your age
   C. the methods of teaching in Iraq
   D. the nature of Iraqi English curriculum
   E. the English language teacher in Iraq
   F. the nature of ACL and TAFE English language curriculum and methods of teaching
   G. the citizenship of English language teacher in the ACL and TAFE
   H. your husband / wife
   I. you think that English language is difficult to learn

23. Do you follow the Australian television or radio? Why?
   A. Yes, in order to deepen the relationship between the refugee and the custodial community.
   B. For the purpose of learning language.
   C. For the purpose of identifying the habits and traditions of the Australian community.
   D. Sometimes.
   E. No.

24. Do you follow Arabic television or radio? Why?
   A. For the purpose of promoting and strengthening the correlation with the mother country.
   B. For the purpose of following the news of the mother country.
   C. It is the most important way to spend leisure time.

25. Do your children use English through your interaction with each other or with others? Why?

26. (For the tertiary or university graduated persons) why did not you pursue your study here?
27. Do you consider English language as a barrier in the path of your study? Why?

28. What do you think your parents wanted or want you to do after you finish school?
   A. Go to university
   B. Do training or apprenticeship
   C. Go to a TAFE college
   D. Do some other study or training
   E. Look for work/get a job
   F. Other (specify…….)
   G. Don’t Know

29. For the parents, do you prefer or encourage your kid pursue his/her study? Why?

30. The next few statements are about your teachers.

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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. How would you rate most of your teachers on knowing their subject matter well?</td>
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<tr>
<td>B. On being able to explain things clearly?</td>
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<tr>
<td>C. On being well prepared and organized?</td>
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<tr>
<td>D. On being able to communicate with students?</td>
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<tr>
<td>E. On being able to maintain student interest?</td>
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<tr>
<td>F. And on managing student discipline well?</td>
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</table>

For each, the response set is

31. Do you think that the work helps in integration into the Australian community?

32. Regarding employees and workers with the Australians, do you have working relationship or fellowship with Australians?
Yes, an excellent relation  Yes, normal relation
No, weak relation  No, a bad relation

33. Do you currently work in your own business or on a farm or work for wages or salary with an employer, or work in some other way?

34. What nationality of employer do you prefer to work with? Why?

35. If you are offered a membership of an Australian party, will you join it or not? If no, what is the reason?

36. Are you a member of an Iraqi or Australian cultural association? Do you intend to join in the future? If no, why?

37. Do you attend cultural activities held by the Australian authorities?
1. Yes  2. Sometimes  3. Not at all

38. Do you have full knowledge of Australian laws and customs?
1. Not much  2. Don’t know

39. Do you feel of belonging to Australia?
1. Yes  2. No  3. Don’t know

40. Do you think that there is a positive relationship between length of residence in Australia and a sense of belonging to it?
1. Yes  2. No  3. Don’t know

41. Do you have a great and clear desire to integrate into the Australian community?
A. Yes, why?
B. Yes, but on conditions
C. No, why?

42. Did your outlook of life in general change as a result of this immigration?
A. in terms of respect woman
B. in terms of respect the freedom of others
C. in terms of punctuality
D. in terms of food timing or the disappearance of having dinner simulating of the Australians
E. in terms of the positive view of religion

F. in terms of the appearance change, particularly in clothing

43. Do you fear for your children moral character in Australia?

44. Do you encourage the marriage of Iraqis to Australians? Why? And do you think it is necessary that Iraqis should marry to Iraqis?

45. Do you have relationship or friendship and exchange of visits with Australians? And do you consider it as a positive or negative matter?

   A. Yes, on an ongoing basis
   B. Yes, intermittently
   C. Sometimes
   D. No

46. If the answer is no, do you consider the religious factor as an obstacle or do you think that there are other reasons? Why?

47. Do you exchange gifts with the Australians in events and religious occasions?

   A. Yes, why?
   B. Sometimes
   C. No, why?

48. Do you feel of equality before the law in Australia?

   1. Yes  2. Sometimes  3. No

49. What are the most important factors of integration with the Australian community?

   A. Mastering the language of the country
   B. Knowing the laws and customs of the country
   C. Working with the Australian community members
   D. Doing relations with the people of the country
   E. Following the news of the country
   F. Constant contact with them, and get the citizenship of the country
   G. Marry an Australian male or Australian female
50. Do you go to the places of worship? Why?
   A. Yes, always
   B. Yes, sometimes
   C. Yes, in times of religious festivals only
   D. No

51. Do you have a serious inclination to return to Iraq at the moment or you are thinking to return to Iraq, but not at this time? Why?

52. Do you believe that the decision of coming to Australia was healthy?
   A. Yes, why?
   B. No, why?

53. Do you have a positive inclination and a sense of satisfaction and contentment towards the Australians?

54. Are you familiar at all with programs of integration held by the Australian institutions, or do you have any idea about them? If yes, do you consider them successful or unsuccessful?
ما هي العراق؟ أمام إدماج الجالية السكانية الإسلامية في سيدني، أستراليا؟
1. محل وتاريخ الولادة.
2. الجنس.
3. ما هو تحصيلك الدراسي؟ أ. إبتدائية ب. ثانوية ج. معهد أو جامعة. دراستك العليا.
4. هل أنت حالياً أ. متزوج ب. أعزب. ت. أرمل.
5. هل أنت من مكان المدن أو القرى؟
6. هل عشت في مکرم لا يناسب قبل مجيئك هنا؟ إذا كانت الإجابة نعم ما اسم المکرم/ المخلفات التي عشت فيها؟
7. هل عشت في بلد غير العراق قبل مجيئك إلى هنا؟ نعم لا
8. تاريخ وصولك إلى أستراليا؟
9. ما هو الدافع وراء مجيئك إلى أستراليا؟
10. كم كان عمرك عندما تركت الدراسة؟
11. ما هو السبب الرئيسي وراء تركك المدرسة قبل السنة 12؟

نعم لا
أ. أديب عم أو تدريب تقوم به
ب. تود أن يكون لك عمل أو تدريب.
ت. مستوى دراسي ليس جيداً أو على ما يرام.
ث. تود أن تدرس أو تدرب وذلك غير متوفر في المدرسة
ج. لا أحب المدرسة؟
د. من الشامية المدنية، من المسعودية يمكن البقاء في المدرسة.
س. يعتقد معلمك بأنه عليك ترك المدرسة
خ. أجهز معلمك وعيش معلمك على ترك المدرسة.
ذ. تود كسب التقدم بنفسك.
ر. يود والدك ترك المدرسة.
ل. لا أتفرج المدرسة المواضيع أو المناهج التي تريدها.
س. طرق التدريس قد أثرت على إهتمامك بالدراسة.
ش. حصولك على شهادة الصف 12 لا يساعدك في الحصول على عمل.
ص. الوضع المادي والاجتماعي للطريقة السكنية في العراق قد أثر على اختيارك في إكمال الدراسة. نعم لا
ضر، خلفيتك الاجتماعية تتفَّق عاقلاً بوجه دراستك؟

نعم
لا

ط. يقف الدين بوجه دراستك ونذ ذلك بسبب الجو الدراسي المخلط في مدرستك.

نعم
لا

نظر حالتاك النفسية تتفَّق عاقلاً بوجه دراستك.

نعم
لا

ع. مستوى والدك العلمي يقف عاقلاً بوجه دراستك.

نعم
لا


غ. سبب آخر (حدد...)

2. متى أنهيت دراستك؟ (مثلاً 1975)

13. في أي بلد (بلدان) غير العراق التحقت بالمدرسة؟

14. ما هي المواد المدرسية التي تنجدها صعبة لمناناً؟

15. هل رضيت في سنة دراسية بسبب مشاكل صحية أو لأي أسباب أخرى؟ راجع أوضح.

16. هل التحقت في أي كورس دراسي معد تركك المدرسة؟ راجع أوضح.

17. ما نوع الدورات أو الكورسات التدريبية (إن كان هناك واحد) تود أن تدخلها في المستقبل؟

18. منذ تخرجنك، كم هي الفترة التي تنتظرت فيها من الدراسة؟

19. هل تعتقد أن تعليم اللغة يساعد على الاندماج الاجتماعي؟

20. بالتفكير في مدى قابلتك للتحدث باللغة الإنجليزية، ما نسبة إتقانك للغة الإنجليزية؟

أ. جيدة جداً
ب. أعلى من المعدل
c. حول المعدل
d. ليس بصورة جيدة
e. ضعيفة جداً
f. لا بالمرة

21. إذا لم تستطع التحدث بالإنجليزية، عندما كيف تتعامل مع الآخرين ومع مختلف الدوائر الحكومية وغير الحكومية؟

22. لم تتعلم اللغة الإنجليزية هنام؟

أ. يقف مؤلفك الاجتماعي عاقلاً أمام تعلمك الأنجلزية
ب. يقف عرفاً عاقلاً أمام تعلمك الأنجلزية

t. طرق التدريس المتاحة في العراق تأتي على رغبتك في تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية هنا

ث. طبيعة منهج اللغة الإنجليزية في العراق تأتي على رغبتك في تعلم اللغة هنا

ج. معلم مادة اللغة الإنجليزية في العراق دخل أو عدم تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية هنا
تأثرًا على رغبتك في تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية

خ: تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية في TAFE و ACL دور في عدم تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية

د. رغبة هكذا أو زوجك دور في إقناعك عن تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية

ذ. تعتقد بأن اللغة الإنجليزية مصيبة تعلم

23. هل تشاهد التلفاز الأسترالي أو تستمع للمذياع الأسترالي؟ وهل لمستوى إقناع اللغة دور في ذلك؟

أ. نعم من أجل تعميق العلاقة بين اللاجئ، المجتمع الحاضن، تعلم اللغة

ب. لغرض تعلم اللغة

ت. لغرض التعرف على عادات وتقاليدي المجتمع الأسترالي

ث. لا

ج. أحيانا

24. هل تشاهد التلفاز العربي أو تستمع للسمع العربي؟ وما هي الغاية من إستعماله؟

أ. لغرض تعزيز وقوية الارتباط بالوطن الأم

ب. لغرض متابعة أخبار الوطن الأم

ت. لأنه أعم وسهلة في قضاء وقت الفراغ

25. هل تستخدم اللغة الإنجليزية في البيت من خلال تفاهمك مع أبنائك أو ذويك؟ أحيانا كلا على الإطلاق كثيرا

26. (بالنسبة لخريجي الدراسة الإعدادية أو الجامعية) لم تكن دراستك هذا

27. هل تشعر اللغة الإنجليزية معك في طريق دراستك؟ نعم / كيف؟ لا / كيف؟

28. مكان والديك تريد أن تعمل بعد التخرج من المدرسة؟

أ. الاختيار بالجامعة

ب. التدريب على مهنة

ت. الاختيار بـ (TAFE)

ث. الاختيار دراسة أخرى أو تدريب آخر

ج. البحث عن عمل / الحصول على مهنة

ح. أمور أخرى (حدد...)

خ. لا أعرف

29. بالنسبة للرجال، هل تفضل أو تتشجع إنك / إنك على متابعة دراسته / ها؟ لماذا؟

30. الجمل القليلة القادمة هي حول معلميك...
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>جدبة</th>
<th>ضعيفة</th>
<th>ممتازة</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>آ - كيف تقوم معرفة معظم معلمك بالمواضيع جيداً</td>
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<tr>
<td>ب - كيف تقييمك في كونهم قادرين على توضيح وشرح الأمور بوضوح</td>
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<td>ج - حصول كونهم معظمهم ومنظمون جيداً</td>
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<td>ح - حصول كونهم قادرين على التحدث مع الطلاب</td>
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<td>ط - حصول كونهم قادرين على تحقيق اهتمام الطلاب</td>
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<tr>
<td>م - حصول القناعة على إدارة الصف وضبط الطلاب جيداً</td>
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1. هل تعتقد أن العمل يساعد في الاندماج مع المجتمع الأسترالي؟ نعم، أحياناً لأعتقد لأعظم

2. بالنسبة للموظفين والعمال أو الطلاب، هل ترتبط علاقة عمل أو زبدة مع الأستراليين؟

3. هل تمارس حالياً أي عمل مستقل أو عمل بالجرة أو مربي مع ريب عمل أو هل تعمل في مزرعة؟

4. ما راب العمل الذي تجد العمل معه؟ لماذا؟

5. هل تعرض على الاندماج لحزب أسترالي، هل كنت مستثنياً إذ كان لا ما السبب؟

6. هل تحضر الأنشطة الثقافية التي تقيمها الجهات الأسترالية؟ نعم لا أحبس أدناء أحياناً

7. هل أنت منتمي لجمعية عرقية أسترالية وهل تدير البناء مستقل؟ إن كان لا ما السبب؟

8. هل لديك إلمام بالمقرار والأعراف الأسترالية؟ قليلاً كلاً

9. هل تشعر بالإرتياح إلى أسترالي؟ نعم، كلاً لا أدير

10. هل تعطى هناك إجابة بين طول دية الإقامة في أستراليا والشعور بالإرتياح إليها؟ نعم كلاً الأدنى

11. هل لديك رغبة كبيرة وصورة في الاندماج مع المجتمع الأسترالي؟ نعم لمما؟ نعم ولكن بشروط كلاً لمما؟

12. هل تخبرت نظرتك إلى الحياة بصورة عامة نتيجة هجرتك هذه؟

13. من ناحية إحترام المرأة

14. من ناحية إحترام حرية الآخرين

15. من ناحية إحترام الوقت

16. من ناحية توقيتات الأول أو اتخاذ وجهة العشاء محاكاة لأستراليين

17. النظرية للذين بصورة إيجابية

279
ح. التغير المظهري في الملابس خاصة

42. هل ترى أن بعض الناس من الأتباع في أسترالي؟

43. هل تشجع الزواج من أستراليات أو أستراليين؟ لماذا؟ هل ترى من الضروري أن يتزوج العراقي من عراقية؟

44. هل تقيم علاقة صداقة وتبادل زيارات مع الأستراليين؟ وهل تعتبرها مسألة إيجابية أم سلبية؟

45. إذا كان العامل كلا، هل تعتبر العامل الدينية عائقا أمام ذلك أم هناك أسباب أخرى؟

46. هل تتبيل البدايات مع الأستراليين في المناسبات والأعياد الدينية؟

أ. نعم لمالا.

ب. لا.

ت. كلا.

47. هل تشعرن بالعلاقة في أسترالي؟ نعم أحيانا كلا

48. ما هو أهم عوامل الانتماء مع المجتمع الأسترالي؟

أ. إنقاذ لغة البلد.

ب. معرفة القوانين والأعراف.

ت. العمل مع أبناء المجتمع الأسترالي.

ث. مساعدة أبناء البلد.

ج. متابعة أخبار البلد.

ح. الاتصال المستمر بهم، والحصول على جنسية البلد.

خ. الزواج من أسترالي أو أسترالية.

49. هل تتردد على أماكن العبادة وما السبب؟

نعم على الدوام نعم أحيانا

50. هل لديك توجهات جدية في العودة إلى العراق في الوقت الحالي؟ هل تفكر بالعودة ولكن ليس في هذا الوقت؟ وما السبب؟

51. هل ترى أن قرار محبتك إلى أستراليا كان صحيحاً؟ نعم، لما لم تلعب، كلا، لماذا؟

52. هل لديك توجه إيجابي وشعور بالرضا والثقافة تجاه الأستراليين؟

53. هل إبطعت إطلاعا على برامج الانتماء الاجتماعي التي تقوم بها المؤسسات الأسترالية، أو تجعل أي فكرة عنها؟ إن كان الحجاب ينعم، هل تعتبرها ناجحة أم فاشلة ولم تتعلق بها؟
Appendix 3: Interview Question

What are the Obstacles to the Integration of Iraqi Muslim Shiites Refugees in Sydney, Australia?

1. The first and most important question relates the subject of religion, beliefs and more specifically, doctrine. It is well known that religion is considered one of the main variables that promote the idea of citizenship, cohesion and integration among groups of society. In light of this, a question can be asked on the subject of religion within the community, which is based on the main question: Is the religious differences create social divisions and weakened the integration among the different social groups, for example our integration into the Australian community? If the answer is: No, so what are its obstacles? If the answer is that it has created these intervals and borders, so what is the role of religious associations, and the scholars from all different groups?

2. Do you think that there is a problem or a crisis of confidence for the other which deters the process of integration? What is your perspective towards the Australians and do you prefer integrating with them without any conditions? Do you feel of equality in Australia?

3. Do you think that religion stands as an obstacle in the path of women education and working here? Do you encourage our girls pursue their study or marry? Why?

4. Do you think that learning the language of a country facilitates the process of integration? How? If the answer is yes, so why most of Iraqis prefer working to studying? And why they prefer working with Iraqis or Arabs?

5. Have the matter of belonging and loving the country where we live been discussed religiously, because there is a relationship (as I think) between loving the country and its citizens and learning its language (if you agreed), let’s take the probability of that matter influence on Iraqis who lived in Iran and their endurance there and not learning the Persian language and the probability of its influence on learning the language of Australia? Or do you think that the patriotic sense (as the language of this country is the same as the language of the British colonialism early last century) stands as an obstacle towards learning its language? Does the Fatwa (the religious legal opinion), issued last century for not joining the governmental schools as they were belong to the occupier, have an influence upon learning it here?

6. Have the matter of religions dialogue been discussed from scholars inside the community as many Iraqis find the agreement to an invitation of other Iraqi (Christian or Sabaean Mandaeans, or others) embarrassing? A question arises here, if you invited to have a lunch or an occasion from an Iraqi Christian or Sabaean Mandanean, will you agree or not? Why?
7. Perhaps another question arises here stems from the educational field and links to the educational system, educational environment, methods of teaching and curriculum, and what Iraqis have been taught in Iraq and here. Do the educational organizations offer or deal with concepts of citizenship and belonging and treat the concept of integration which stems from the reality that distinguishes and divides society into categories and specific religious and social groups in their programs? Do they touch reality in discussing these issues or there is timidity in offering the problem?

8. Does the curriculum contain directly or indirectly the model of integration between the Muslims and others in an educational work? Does the curriculum succeed in the treatment and control, and creating development frameworks in facing the problem?

9. Do you think that there is a benefit from joining learning language institutes of ACL or TAFE? Do the educational environment from the nationality of the teacher and his or her accent, the mixing climate, methods of teaching and the curriculum have an impact on the Iraqi intention to study here?

10. Do you think that there is a relationship between the length of dropping out of study and returning to it? And do these educational organizations take that matter into consideration related the methods of teaching and curriculum?

11. Do you think that the teaching methods used in Iraq, the (English) curriculum, educational environment and teacher have an influence on not learning here?

12. The other question addresses the media with its various formal and informal institutions. Do the TV programs present the concept of citizenship, belonging and loyalty and integrating with others in their programs? Do various kinds of media discuss the concept of national unity and integration and the obstacles in their path in an appropriate manner? Are there clear and specific programs to create progressive, preventive and remedial ways and means for the issue of integration and to devote the concept of belonging?

13. It is known that the rule of law and social justice are among the leading elements of integration in any society. Many communities have succeeded in achieving the principle of justice and law enforcement despite the presence of multiple sub-cultures within the community. The law and social equity are considered the main factors of social unity and integration. The question arises here: Will the knowledge of the law of the host country facilitate the process of integration? And to what extent did the Australian government succeed in achieving general justice and equality? How? Did the educational organizations and different media contribute in letting the new arrival know the laws and traditions of this community?

14. Perhaps another important aspect in this subject represented in the general national projects in the area of promoting the values of citizenship and integration. The question raises here is: Are there any national projects that address the issue of integration and belonging and if there are active programs in this area?
1. ينطلق التناول الأول في القضية الرئيسية الأولى والأكثر أهمية، وهي تلك المرتبطة بموضوع الدين والتحديات والمعتقدات والمذهب.

2. يشكل أكثر تحديدًا نص المعرفة أن الدين يعتبر من أبرز المتغيرات التي تثير من الطرفين، واندامج والتشابه بين فئات المجتمع. في ضوء ذلك يمكن طرح النزاع الخاص بموضوع الدين والمذهب داخل المجتمع، والذي ينطلق من تناول رئيسي ينتمي إلى أن الانتفاخ الدينى خلق الفواصل الاجتماعي وأضعف الامتداد بين النزاعات الاجتماعية المختلفة؟

3. هل تعقد أن هناك مشكلة أو أزمة ثقة بالأخير مما أعاق فكرة الإجماع معهم؟ ما هي تفاصيل تناولها في جامعات الأسترالية والوضعية؟

4. هل تعقد أن الدين يقف عائقًا أمام تعليم المرأة، ومثلها هناك أم؟ وهل تتضمن إمكانية تنظيمًا، أم الزواج في مبكرة؟ هل وماذا؟

5. هل تعلق حتى غيبال البنية في عملية الإجتماع فيه؟ كيف إذا كان البناج بشكل، هنالك لم تقل كثير من العراقيين للعمل على الدراسة، ولم تتحب بهذا العمل مع عراقي أو عربي؟

6. هل نقص معروض الإعداد وموحبة البلد التي تقدم فيها ديننا وجود علاقة (حسب ما أعتقد) بين عمليات الولادة، ونظام الProduces إن واقع على ذلك، وتاريخ إعداد تأثير هذا الأمر على أولئك الذين عائليًا في أن، وسعتهم هناك وسعتهم للعبة الفارسية؟ وإخمن تأثيره على قدوم لغة هذا البلد؟ هل تعتقد أن الحسب الوطني (كون لغة هذا البلد هي ذاتية لغة الحاكم البريطاني أو أغلب القرن الماضي) قاد خلقًا أمام تعليم له؟ وهل للقوى المزدوجة هذا البلد بعدد الأنحاء البيروتية الحكومية كونها متاحة للمحل تأثير على عدم تعلمها؟

7. هل تم طرح ومناقشة ما سيجري في السابق بالقرب بين الندوات في قد رجال الذين دخل المجتمع كن العديد من أفراد الجالية العراقية بعد حربه في نهاية دورة العراق الأخيرة، والمطالع الذي يطرح نفسه هنا هو، إذا دعم تلبية دورة من أحد إخواننا العراقيين السحوب أو الصابون على دورة عداء أو سرح أو إجتياز بنامسية، ما هو حتى دعوته أو لم؟ وماذا؟ هل تم طرح ومناقشة ما سيجري في السابق بالقرب بين الندوات في قد رجال الذين دخل المجتمع كن العديد من أفراد الجالية العراقية بعد حربه في نهاية دورة العراق الأخيرة، والمطالع الذي يطرح نفسه هنا هو، إذا دعم تلبية دورة من أحد إخواننا العراقيين السحوب أو الصابون على دورة عداء أو سرح أو إجتياز بنامسية، ما هو حتى دعوته أو لم؟

8. هل تم طرح ومناقشة ما سيجري في السابق بالقرب بين الندوات في قد رجال الذين دخل المجتمع كن العديد من أفراد الجالية العراقية بعد حربه في نهاية دورة العراق الأخيرة، والمطالع الذي يطرح نفسه هنا هو، إذا دعم تلبية دورة من أحد إخواننا العراقيين السحوب أو الصابون على دورة عداء أو سرح أو إجتياز بنامسية، ما هو حتى دعوته أو لم؟

9. هل تم طرح ومناقشة ما سيجري في السابق بالقرب بين الندوات في قد رجال الذين دخل المجتمع كن العديد من أفراد الجالية العراقية بعد حربه في نهاية دورة العراق الأخيرة، والمطالع الذي يطرح نفسه هنا هو، إذا دعم تلبية دورة من أحد إخواننا العراقيين السحوب أو الصابون على دورة عداء أو سرح أو إجتياز بنامسية، ما هو حتى دعوته أو لم؟

10. هل تم طرح ومناقشة ما سيجري في السابق بالقرب بين الندوات في قد رجال الذين دخل المجتمع كن العديد من أفراد الجالية العراقية بعد حربه في نهاية دورة العراق الأخيرة، والمطالع الذي يطرح نفسه هنا هو، إذا دعم تلبية دورة من أحد إخواننا العراقيين السحوب أو الصابون على دورة عداء أو سرح أو إجتياز بنامسية، ما هو حتى دعوته أو لم؟

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11. هل تعتقد بأن لطرق التدريس المتاحة في العراق والمجال التعليمي (اللغة الإنجليزية) والمعلم تأثير على عدم تعلمها هنا؟

12. والسؤال الآخر يطرح ويوه إلى الإعلام بمؤسسات الدولة الرسمية وغير الرسمية. فهل وجد أو حاول الإعلام وخاصة المرئي منه أن يعرض البرامج الإعلامية التي تتمي مفهوم المواطنة والولاء والانتماء والإدماج مع الآخر؟ وهل تداولهما وما يعكر من صفوفهم بطريقة مناسبة أم لا؟

13. من المعروف أن سيادة القانون وتحقيق العدالة الاجتماعية هي من أبرز مقومات الاندماج الاجتماعي في أي مجتمع من المجتمعات. وقد نجحت مجتمعات عديدة في تحقيق مبادئ العدالة وتطبيق القانون في ظل وجود ثقافات فرعية متعددة داخل المجتمع. فسيادة القانون وتحقيق العدالة الاجتماعية هي من أبرز مقومات الدولة الوطنية والإدماج الاجتماعي. والسجال المطروح هنا، إلى أي مدى نجحت الحكومة الأسترالية في تحقيق العدالة والمساواة العامة؟ هل تعتقد بأن تعلم قوانين البلد وعاداته وتقاليد أكثرهم في تسهيل عملية الاندماج؟ كيف؟ وهل ساهمت المؤسسات التعليمية ووسائل الإعلام المختلفة في تعريف القادمين الجدد بقوانين البلد وعادات وتقاليد أهلها؟

14. ولعل جانب آخر هام في هذا الموضوع الذي يطرح السؤال الأخير في هذه القضية وتمثل في المشاريع والبرامج الحكومية في مجال تعزيز قيم المواطنة والإدماج. والسؤال المطروح ما هي المشاريع والبرامج الحكومية التي تتعلق موضوع الدولة والإدماج وهل هناك برامج فعالة في هذا المجال؟
Appendix 4: Human Research Ethics Committee Participation Information Sheet

Participation Information Sheet

Project Title: What are the obstacles to the integration of Iraqi refugees in Australia?
Who is carrying out the study? Makkii Ilaj
What is the study about? The purpose of the study is to investigate the obstacles facing Iraqi refugees in their intention to integrate into the Australian community.
What does the study involve? The study involves doing a questionnaire and interviews with Iraqi refugees.
How much time will the study take? The study will take about one hour.
Will the study benefit me? The study may be of benefit to all Iraqi refugees in Australia but may not benefit you directly.
Will the study involve any discomfort for me? No.
How is this study being paid for? The study is not sponsored by any organization.
Will anyone else know the results? How will the results be disseminated? All aspects of the study, including results, will be confidential and only the researchers will have access to information on participants. Need to comment on dissemination (journal articles? Conference papers? Talk to local Mosque?)
Can I withdraw from the study? Participation is entirely voluntary: you are not obliged to be involved and - if you do participate - you can withdraw at any time without giving any reason and without any consequences.
Can I tell other people about the study? Yes, you can tell other people about the study by providing them with the chief investigator's contact details. They can contact the chief investigator to discuss their participation in the research project and obtain an information sheet.
What if I require further information? When you have read this information, Makki Ilaj will discuss it with you further and answer any questions you may have. If you would like to know more at any stage, please feel free to contact Carol Reid on Tel 9772 6524 or email c.reid@uws.edu.au.

What if I have a complaint?
If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Ethics Committee through the Office of Research Services on Tel 02-4736 0883 Fax 02-4736 0013 or email humanethics@uws.edu.au. Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.

If you agree to participate in this study, you may be asked to sign the Participant Consent Form.

This study has been approved by the University of Western Sydney Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Ethics Committee through the Research Ethics Officers (Ph: 02 4570 1136). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.
Appendix 5: Human Research Ethics Committee Participant Consent Form

Participant Consent Form

Project Title: What are the obstacles to the integration of Iraqi refugees in Australia?

I, ........................................, consent to participate in the research project titled: What are the obstacles to the integration of Iraqi refugees in Australia?

I acknowledge that:

I have read the participant information sheet [or where appropriate, ‘have had read to me’] and have been given the opportunity to discuss the information and my involvement in the project with the researcher/s.

The procedures required for the project and the time involved have been explained to me, and any questions I have about the project have been answered to my satisfaction.

I consent to the audio taping during the interview procedure.

I understand that my involvement is confidential and that the information gained during the study may be published but no information about me will be used in any way that reveals my identity.

I understand that I can withdraw from the study at any time, without affecting my relationship with the researcher/s now or in the future.

Signed:

Name:

Date:

Return Address:

This study has been approved by the University of Western Sydney Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Ethics Committee through the Research Ethics Officers (Ph: 02 4570 1136). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.