Lebanese Diaspora: hybrid, complex and contentious

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Diasporic communities have become the subject of intense research in recent years due to the impact of globalisation on the economic, political and cultural aspects of the nation-state (Robertson 1992 and 1995, Appendurai 1990 Featherstone1990, Gilroy 1993, Brah 1996, Anthias 1998, Braziel and Mannu 2003). Forces of globalisation have brought diasporic identities to the forefron of academic and political interests. In most writings on the subject, the concep of diaspora refers not only to a community whose members are dispersed ir various parts of the world, but also to a community united by a sense o (be)longing to a particular nation-state from which they have been displaced This sense of diaspora is mostly emphasised in the writing of Cohen (1997). Ir his book, Cohen provides a typology of diasporic communities based or objectivist criteria for defining the term 'diaspora'. According to him, the ke feature in defining this category is the presence of an orientation to a symboli homeland, or 'homing' in Brah's terminology (Brah 1996). This is indicated b the significant place the author gives in his analysis to 'return movement, an continuing affective bonds, including travel and investment in the homeland o ethnic group' (Anthias, p. 568). In the present book, we argue that althoug these 'diasporic' features are found among members of the Lebanese migrar communities, they can hardly be exhaustive of the complex reality of th Lebanese diaspora, or any diaspora for that matter.

More recently, the concept of diaspora has assumed the meaning of communal identity which can be sub-national and, at the same time, broa enough to cut across national boundaries. In the age of globalisation, it i becoming increasingly difficult to consider a particular nation-state as th exclusive reference point against which a diasporic identity is formed. This du (sub-national and trans-national) aspect of diasporic identity is characteristic c living in an increasingly globalised world. The case of the Lebanese diaspor

Chapter 8

From Beirut to Bankstown: The Lebanese Diaspora in Multicultural Australia

Jock Collins

1. Introduction

The history of Lebanese emigration is a central part of the history of the Lebanon. For centuries Lebanese people have spread around the world seeking a better life for them and their families. Most western countries of the world today have significant Lebanese communities while Lebanese immigrants are also found in South American and African continents. These Lebanese immigrants, and their descendants, form the Lebanese Diaspora, an international community that is at the same time a national community. This article looks at one chapter of the Lebanese Diaspora: Lebanese immigrant settlement in Australia. In fact, this means Lebanese settlement in Sydney, Australia's largest city of some 4 million people and home to the vast majority of Australia's Lebanese Diaspora. Bankstown, in Sydney's south-western suburbs, is one of Australia's most culturally-diverse suburbs and the centre of the Sydney Lebanese community, hence the title of this article – *From Beirut to Bankstown*.

The issue of the Lebanese Diaspora in Australia is very timely because two intersecting events, one national and the other international, have sensationalised and racialised public discourse about, and social interaction with, the Lebanese community in Australia. The local event is the 'Lebanese crime debate' that has dominated Sydney's political and media discourses since 1998 (Collins et al. 2000; Poynting et al. 2004). The international event is, of course, the destruction of the twin towers of the World Trade Center in New York on 11 September 2001. In the aftermath there was often an equation of 'Middle Eastern' with 'terrorist' in many media and political discourses, further problematising and stigmatising the Lebanese community, among others, in Sydney and Australia.

This article attempts to sketch the broad contours of Lebanese immigration

and settlement in Australia. The structure is as follows. First a brief review of the history of Lebanese immigration to Australia from the earliest days to the present sets the background for the contemporary scene. A spatial and demographic profile of the contemporary Lebanese community in Australia is then presented, with a particular emphasis on Sydney. This is followed with a socio-economic profile of the contemporary Lebanese community to establish the diversity that characterises the Lebanese Diaspora, a fact often ignored in racialised and homogenised stereotypes of Lebanese culture as both criminal and violent. The article then addresses the issues of the role of Lebanese entrepreneurs in the establishment of the Lebanese community, Lebanese unemployment in Australia, and the second generation. Contemporary dimensions of the racialisation of Lebanese immigrants are then discussed by reference to the recent controversial issue of Lebanese crime in Sydney. The article concludes that it is impossible to understand the diverse experiences of the contemporary Lebanese Diaspora in Australia without adopting the lens of racialisation, social class and globalisation.

2. A Short History of the Lebanese Diaspora in Australia

Australia has a long history of Lebanese settlement, dating from more than 120 years ago, with Sydney as the core of the Lebanese Diaspora in Australia. In the 1880s a group of Lebanese Christians from the Bekka Valley settled in the Sydney inner-city suburb of Redfern. They were the first of the 50,000 Lebanese-born immigrants who had settled in Sydney by 1996.

Lebanese immigration to Australia has some similarities and some differences with other non-English immigration streams. As Ian Burnley (2001: 198) argued recently, "of all the major immigrant groups in Sydney, the Lebanese have been most characterised by *village* chain migration" (emphasis in original). This was reinforced because of the lack of any assisted passage scheme for Lebanese immigrants -- such as were generously provided for British immigrants (Collins 1991: 23) -- and a more rigid sponsorship regime than that faced by Greek and Italian immigrants. This means that Lebanese migrations and settlement patterns in Sydney are closely linked to specific village migrations from Lebanon.

In the mid-1950s migrations from the Mt Lebanon and Sir regions of Lebanon to Sydney began. Most of these Lebanese immigrants settled in Great Buckingham Street, Redfern – later to be known as 'Little Lebanon' – as did later arrivals from Imar, Meziara, Kahf-el-Malloul and Zghartaghrine. In the

post-war decades, Sydney's Lebanese community began to disperse to Sydney's western suburbs. Lebanese immigrants from Zahle and Becharre moved to the western suburbs of Harris Park and Granville, as did Maronite settlers from the Bekka Valley. Later groups of Lebanese immigrants moved to cheaper housing in the south-western suburbs of Canterbury and Bankstown, while another village chain migration from Karm-el-mohr moved to the relatively more prosperous inner-western suburbs of Burwood and Croydon (Burnley 2001: 196-97).

Most Lebanese migration to Australia was of Christian Lebanese until the early 1970s, when the immigration of Muslims from Lebanon began. Most of these Muslim Lebanese came to Sydney and settled in the south-western suburbs of Campsie, Lakemba and Wiley Park – all within the boundaries of the Canterbury municipality – with others settling in the adjoining western suburbs of Bankstown and Milperra. Hence religion intersected with village chain migration in the history of the Lebanese Diaspora in Sydney to recreate close settlement patterns many thousands of kilometres from Lebanon.

Lebanese immigrants, like all others, have left their mark on Sydney. One of the most visible marks has been the cuisine, the most obvious manifestation of the long history of entrepreneurship in the Lebanese-Australian Diaspora. The other is the Lebanese contribution to the diverse religious landscape and skyline of Sydney. By 1895 the Melkite Catholic Lebanese community had built the first Lebanese church in Australia, St Michael's, in the inner-city suburb of Waterloo, a stone's throw from Redfern where the Maronite Catholic Lebanese community built St Maroun's two years later. In 1901, the first church of the Antiochian Orthodox community – St George's – was also built in Redfern (Collins and Castillo 1998).

By 1954 there were 3,861 Lebanese living in Australia, with most living in Sydney. In 1965 the Maronites refurbished their Redfern church and added a primary school. Other churches were built at Harris Park (Maronite) and Punchbowl (Antiochian). From the late 1970s Lebanese Sunni Muslims began to arrive in Sydney as immigrants, establishing a small Sunni Muslim community in the suburb of Lakemba in south-western Sydney. Today the landscape and soundtrack of daily life in Lakemba is dominated by the huge Imam Ali Mosque, which was built in 1976. Lebanese Shi'ite Muslims also arrived in Sydney from the end of the 1970s and established a thriving community in the southern suburb of Arncliff where they built the Fatima-Al Zahara Mosque, the largest mosque in Australia in 1985.

The 1996 census provided a snapshot of the Lebanese-Australian Diaspora at that time. Of all Lebanese immigrants in Australia in 1996, 72% lived in Sydney (Burnley 2001: 196). Of Australia's very many (nearly 200) immigrant groups, only two birthplace groups – those born in Iraq and Korea – had a higher proportion of the Diasporic Australian population (more than 60%) living in Sydney (Burnley 2001: 222). By 1996 some 116,000 first- and second-generation Lebanese Australians – and an unknown number of third- or later-generation Lebanese – lived in Sydney (EAC NSW 1998: 2-7). Further, Sydney accounted for three-quarters of Australia's Lebanese-born Christians and Muslims (Humphries 1998: 29; Collins and Castillo 1998: x), with about 60% of the Lebanese Australian population at the time Christian, and one-third Muslim (Young 1988: 675). Similarly, in 1996 two-thirds of the Lebanese-born living in Lakemba and Marrickville were Muslims, while 80% of the Lebanese-born living in Redfern and Harris Park – and 90% of the Lebanese-born living in Croydon – were Christians (mainly Maronite) (Burnley 2001: 198-99).

Clearly, the Lebanese community has added to Sydney's cultural diversity for more than 100 years. Moreover, Sydney's Lebanese community is itself very diverse, as are other non-English-speaking background (NESB) immigrant communities in Australia. This diversity is along lines of region, religion, politics and social class – a diversity that is mirrored in the settlement patterns of Lebanese immigrants in Sydney.

3. Lebanese Settlement in Sydney Today

The 2001 national census revealed that 148,692 first- and second-generation Lebanese lived in Australia, with the second generation numbering over 77,000, nearly 10% greater than the first-generation Lebanese-born population. As Table 1 shows, the Lebanese born are the fifth largest immigrant group in Sydney after those immigrants born in England, China, New Zealand and Vietnam. At the 2001 census, there were just less than 150,000 first and second generation Lebanese living in Australia, as Table 2 shows, with the first and second generation roughly equal in size. Nearly three quarters of all first and second generation Lebanese in Australia live in Sydney.

Table 1

Sydneys population by Birthplace, 2001 census*

Birthplace	Numbers
Australia	2,454,424
United Kingdom	183,991
China	82,029
New Zealand	81,963
Viet Nam	61,423
Lebanon	52,008
Italy	48,900
Hong Kong	36,039
India	34,503
Greece	33,688
Korea	26,928
Fiji	25,368
S Africa	25,190

Source: 2001 Census* Populations in excess of 20,000

Table 2

First- and second-generation Lebanese population, Australia, and Sydney 2001 by gender and religion (Numbers)

	1st Generation	2nd Generation	Total
Australia			
Males	37,111	39,031	76,142
Females	34,235	38,315	72,550
Total pop'n	71,346	77,3461	48,692
% of total pop'n	2.7	1.4	
Sydney			
Males	27,024	27,843	54,867
Females	24,984	27,554	52,538
Total pop'n	52,008	55,554	107,405

Source: 2001 Census of Population and Housing

Birthplace is an inaccurate measure of ethnicity. Many of the Lebanese Diaspora were born in countries other than Lebanon. We can also use language (Arabic language spoken at home) and ancestry to help identify the Lebanese

Diaspora in Australia. At the 2001 census, just under 4 million Australians spoke a language other than English at home. 194,603 spoke Chinese languages, 142,453 spoke Arabic, 83,915 spoke Greek at home and 79,612 spoke Italian. In Sydney, Chinese languages were the major language spoken at home other than English (spoken by 194.603 people or 4.9% of Sydney's population. This was followed by Arabic, which was the language spoken at home for 142,453 people or 3.6 per cent of Sydney's population. Moreover, Arabic is one of the fastest growing, and most widely used, languages other than English spoken in Australia, with 115,000 Arabic speakers in Sydney in 1991, an increase in 23 per cent for the period.[1]

The 2001 census was also the first to ask a question about ancestry. Results show that 115,000 people regard themselves as being of Lebanese ancestry, including 5,500 people whose both parents have been born in Australia and over 90,000 whose both parents were born overseas. This means that over 30,000 people who were first or second generation Lebanese Australians did not identify their ancestry as 'Lebanese' (Australian Bureau of Census, 2001 census, Table BC05).

One of the most striking features of Lebanese migration to Australia is the relatively high degree of residential concentration within certain western and south-western suburbs of Sydney. Media portrayals of Lebanese crime have shone the spotlight on suburbs such as Bankstown, Punchbowl and Lakemba as 'no-go' Lebanese enclaves (Collins et al. 2002). In fact, Sydney's immigrant settlement is so diverse – coming from some 180 different birthplaces – that our suburbs of immigrant settlement are populated by a great diverse range of ethnicities, with no ghettoes in the sense that we see in the USA or UK (Jupp et al. 1991). But as Table 3 shows, the highest concentration of Lebanese immigrants *is* in Bankstown -- where first- and second-generation Lebanese comprise 13.2% of the total population -- and Canterbury (11.2%). In all other Sydney local government areas (LGAs) first- and second-generation Lebanese comprise less than 10% of the total population. To repeat, areas of Lebanese concentration in Sydney are multicultural rather than monocultural.

[1] Note that the 2001 census includes all persons. For the 1991 and 1996 Censuses, previously published figures exclude persons under the age of 5 years.

Table 3

First- and second-generation Lebanese as a percentage of the total populatio in selected Sydney LGAs, 2001

LGA	1 and 2nd Generation Lebanese – percentage of total pop'n
Bankstown	13.2
Canterbury	11.2
Auburn	9.6
Holroyd	9.2
Rockdale	6.3
Burwood	5.3
Strathfield	4.9
Kogarah	2.8
Hurstville	2.6
SYDNEY Metropolitan Area	2.7

Source: 2001 Census of Population and Housing, customised table.

Another aspect underlying Lebanese-Australian settlement patterns Sydney are networks linked to Lebanese villages, or common denominators region and religion.

4. Entrepreneurship and Lebanese Settlement in Australia
Early Lebanese entrepreneurs in Australia

The history of the Lebanese Diaspora in Sydney is very closely linked Lebanese entrepreneurship in Australia. When Lebanese immigrants start coming to Sydney in the 1880s they generally started off as hawkers, peddli their wares in NSW country towns. According to McKay and Batrouney (198 670), "almost all early Lebanese migrants were engaged in commercial callin such as shop-keeping or hawking". Others moved into business as wholesale importers and small manufacturers. Lebanese textile stores, such as Nile Textil run by the Aboud family in Sydney, became common in the early 20th centu Lebanese wholesalers often helped newly arrived compatriots by providing the with goods on credit, and advising them on where to sell. Well-organised tra networks emerged in this way. In 1901, 80% of Lebanese in NSW we concentrated in commercial occupations.

By 1947 there were 1,886 Lebanese or Syrian immigrants in the whole Australia. Small business still appeared to be the main economic activity, w

60% of Lebanese either employers or self-employed (Collins 1991: 89-96). Their business ventures varied, although the Lebanese drapery business appeared everywhere. As McKay and Batrouney (1988: 667-68) put it:

> Those who had provided themselves with enough capital settled in businesses such as shopkeeping, warehousing or manufacturing. In Victoria, shopkeeping included grocery, hairdressing and drapery shops; in New South Wales and Queensland, drapery stores predominated.

1947 also saw the launch of the post-war immigration program, which was to transform Australia into one of the world's most cosmopolitan societies (Collins 1991; Collins and Castillo 1998).

In the post-war period, when Lebanese immigration increased significantly, many Lebanese-born men and women entered factory work, with the Lebanese-born significantly over-concentrated in the manual labourer, production process worker and trades activities from the mid-1960s (Collins 1978) to the 1980s (Collins 1991: 81-86). At the same time, the small business tradition continued. Most Lebanese arrived unassisted, with chain migration the major dynamic as for most southern Europeans. Many were refugees from war-torn Lebanon.

There is a religious dimension to the labour force profile of Sydney's Lebanese community. Most Muslim Lebanese appear to be employed as unskilled workers in Australia (Humphries 1988: 679), with their Christian counterparts more likely to be involved in small business.

For some (the minority) of Lebanese immigrants, small business was just a leg-up to very successful and wealthy big business activities. This happened most prominently in the Australian clothing industry, drawing on the traditions of their forebears "who came to Australia last century as hawkers selling haberdashery and clothing, and went on to become major forces in the textiles, clothing and footwear industry of the 1990s" (Ostrow 1987: 78). As John David – who made his fortune out of food – put it to Ruth Ostrow (1987: 79): "I travelled the country recently. There were Lebanese drapery stores in all the country towns. The early Lebanese traders settled in country towns because they felt comfortable there and there were opportunities."

There are other examples of Lebanese immigrants accumulating large and successful business enterprises in Australia. Joe Gazel, for example, arrived in Australia from the Lebanon in 1950 to export woollen goods to Lebanon and to become head of a very large clothing empire (Ostrow 1987: 104-7). Led by patriarch Frank Scarf who arrived in NSW in the 1890s and later sent for his four sons, the Scarf family controlled an empire of men's wear chains run by Frank's

grandchildren and relatives. The Aboud family are the descendants of Abraham Daher Aboud who came to Australia in the late 1800s to sell handkerchiefs out of a wheelbarrow. Out of these humble beginnings Nile Industries was established and later run by Aboud's children before they sold out in 1983-84. Joe David, the son of Lebanese immigrants, bought a little grocery shop in the inner-Sydney suburb of Wolloomooloo in 1927 for 100 pounds. He established David's Holdings, which became the largest independent grocery wholesaler in Australia (Ostrow 1987: 144-48). John David and his children, Peter and Sandra, had an estimated wealth of $330 million in 1994 (*Business Review Weekly* 1994: 75), before the family business was sold to South African interests.

Other well-known Lebanese family business success stories in Sydney's clothing, manufacturing and finance businesses, are the Gazel, Malouf and Moubarak families. While the Simons, Solomons, Bechara and Whebbe families have made their mark on the Australian development and construction industries (Humphries 1998: 50).

But it is in the small business sector of the Sydney economy where many more Lebanese immigrants have made their mark. These Lebanese entrepreneurs followed in the footsteps of their hawker antecedents of the turn of the century by moving into retailing, but given rising and concentrated Lebanese settlement in Sydney they did not have to take their wares on the road. They established restaurants, shops and a variety of businesses providing goods and services. Today, great Lebanese restaurants – *Emads & Salindas, Fatimas, Almustafa, Omar Khayyams, Nadas, Abduls, the Prophet, Girne Pide* and *Erciyes* – still give character to the Redfern end of the busy Cleveland Street, the original site of Lebanese settlement in Sydney 120 years ago (Collins and Castillo 1998: 17-20). But as Lebanese settlement has shifted out from Redfern to the south-western areas of Canterbury and Bankstown, suburbs like Lakemba and the western suburbs of Harris Park and Granville, the location of Lebanese businesses also shifted.

Contemporary Lebanese Entrepreneurs in Australia

Surveys of male and female Lebanese small business owners in the late 1980s (Collins et al. 1995) and in 1996 (Collins et al. 1997) highlight the contribution that they make to the Sydney economy. The following snapshot of Lebanese small businesses in Sydney emerges. They generate jobs, particularly for their family members. They generate new wealth: one in every two Lebanese-born female entrepreneurs started up their business from scratch, as

did two in three of the Lebanese-born male entrepreneurs. About three-quarters of the businesses owned by first-generation Lebanese men and women were profitable. Lebanese entrepreneurs were the most likely to put their profit back into the business. They also worked very hard: Lebanese female entrepreneurs worked a longer week than any other female entrepreneurs surveyed. Finally, Lebanese-born entrepreneurs had been in business the longest of any ethnic group, including the Australian control sample – no mean feat in the Sydney small business sector that is notorious for bankruptcy and in which, some argue (Neals 1989), 80% fail in the first five years.

The Sydney survey showed that while less than one in four non-immigrant businesses combined both the business and the home on the one site, in one half of businesses owned by Lebanese women they lived above, or out the back of, their business. This reflects the links between family and business responsibilities. As Michael Humphries (1998: 54) put it:

> In family businesses where workplace and residence are a contiguous space – a shop or a restaurant – the problem of childcare is simplified. Children are close by and can be employed around the shop doing chores after school and at weekends. In fact the contribution of women and children to the family business is not merely casual, but an essential ingredient for maximising the takings of many family businesses. In such households any additional members, including grandparents, become a part of the division of labour of the family as a productive household.

The family provides loyal, cheap labour (often unpaid). Lebanese and other ethnic entrepreneurs tend to rely greatly on family labour. The corollary of this is that growth in the number of Arabic businesses and the expansion of existing ones will generate, in the first instance, jobs for family and friends and then jobs for the broader Lebanese community.

One important aspect of the relationship between employment creation and ethnic small business lies in the dynamics of employment recruitment. Current recruitment networks indicate the profile of those who are most likely to be able to gain employment from small business sector growth. According to one national survey of ethnic entrepreneurs (Collins et al. 1997) nearly half of the small business owners born in the Lebanon recruit from their family or community, as do about one in three of Asian and Latin American entrepreneurs. European-born female entrepreneurs, however, are the least likely to use family networks to create workers. The implication from this is that on average one in every two small businesses are likely to directly recruit co-ethnics via family and community networks. Where newspapers are referred to, these will most often

be ethnic newspapers. In other words, existing sources of recruitment of employment by ethnic small business suggest strongly that ethnic businesses do and will employ co-ethnics if their employment base is expanded.

This shows how important it is that strategies to reduce Arab unemployment in Australia are linked to strategies to promote new business formation among Australian Lebanese and strategies to assist existing Lebanese businesses in Australia.

For those who do start a business, the family and the community are critical elements to their business survival and success strategies. Families provide the labour, the capital and the advice, while other Lebanese provide goods and services, customers and, sometimes, overseas trading networks. Gender relations are important in this, since most Lebanese businesses are family businesses. But it is also important to recognise that Lebanese women are starting to make a mark as entrepreneurs in their own right.

Humphries (1998: 54) sees family businesses as a continuum of the urban subsistence strategies of Muslim Lebanese refugees that link the reciprocities based on family and communal ties, collective income sources, patriarchal family structures and dependence on welfare. These Lebanese businesses are marginal, according to Humphries, and utilise unpaid labour in a business that often links work and home, so solving childcare and labour problems associated with long business hours seven days a week.

Other research supports the argument that family members put long hours of work into Lebanese businesses (Collins et al. 1995; Collins 2002). It cannot conclusively support the notion that Lebanese businesses are, by definition, marginal. In an earlier section, the few who made the rags to riches trip are considered. But are the rest all marginal? More research is required before firm conclusions can be made in this regard. Humphries does not explore the role of Muslim Lebanese entrepreneurs in sponsoring the chain migration of others or in playing a leading role of what Italian migrants call the 'Padrone'. That is, the role of cultural broker for advising and helping new immigrants find jobs and housing and of helping them to navigate the maze of government bureaucracy (Pascoe 1988; Collins 1992). This is another fertile area for new research. Religion is obviously important in understanding matters Arabic.

There are so many other aspects central to an understanding of Lebanese entrepreneurs in Australia that have not been investigated sufficiently to date. We know little about second-generation Lebanese entrepreneurs, and the extent to which they replicate or reject their parents' entrepreneurial paths. There has

been little investigation into the ways in which Lebanese international networks are used – and can be tapped – to increase export activity. Indeed, the history of entrepreneurs in the Lebanese Diaspora would also provide fertile ground for future research. Matters related to the family and entrepreneurship also require more detailed investigation.

Despite these gaps in our knowledge, it is clear that Lebanese entrepreneurs play an important role in the past, present and future communities of Lebanese Australians. They have been pioneers to later proletarian waves of immigrants; they create jobs, wealth and exports, and play a central role in Lebanese community life in Australia. Lebanese entrepreneurs are also central to strategies to reduce the unacceptably high rates of Lebanese unemployment in Australia.

5. Lebanese in the Labour Market

While Lebanese entrepreneurs in small and big businesses have made an important contribution to economic and social life in Sydney, it is important to stress that life in Sydney for those in the Lebanese community today is more likely to be that of the unemployed, the welfare recipient or the manual worker than it is to be the successful entrepreneur. This is once again a reminder of the class diversity within Sydney's Lebanese community.

Table 4 shows that the rate of entrepreneurship of first-generation Lebanese immigrant males in Sydney is nearly double that of the Sydney male average. This is true for those classified as employers and for those classified as 'own account workers' (or the self-employed, to use the old currency).

Table 4
Lebanese labour force profile, Sydney, 2001*

	Employer	Own Account Worker
1st Generation Males	13.8	17.5
1st Generation Females	7.9	9.3
2nd Generation Males	8.9	9.9
2nd Generation Females	3.2	2.9
Total Lebanese Males	7.8	10.6
Total Lebanese Females	10.6	5.6

* As a percentage of those in the labour force

Source: 2001 Census of Population and Housing, customised table.

Of course for the Lebanese, as for all ethnic groups, including the Ang Celtic majority, the vast majority enter the labour force as wage earners employees. Table 5 shows data on the occupational distribution of first- ; second-generation Lebanese in Sydney at the 2001 census for selec occupations. The figures show those in the selected occupations as a proport of the total Lebanese employed in Sydney. It shows that the first- and seco generation Lebanese males and females are under-represented by a 1 percentage points in the 'managers and administrators'. First-generat Lebanese males and females are significantly less represented in professic occupations, with a rate of about half the average. For second-generat Lebanese men and women, the rate of professional employment is about 5 higher than their parents. This suggests that local schooling and educatioi providing upward mobility for a significant number of second-generat Lebanese.

Table 5
First- and second-generation Lebanese, selected occupational groups, Sydney, 2001, males and females*

Occupation	M1	F1	M2	F2	Total Males	Total Female
Managers & Administrators	9.4	4.4	9.2	3.9	11.1	5.8
Professionals	8.1	14.2	12.4	17.1	19.1	23.7
Tradespersons	25.8	4.2	25.3	4.11	8.2	2.6
Labourers & related	11.3	10.2	8.4	2.0	7.8	5.2
Intermediate production & transport workers	16.9	2.4	9.5	1.0	11.5	2.4

*As a percentage of those in the labour force

Note: M1 = first-generation Lebanese males; F1 = first-generation Lebanese females; N second-generation Lebanese males; F2 = second-generation Lebanese females; Total refers to Sydney workforce.

Source: 2001 Census of Population and Housing

At the other end of the spectrum, first-generation Lebanese males females are significantly over-represented in the 'labourers and related' 'intermediate production and transport workers' occupations. Also of intere the fact that the same proportion – one quarter – of first- and second-genera

Lebanese males work as tradespersons. With a concentration in occupations such as tradesperson, labourer and intermediate production worker, Lebanese men and women are vulnerable to structural change and the impact of globalisation in a dramatically reducing Australian manufacturing industry (Collins 2000).

Lebanese unemployment

Some Lebanese become millionaires, others become entrepreneurs, and others are employed across a range of occupations as explained above. But there are also those Lebanese immigrants in Australia who do not find employment. Lebanese unemployment rates have been between three to five time that of the national average for decades now (Collins, Morrissey and Grogan 1995). Hence in May 1983 when the unemployment rate for the Australian-born was 10.2%, the rate of unemployment among Lebanese-born was 33.6%. A decade later (in May 1993) unemployment rates for Lebanese aged 15-34 years was 43% (Moss 1993: 258). As Table 6 shows, the unemployment rates for Lebanese-born males in 'November 1996 was 31.7% and for Lebanese-born females 50%. It is therefore not surprising that many of Australia's Lebanese community rely on unemployment benefits or other state payments for survival: 60% of Australia's Sunni Muslim immigrants rely on welfare and workers' compensation for income, as do 32% of Maronites (Humphries 1998: 54).

Table 6
Labour force characteristics of Lebanese-born men and women compared to all migrants in Australia*

Birthplace	Employed (full-time)	Employed (part-time)	Unemployed (Numbers)	Unemployed (Rate %)
Lebanon - Male	4,800	1,200	2,800	31.7
All migrants - Male	485,500	40,600	52,600	9.1
Lebanon -Female	1,000	1,900	2,900	50.0
All migrants - Female	239,900	126,000	42,900	10.5

* Migrants aged 18 years and over on arrival, arrived after 1970.

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics 1996: 14.

There is also a religious dimension to Lebanese unemployment in Australia in general and Sydney in particular. Ian Burnley (2001: 206) presents 1991 census data on unemployment of Australian-born English speakers and Middle-Eastern-born Arabic speakers by religion and gender for the Canterbury LG At that time, 9% of Australian-born English speakers were unemployed. contrast, Lebanese unemployment was about four times higher for Christi and five times higher for Muslims. Nearly half (47.1%) of Middle-Eastern-bc Arabic speakers who were of Muslim faith were unemployed, as were just o' one-third (34%) of Middle-Eastern-born Arabic speakers who were of Christ: faith.

Another insight into Lebanese unemployment in Sydney comes fr comparisons of 1991 and 1996 census data for Sydney LGAs. This d aggregates those who were born in the Middle East and speak Arabic, but si the largest Middle East community in Sydney is the Lebanese born, it is a gc proxy for Lebanese unemployment. This data thus loses some accuracy, compensates for this by distinguishing between Christian and Muslim Arat speaking unemployment rates. For the total Sydney area, as Table 7 shows, unemployment rate for English-speaking Australian born was 8.7% in 1991 a 7.0% in 1996. In comparison, the unemployment rate for Christian Arab speaking people in Sydney was 21.1% and 31.1% for Muslim Arabic-speak people.

Table 7
Unemployment rates, Canterbury LGA and the total Sydney area, 1991 and 1996

Language	Birthplace	1991 Canterbury	1991 Sydney	1996 Sydney	1996 Canterbu
English	Australia	9.0	8.7	7.0	7.2
Arabic – Christian	Middle East	34.0	30.4	21.1	29.2
Arabic – Islam	Middle East	47.1	45.1	31.1	37.1
Chinese	Vietnam	28.4	26.2	18.9	23.1
Chinese	China	14.3	14.6	10.8	11.1
Vietnamese	Vietnam	35.5	41.7	29.4	30.2
Khmer	All origins	40.9	40.2	32.9	32.7
Lao	All origins	34.7	28.3	23.4	27.1

Source: Burnley 2001: 291.

The relatively high rates of unemployment experienced by first-generation Lebanese immigrants in Australia, and the way that religion shapes that unemployment experience, is further illustrated in Table 8. This shows unemployment rates for Middle Eastern-born Christians and Muslims in Sydney in 1996 compared to the unemployment rates of Australian-born English-speaking persons in Sydney's south-western LGAs. In all areas for which data is presented, unemployment rates for Middle Eastern-born Muslims exceeds those of unemployment rates for Middle Eastern-born Christians. Typically, Middle Eastern-born Muslims have an unemployment rate *three to five times* that of Australian-born English-speaking persons living in the same area while Middle Eastern-born Christians generally have an unemployment rate *two to three times* that of Australian-born English-speaking persons living in the same area.

Table 8

Unemployment rates of Australian-born English-speaking persons and Middle Eastern-born Christians and Muslims, Sydney LGAs 1996

	Australian-born English speaking	Middle East-born Arabic-speaking Christians	Middle East-born Arabic-speaking Muslims
Fairfield	10.9	28.2	32.9
Bankstown	7.6	21.4	35.1
Liverpool	11.2	29.9	30.3
Canterbury	7.2	29.2	37.1
Marrickville	8.4	21.4	32.1
Other Sydney	6.5	15.1	27.1
Total Sydney	7.0	21.1	31.1

Source: Burnley 2001: 291

More recent unemployment data from the 2001 census, shown in Table 9, confirms the persistence of relatively high rates of unemployment among *both* the first and second generation of Lebanese males in Australia in general and Sydney in particular. The rate of unemployment for first-generation Lebanese males in Sydney in 2001 (14.9%) was nearly double that of the Sydney average for male unemployment (7.9%) while for first-generation Lebanese females the rate of unemployment (12.5%) was more than double that of the Sydney average (5.5%). For second-generation Lebanese males and females the unemployment rate is lower than their fathers' and mothers' respectively.

Table 9

Unemployment rates of first- and second-generation Lebanese males and females compared to total, Sydney and Australia, 2001

Unemployment Rates	Australia (%)	Sydney (%)
1st Generation Lebanese Males	14.9	14.3
1st Generation Lebanese Females	13.7	12.5
2nd Generation Lebanese Males	12.4	11.5
2nd Generation Lebanese Females	9.8	8.8
Total Male	7.9	6.6
Total Female	6.6	5.5

Source: 2001 Census of Population and Housing, customised table.

Clearly, persistent unemployment among the Lebanese community Sydney is a major problem for policymakers. The stark fact remains that the a of Lebanese unemployment remains the most intractable of all communities Australia other than Aboriginal peoples. There is some encouragement in second generation, but unemployment rates for the Lebanese second generat lie much higher than most others in Australian society.

6. A socio-economic profile of the Australian Lebanese community

One of the constants of Australian socio-economic life is that as the rich richer, the poor get poorer. This is clear from poverty research by Saund (1994: 270) who found that the number of income units in poverty in Austr; nearly doubled – from 550,200 to 992,900 – in the 1980s. Many NE immigrants continue to be over-represented among the poor in Australia. O the period 1981-82 to 1985-86, while poverty of those born in Austr; increased by 16%, it increased by 50% for those born overseas (Williams ; Batrouney 1998: 263-65). Studies of income distribution also suggest t recently arrived immigrants, particularly those of an NESB background, "more heavily concentrated in the lower reaches of the distribution than ot immigrants or the Australian-born" (Saunders and King 1994: 90).

Australia's Lebanese Diaspora appears to be disproportionately concentra among the poor and the low-income families in Australia, just as they are am(the Australian unemployed. For example, data for the Sydney region from 1996 census allows an analysis of income distribution by birthplace. This d shows that while 13.7% of Australian-born families – and 12.4% of immigr families born in English-speaking countries – had incomes less than $20,8

25.5% of Lebanese-born families earned less than $20,800. The only immigrant groups with a higher proportion of families in this lowest income category were those born in Iraq (26.1% of families earned less than $20,800), China (27.5%) and Cambodia (32.5%). At the top end of income earners in 1996 – that is, those families with incomes in excess of $104,000 – Lebanese families were under-represented. Only 3.9% of Lebanese-born families were in this top-income category, compared to 12.3% of the Australian-born, 17.8% of immigrant families born in English-speaking countries and 27.1% of those born in Japan (Burnley 2001: 289).

Another insight into the relatively disadvantaged position of Lebanese families in Sydney can be gleaned from 2001 census data on average income for first- and second-generation Lebanese Australians, as Table 10 shows. First-generation Lebanese males in Australia earn three-quarters of the average income while first-generation Lebanese females earn-two thirds of the average income for Australian women. For the second generation, this income differential between the Lebanese immigrant and total population is reduced: second-generation Lebanese females earn 90% of the average female income in Australia, while Lebanese males earn 80% of the average male income. Similar trends are evident in the data for average income of males and females in Sydney, though the Lebanese first generation in Sydney has an average income even lower than the national average income. Lebanese first-generation males earn on average only two-thirds of the average Sydney male income, while Lebanese first-generation females only earn 61% of the average Sydney income for females.

Table 10

Average income for first- and second-generation Lebanese males and females in Australia and Sydney compared to total average incomes, 2001

Average Income	Australia	Lebanese*	Sydney	Lebanese*
1st Gen Males	$440	74.2	$452	66.9
1st Gen Females	$271	69.3	$273	61.0
2nd Gen Males	$480	80.1	$490	72.4
2nd Gen Females	$351	89.9	$359	80.3
Total Males	$593	$676		
Total Females	$391	$447		

* Income as a percentage of average income

Source: 2001 Census of Population and Housing, customised tables.

Clearly, the Lebanese community in Australia is amongst the worst off in terms of the usual socio-economic characteristics of unemployment and income. However, this disadvantage for (too) many Lebanese immigrants occurs at the same time that a minority of Lebanese families have been able to achieve enormous wealth and accumulate fortunes as big business entrepreneurs, as we saw in the previous section on Lebanese entrepreneurs in Australia. In addition many Lebanese immigrants in small business have been able to achieve economic success in Australia, with most arguing that they are better off in entrepreneurship than they were as wage-labourers. The key point to be made here is that there is a diversity of outcomes from Australia's Lebanese Diaspora.

7. The racialisation of Lebanese immigrants in Australian society

Lebanese immigrants in Australia have, from the earliest days, been *racialised* minority. They have been as a people thought of, and treated, in stereotypically negative way by individuals and by the institutions of Australian life. Put another way, racism has shaped the lives of Australia's Lebanese community in diverse and changing ways, just as racial discrimination has been an important part of the lives of all immigrant minorities in Australia (Collin 1991; 1996). This racism has taken many forms. The first was the official racist White Australia policy which prevented non-whites from entering a immigrants for the first six decades of the 20th century. In the 1960s, Lebanese and other immigrants from the Middle East were declared 'honorary whites' i order to allow them to enter Australia in large numbers during that period.

The HREOC Report (1991) noted other incidents of racism particularl directed towards Muslim Lebanese. In 1991 there were arson attacks on fiv Jewish kindergartens and synagogues, while the Muslim Women's Associatio reported increased racist harassment during the Middle East conflict followin Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in August 1990. This latter finding was confirmed b a report by the *Committee on Discrimination Against Arab Australians* in 199: which documented racist incidents against Arabs and Muslims for the perio November 1990 to July 1991. Many families reported harassment at their home and in the streets, shopping centres, schools and communities. Many wome wearing the *hijab* reported harassment from passing cars and in parking lot Physical violence was also widespread, with reports of Arabs being spat at (incurring physical injury, including women who had their *hijab* pulled or tor (Hage 1998).

In one incident, a car was deliberately ran into and damaged, while in anoth

an Arab man died of a heart attack after being racially harassed by a group of teenagers. Widespread property damage was also reported. A Muslim school and restaurant in Perth, Western Australia were subject to arson attacks after threatening phone calls and in other homes and restaurants broken windows and graffiti were common. Many mosques and offices of Arab and Muslim organisations were attacked repeatedly while staff received threatening phone calls and mail threats. One Islamic Centre in an outer-Sydney suburb was fire-bombed in January 1991.

The racialisation of Lebanese crime in Sydney

Another dimension of the radicalisation of Lebanese immigrants in Australia relates to the moral panic about Lebanese 'youth gangs' and a law-and-order crackdown that has occupied Sydney newspapers, television, radio and politics since late 1998 (Collins et al. 2000; Anti-Discrimination Board of New South Wales 2003). A series of gang rapes that occurred in Sydney in 2000 further intensified the panic about Lebanese youth. The media portrayed these as 'race rapes' and a number of young Lebanese-Australian youth were sentenced severely for their role in these events (Poynting et al. 2004). For many Sydney-siders the media discourse on Lebanese crime has meant that fear of crime in Sydney has escalated at the very time that crime statistics in most areas are falling (Collins et al. 2002). Tim Priest (2004: 9), a former senior NSW police officer, typifies the sensationalist panic approach: "I believe that the rise of Middle Eastern organised crime in Sydney will have an impact on society unlike anything we have seen."

There is certainly evidence that Lebanese-born have higher rates of imprisonment than many other Australians. A study of the 1991 National Prison census suggested that overall there was little difference between the imprisonment rate of first-generation immigrants and the average rate for the total population. However, once again when the foreign-born data is broken into different birthplace groups, the Turkish-born had the highest rate of imprisonment (309.2 per 100,000 adult Australian residents), followed by the Lebanese-born (275.1), the Vietnam-born (156.6) and the New Zealand-born (168.4). These rates are higher than the rate of imprisonment for the Australia-born, which was 131.6 per 100,000 adults in 1991 (Mukherjee 1999: 8). But it would not be correct to draw the conclusion from this data that immigrants *per se*, or NESB immigrants in particular, are more criminal than the Australian-born.

Extra caution is required in using these statistics to make any firm conclusions about the relationship between ethnicity and crime in Australia. To make a claim about the criminality of different ethnic groups or 'cultures' in Australia from data on rates of incarceration of different immigrant groups is valid *only if* it can be assumed that the foreign-born in general are equally disposed to crime, have an equal probability of apprehension and are treated equally by the judicial system (and the police) (Thomas 1993: 7). It also implies that birthplace is an accurate proxy for ethnicity, which it is not.

The Lebanese community in south-western Sydney – and especially its young men – was tainted by the media brush of *ethnic crime*. Sydney's diverse Lebanese community, numbering some 111,000 people, was criminalized in the process. The problems of youth crime in Sydney were racialised, with reports linking the events to a 'criminal Lebanese culture'. Sometimes the brush was broader, with Sydney's even more diverse immigrant communities from the Middle East drawn into the events by repeated reportage of 'criminals of Middle-Eastern appearance'. Not only was the whole Lebanese community smeared by media and politicians with blame for the crimes, they – especially ethnic community leaders – were also charged with the responsibility for their solution, and condemned for the maintenance of a purported 'wall of silence' protecting the perpetrators.

It is clear that in cosmopolitan societies like Australia, and its major cities like Sydney, crime will be cosmopolitan and immigrants will be involved in crime. The critical issue is whether some cultures are themselves predisposed to criminal activity, a view that is presupposed by much of the media moral panic about ethnic crime in Sydney. As a corollary, the public discourse on immigrant crime in Sydney has equated *immigrant* or *ethnic* with *criminal*. Moreover, in the public discourse on Lebanese or Middle Eastern crime in Sydney, the accused – mostly second-generation immigrants born in Australia – have been robbed of their nationality. They are 'Lebanese' or 'Middle Eastern', and never 'Australian'.

An investigation into Lebanese or Middle Eastern crime in Sydney is at the same time an investigation into *racialisation* of crime. That is, attitudes of racial prejudice, directly or indirectly, shape practices of individuals and institutions including the labour market and the police. This is not to say that there are no Lebanese Australians in Sydney who do engage in criminal activities or who do in fact belong to organised crime gangs. Nor is everything a consequence of police racism. To think this is naïve. But in order to understand the complex

issue of ethnic crime in Sydney it is necessary to consider how the social construction of 'ethnic' – say Lebanese – produces a discourse about ethnic crime that often reproduces racist stereotypes rather than challenges them. Sydney's Lebanese community, like all others in Sydney, is very diverse, with this diversity expressing itself in religious and social class terms.

8. Conclusion

The Lebanese Diaspora has a long history in Australia, with Sydney the main geographical centre of Lebanese settlement. This article has argued that the Lebanese Diaspora in Australia is very diverse in terms of religion, region and social class. This is demonstrated by reference to labour force data and general socio-economic data. The Lebanese experience in Sydney and Australia has been strongly linked to entrepreneurship, though at the same time the Lebanese unemployment rate is among the highest and most persistent in non-Aboriginal Australia.

Australia's Lebanese Diaspora thus comes from diverse pre-migration situations and they achieve diverse economic and social outcomes once in Australia. They have made an important contribution to shaping the economy and society of Sydney in particular. Despite this fact, all Australian Lebanese are subject to (common and different) patterns of racialisation that shape their lives in the labour market, communities and institutions of Australian life. But they are not passive agents in this process: Lebanese Australians actively shape their lives within these constraints.

Issues such as crime are linked to social disadvantage. The Sydney Lebanese community seems to be one of the most marginalised in socio-economic terms of all ethnic communities in Australia. This is evident in the persistently high relative rate of unemployment that first-generation Lebanese men and women have experienced for decades. But at the same time, Lebanese entrepreneurs are making a good living in small business and, some, in large business in Australia. This is an important aspect of the diversity of the experience of the Lebanese Diaspora in Australia, a diversity that is denied by stereotypes of 'Middle Eastern appearance' and 'Lebanese' that have dominated the recent media discourse on ethnic crime in Sydney.

There is no one, homogenous Lebanese culture or ethnicity *per se* but rather a diverse and dynamic culture that is changing over the generations and the decades of settlement in Australia. With a decline of Lebanese immigration to Australia in the past decade, attention will increasingly focus on the second- and third-generation of Sydney's Lebanese Diaspora. This makes the issues of 1 and second-generation Lebanese crime, education outcomes and unemployi critical to policy makers so far too eager to play with fear of crime and fe: (Middle Eastern) difference for political advantage and too reluctant to ta leadership role against the tide of the popular construction of Sydney's Leba Diaspora as possessing an homogenous, static, undifferentiated and crin culture.

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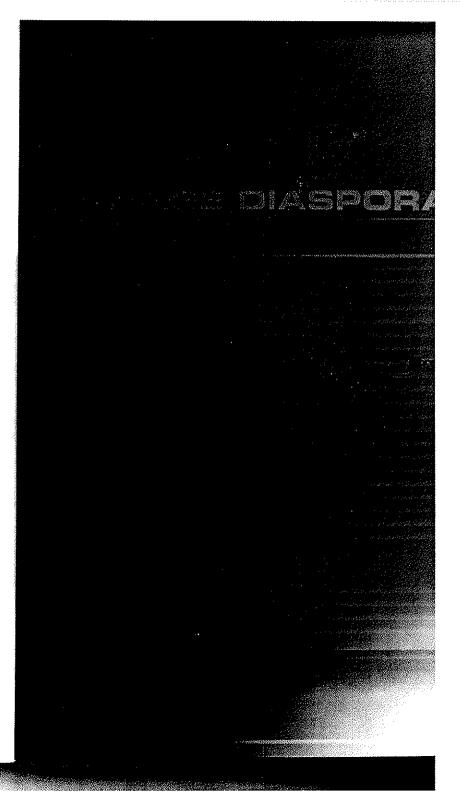COMMITTEE ON DISCRIMINATION AGAINST ARAB AUSTRALIANS (1992) *Racism, Arab and Muslim Australians and the war against Iraq. Volume 2* November 1990-July 1991, June 1992.

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At the very root of possessing a diasporic identity is a dual relationship of longing for an imaginary and deferred homeland shared by co-ethnics around the world and belonging to the country in which the migrant is settled. This dual bonding makes a homogeneous concept of diaspora untenable. This is not to say that in the history of Lebanese migration, for instance, there were no attempts at forging a homogeneous diasporic identity, an identity focusing on imagined characteristics which are thought to be shared by members of the Lebanese migrants and their descendants across the world... But despite these efforts to homogenise the Lebanese diasporic identity, the differentiating effects of living in different countries is real and inescapable. The sense of belonging that Lebanese migrants and their descendants had developed throughout their migrant experience differs depending on the host society in which they settled. This is exactly what distinguishes, for example, an American from an Australian member of the Lebanese Diaspora... The study of Lebanese Diaspora does not only reveal the ethnicisation of Lebanese migrants and their descendants, but also the de-territorialisation of their outlook. In getting involved in 'homeland' politics, the Lebanese diapsora live 'locally' and think 'globally'. More importantly, the diasporic identity in this context is not immune to the impact of class, gender and ethnicity. This book focuses on the local that is highly differentiated by class, gender and ethnicity (defined primarily by religious identity). Some of these 'local' features open up onto a diasporic identity reconstituted to 'fit' the contradictory interests and outlooks of local community groups... By partly addressing the issue of what Anthias calls 'the problem of intersectionality', this book shows that Lebanese diasporic identity is not only 'de-territorialised', but is also 're-territorialised' and highly differentiated.

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Lebanese Diaspora
History, Racism and Belonging

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