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REVIEW OF THE CIRCUMSTANCES AMONG CHILDREN IN IMMIGRANT FAMILIES IN AUSTRALIA

Ilan Katz and Gerry Redmond

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Correspondence should be addressed to:

UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre
Piazza SS. Annunziata, 12
50122 Florence, Italy
Tel: (+39) 055 20 330
Fax: (+39) 055 2033 220
Email: florence@unicef.org

Special Series on the Situation of Children in Immigrant Families in Affluent Societies

The series supports and complements the UNICEF Innocenti Insight on 'Children in Immigrant Families in Eight Affluent Countries: Their Family, National and International Context' and includes the following papers:

Review of the Circumstances among Children in Immigrant Families in Australia by Ilan Katz and Gerry Redmond
The Children of Immigrants in France: The Emergence of a Second Generation by Thomas Kirszbaum, Yaël Brinbaum and Patrick Simon, with Esin Gezer
The Situation among Children of Migrant Origin in Germany by Susanne Clauss and Bernhard Nauck
The Situation of Children in Immigrant Families in Italy: Changes and Challenges by Letizia Mencarini, Emiliana Baldoni and Gianpiero Dalla Zuanna
Children in Immigrant Families in the Netherlands: A Statistical Portrait and a Review of the Literature by Helga A. G. de Valk, Kris R. Noam, Alinda M. Bosch and Gijs C. N. Beets
Children in Immigrant Families in Switzerland: On a Path between Discrimination and Integration by Rosita Fibbi and Philippe Wanner
The Situation of Children in Immigrant Families in the United Kingdom by Heaven Crawley

The findings presented in this series are based on data derived from sources of the countries' respective national statistical offices. In several cases, the basic estimates reported have been calculated directly by the national statistical offices on behalf of the country study teams. In other cases, microdata have been provided by the national statistical offices, and specific estimates have been calculated by the country experts.

The results reported represent the best estimates possible on the immigrant population as derived from official statistical sources. Given the fluid nature of the migration phenomenon, it is not possible to know precisely the extent to which the coverage is representative of the whole population of interest or is fully comparable across the countries studied. In general, the number of undocumented arrivals and undocumented residents is more difficult to measure through routine data collection processes, and the country researchers did not specifically address this segment of the immigrant population. Undocumented immigrants and their families may or may not be covered in some of the country analyses.

The country studies have been reviewed as individually indicated by national experts, by members of the international research team, including UNICEF IRC, and by the series editor.

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REVIEW OF THE CIRCUMSTANCES AMONG CHILDREN IN IMMIGRANT FAMILIES IN AUSTRALIA

Ilan Katz[a] and Gerry Redmond[a]

[a] Social Policy Research Centre, University of New South Wales.

Summary: There were about 1.5 million children 0 to 17 years of age in immigrant families in Australia in 2001. This represented almost 33 per cent of all children. More than a quarter of these children were in families from the most consistent countries of immigrant origin, Ireland and the United Kingdom. Another 17 per cent were in families from other parts of Europe, while 10 per cent were in families from New Zealand, and 3 per cent were in families from other countries in Oceania.

The following are key findings of the study:

- The share of skilled immigrants admitted to Australia in recent years is much larger than the corresponding share in most developed countries. Thus, among 'rest of the world' immigrants who arrived before 1996, 25 per cent had a tertiary education, while, among those who arrived after 1996, the share jumped to 43 per cent.
- It appears that immigrants are able to find stable employment relatively quickly in jobs that lead to better prospects.
- Immigrants in Australia tend to be well educated and well skilled and, overall, to enjoy higher levels of inclusion in mainstream society than immigrants in other, similar countries. Indeed, immigrant families in Australia show higher levels of well-being than the overall population in a number of areas.
- In many cases, children with English-speaking backgrounds who were born in Australia or who immigrated when they were young are already, for all practical purposes, Australian in both nationality and culture, and the concepts of immigrant children and children of immigrants do not have the same connotations as they might in Europe or North America.
- Immigrant families with non-English-speaking backgrounds show average incomes that are lower than the average incomes among immigrant families with English-speaking backgrounds.
- Both with and without controls for a range of socioeconomic background variables, educational outcomes among 15-year-old children in immigrant families are not significantly different from the educational outcomes among native-born children.
- Native-born 16- to 17-year-olds who are living with their fathers exhibit the highest school drop-out rate, while the corresponding children in immigrant families from rest of the world countries have the lowest rates, especially where a language other than English is spoken at home.
- However, some immigrant children do experience significant disadvantage in comparison with the overall population. In particular, parents of children from Lebanon and Viet Nam tend to experience low levels of employment, and have low incomes on average.
- The Australian case is rather unique in showing that immigrant families from advanced industrialized countries are not necessarily always well off and that immigrant families from developing countries may sometimes be relatively wealthy.

Keywords: immigrant child, immigrant family, demography, education, labour market, discrimination, citizenship, health, poverty, deviant behaviour.

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

EEA	European Economic Area: Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, plus the EU
EU	European Union
EU-15	Member states of the European Union before 2004: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

Contents

1. INTRODUCTION

Recent research and our own analysis of census data have generally confirmed that, measured by indictors of well-being, children in immigrant families with English-speaking backgrounds tend to show better results than the overall population of Australian children. Children in immigrant families with non-English-speaking backgrounds also show similar or only slightly below-average levels of well-being according to indicators in many areas.

Despite these positive findings, particular groups of children in immigrant families experience significant disadvantages and suffer the same sorts of difficulties faced by children in immigrant families elsewhere: racism, discrimination, identity issues, dislocation from the culture of origin and so on. The relative well-being of immigrants in Australia thus appears unrelated to any particular positive attitude in Australian society towards immigrants, especially immigrants with non-English-speaking backgrounds. Rather, it seems that, in Australia, immigrants are able to find stable employment relatively quickly in jobs that lead to better prospects.

We have established a summary profile of children in immigrant families in Australia (see Table 1).

Table 1: Basic Data on Children in Immigrant Families, Australia, 2001

number and per cent of children

Family origin	*Total, number*	*Age at last birthday (%)*				*Australian citizens*
		0–4	*5–9*	*10–14*	*15–17*	
All children	4,624,640	26.3	27.9	22.8	22.9	96.4
Children in non-immigrant families [a]	3,115,506	27.9	28.4	22.2	21.5	100.0
Children in immigrant families:	1,509,134	23.2	27.0	24.0	25.8	89.4
Africa	60,379	24.6	28.7	22.5	24.1	82.2
Asia	359,136	26.1	27.1	21.8	25.0	85.3
China	43,991	30.4	24.5	21.4	23.7	83.5
Other East Asia	54,146	18.6	27.0	22.2	32.1	77.7
South Central Asia	64,915	31.4	27.5	18.4	22.7	83.5
Philippines	47,311	22.0	23.2	27.9	27.0	91.6
Viet Nam	62,909	30.4	29.2	19.6	20.8	95.9
Other South East Asia	85,864	23.9	29.0	22.4	24.8	81.2
Europe	608,573	19.9	26.4	25.6	28.1	95.5
Germany	20,610	17.5	24.8	27.9	29.7	94.3
Greece	22,085	15.4	21.8	20.4	42.5	100.0
Italy	45,070	17.4	26.7	24.4	31.5	98.8
Other EU-15, EEA and Switzerland[b]	414,545	20.8	27.5	26.0	25.7	95.3
Other Europe	106,263	18.8	23.4	25.0	32.8	93.9
Oceania	199,600	27.5	29.4	23.7	19.3	72.1
New Zealand	153,831	26.0	30.4	24.0	19.6	68.6
Other Oceania	45,769	32.5	26.3	22.9	18.4	83.8
Other countries	179,261	24.6	28.0	24.3	23.1	93.5
Inadequately described or not stated	102,185	20.4	22.5	24.0	33.2	98.0

Source: Census 2001 Household Sample File (Basic Confidentialized Unit Record File).

a. This includes children in families in which both parents have been born in Australia; b. Other EU-15 here includes Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Ireland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom. For a detailed note on country classification see Table 4.

2. RECENT PATTERNS IN IMMIGRATION

To understand the circumstances of children in immigrant families in Australia today, one should necessarily also seek to understand the history of immigration in Australia. Since the beginning of white settlement in 1788, there has been a steady, massive stream of immigrants. In a clear historical sense, Australia is almost entirely an immigrant society. However, it is also an immigrant society today. The level of immigration into Australia is among the highest among members of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). Data from the 2006 census show that 24 per cent of the population was born overseas (ABS 2007), and our analysis indicates that almost a third of the children in Australia were born overseas or have at least one parent who was born overseas.

For the first 150 years, until the end of World War II, immigration to Australia originated, for the most part, in Ireland and the United Kingdom. This was because of a deliberately restrictive immigration policy under the Commonwealth Immigration Restriction Act of 1901 that was known widely as the white Australia policy. This policy was encouraged at the time by the trade union movement, which viewed foreign workers – especially Chinese workers who came to Australia as part of the gold rush migrations in the second half of the 1800s – as a potential threat to the wages of native Australian workers (Reitz 1998).

In the years after World War II, labour shortages prompted renewed immigration from Ireland and the United Kingdom, but also other European countries, including Greece, Italy and the former Yugoslavia. This economic immigration was accompanied by the settlement of large numbers of refugees from Europe who were allowed to come to Australia on condition they provide labour on public works projects for an initial period after their arrival.

The end of the post-war boom in the early 1970s and the appearance of mass unemployment prompted a reduction in the number of immigrant applications that were accepted. When immigration revived in the late 1970s and early 1980s, it had a different character. Immigration policy was redefined to restrict immigration to certain categories of immigrants, including people with skills and professions in short supply, people who already had close family ties in Australia (family reunification) and refugees. Throughout the period and right up to today, New Zealanders have continued to enjoy the unrestricted right to enter and settle in Australia and have always constituted a significant share of every immigration cohort.

Beginning in the 1970s, there have been successive waves of immigration, first from the Middle East, mainly Lebanon in the aftermath of the civil war there, and later from Asia, especially China, Indonesia and Viet Nam. The cohorts of immigrants from Asia consisted of refugees and economic immigrants.

During the late 1990s, the intake of immigrants hovered between 80,000 and 100,000 persons per year, but, since 2000, the number has increased substantially. It surpassed 140,000 in 2006–2007 (DIAC 2007a).

In recent years, Australia has been admitting refugees from around the world, including Ethiopia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Somalia, the former Yugoslavia and others.

Nonetheless, the numerical majority of immigrants have arrived from English-speaking countries of origin, particularly New Zealand and the United Kingdom, which account together for a third of the overseas-born population, followed by China and Viet Nam at 4 per cent each (ABS 2007).

There is one historic group of child immigrants that differs from all others. Australia, along with Canada, New Zealand and Zimbabwe, has experienced a particular wave of immigration consisting of children alone. Between 1922 and 1967, about 5,000–10,000 children were sent from the United Kingdom to Australia to help populate the country with 'good white stock' (National Archives of Australia 2005). Most were sent to charitable and religious institutions. The Australian Government welcomed the scheme and encouraged non-governmental organizations to continue settling child immigrants. However, many of these children later claimed that they had been treated badly in the institutions to which they were sent. In recent years, non-governmental organizations and the Governments of Australia and the United Kingdom have taken steps to acknowledge the injustice of this policy and have established compensation schemes, family reunification programmes and other support initiatives for child immigrants.

3. SIZE AND ORIGIN OF THE POPULATION OF CHILDREN IN IMMIGRANT FAMILIES

A third of all children are immigrants or have been born in Australia of at least one immigrant parent (Table 2). This is larger than the corresponding share in the total population; about a quarter of the total population are in this category. Among the children in immigrant families, about half are in immigrant families from Europe or New Zealand, and about half are in immigrant families from the rest of the world. This is not an entirely appropriate division for the purpose of our analysis of well-being because the Europe and New Zealand category includes poor European transition countries such as the Republic of Moldova, while the rest of the world includes advanced industrialized countries such as Japan and the United States of America. However, the volume of immigration from these exceptional countries in the two groups is small. Moreover, immigrant families from advanced industrialized countries are not necessarily well off, and immigrant families from developing countries may be relatively wealthy.

Table 2: Family Origin of Children in Immigrant Families by Gender, Australia, 2001

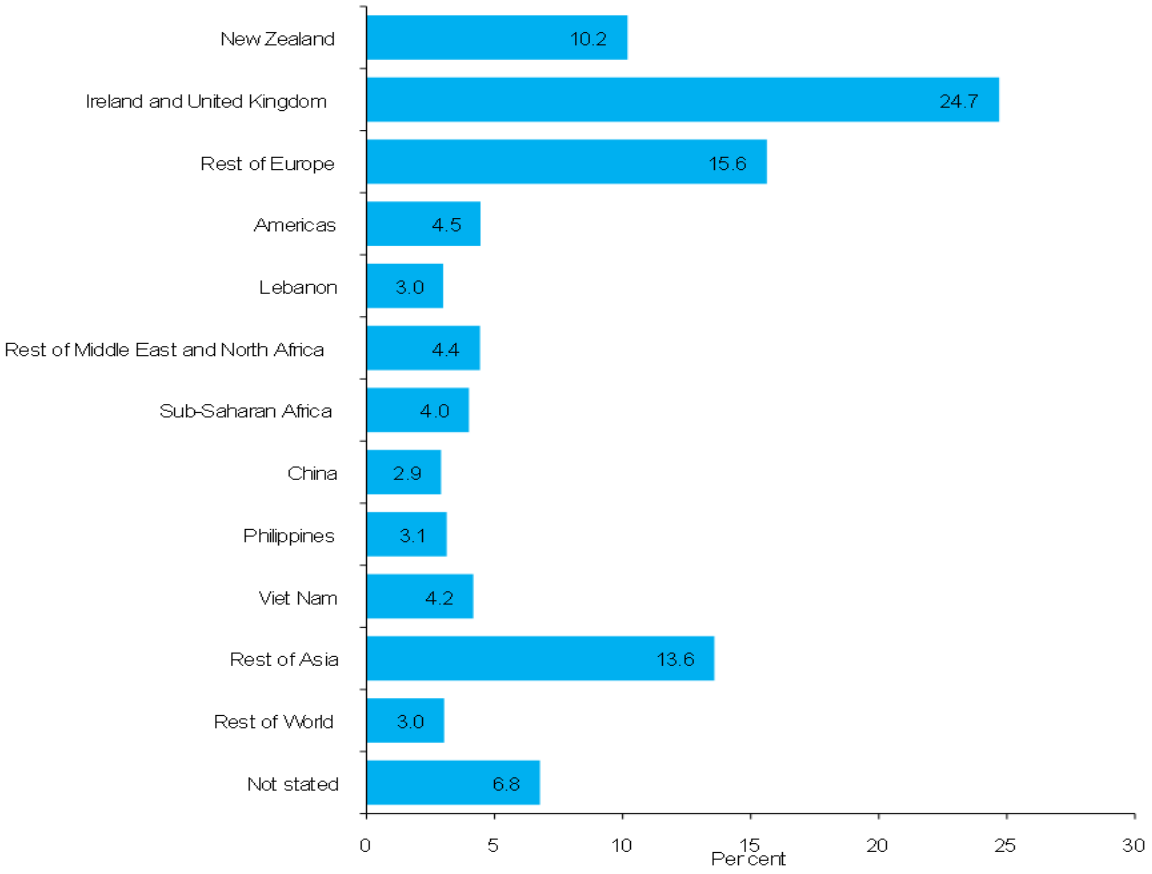
per cent of children

Family origin	*Boys*	*Girls*	*All*
Children in non-immigrant families	66.9	67.8	67.4
Children in immigrant families	33.1	32.2	32.6
Europe and New Zealand	14.2	14.1	14.2
Arrived after 1996	8.9	9.9	9.4
Rest of the world	12.7	12.0	12.4
Arrived after 1996	16.1	16.0	16.0
Not stated	6.1	6.1	6.1

Source: Census 2001 Household Sample File.
Note: Data on immigration status are missing on 1.4 per cent of all children.

Figure 1 gives another breakdown of the countries of origin of children in immigrant families. A quarter are in families from the most consistent countries of origin, Ireland and the United Kingdom. Another 15.6 per cent are in families from other parts of Europe, while 10.2 per cent are in families from New Zealand (a 10th of these describe themselves as Maori).[1] The other important region of origin among immigrant families from the rest of the world is Asia (mainly South East Asia), including China, the Philippines and Viet Nam: 23.8 per cent of the children are in families from this region of origin. This wave of immigration began on a large scale with the arrival of boat people – refugees who used boats to leave their countries of origin – after the end of the Viet Nam War and has continued since. AlsoThe Middle East and North Africa accounts for 7.4 per cent of all children in immigrant families. Children in immigrant families from Lebanon predominate in this group. Lebanon is a traditional country of origin for immigration to Australia, but there was particularly significant immigration following the civil war in Lebanon in the late 1970s.

Figure 1: Country of Origin of Children in Immigrant Families, Australia, 2001



Source: Census 2001 Household Sample File (Remote Access Data Laboratory).
Note: The Remote Access Data Laboratory data set provides more country detail than the Basic Confidentialized Unit Record File used elsewhere in this report. However, it is only possible to obtain highly aggregated data from this data set. Data on Lebanon are based on reports on the ancestry of children who were born abroad or whose parents were born abroad. They should be treated with caution.

[1] The Maori are the native inhabitants of New Zealand. They are of Polynesian origin. They number over 500,000 people today and represent around 15 per cent of the population of New Zealand.

Table 3 presents recent trends in the immigration of children to Australia. The data in the table are not directly comparable with the data in Table 2 and Figure 1 (even though all the data are calculated from the census) because the latter two include children born in Australia to at least one immigrant parent, while the data in Table 3 refer only to children born overseas, some of whom were born to Australian parents. Nonetheless, the table gives a flavour of recent shifts in the structure of child immigration to Australia. In 1996, 2001 and 2006, New Zealand and the United Kingdom were the most important countries of origin of child immigrants to Australia. Hong Kong (China) and the Philippines were major countries of origin in 1996, but contributed notably fewer children in 2006. Meanwhile, the level of immigration of children from India and South Africa increased appreciably in the 10 years after 1996. The biggest proportional increases in immigration occurred among children from Afghanistan, Kenya, Zimbabwe and, especially, the Sudan, where child immigration rose 10-fold. Most immigrants from Afghanistan and the Sudan were allowed to come to Australia under the Refugee and Humanitarian Programme, while the increased immigration of children born in Kenya and Zimbabwe may reflect a motivation to leave these countries because of economic hardship and political crisis.

Table 3: Foreign-Born Children Aged 0–14 by Country of Birth, Australia, 1996, 2001 and 2006

number, per cent and index of children

Country of birth	*1996, number*	*2001, number*	*2006*		*Index 1996 =1.0*
			Number	*Share of total*	
New Zealand	32,242	43,084	39,487	18.6	1.2
United Kingdom	33,793	29,036	35,173	16.6	1.0
South Africa	6,730	11,082	12,575	5.9	1.9
India	7,206	7,610	11,269	5.3	1.6
Philippines	14,317	9,922	8,266	3.9	0.6
China, excluding SARs and Taiwan	8,651	8,677	7,748	3.6	0.9
United States	8,324	8,451	5,991	2.8	0.7
Sudan	553	1,096	5,898	2.8	10.7
Singapore	2,952	3,433	5,267	2.5	1.8
Malaysia	7,210	4,168	4,694	2.2	0.7
Republic of Korea	5,063	5,788	4,388	2.1	0.9
Indonesia	3,626	4,088	3,970	1.9	1.1
Sri Lanka	5,497	3,971	3,868	1.8	0.7
Iraq	2,350	3,804	3,619	1.7	1.5
Viet Nam	9,521	4,453	2,991	1.4	0.3
Fiji	4,657	3,517	2,831	1.3	0.6
Hong Kong (China SAR)	11,239	6,752	2,807	1.3	0.2
Afghanistan	1,177	1,635	2,789	1.3	2.4
Thailand	4,668	3,147	2,531	1.2	0.5
Germany	2,494	2,831	2,414	1.1	1.0
Pakistan	1,405	2,035	2,387	1.1	1.7
Kenya	413	692	2,291	1.1	5.5
Serbia and Montenegro	3,348	3,175	2,123	1.0	0.6
Zimbabwe	785	926	2,100	1.0	2.7
Other countries	62,317	48,932	34,853	16.4	0.6

Sources: ABS (2007), author calculations.

Note: This table counts only children born in a country other than Australia and is therefore not directly comparable with other information presented in this section, which generally also covers children born in Australia to at least one immigrant parent.

The percentage contribution of each country not specifically listed in this table to total immigration to Australia in 2006 is less than 1 per cent. SAR = special administrative region.

Table 4 shows that, among all children in immigrant families, a fifth have been born outside Australia, and four fifths in Australia. Children in immigrant groups from Asia and Oceania are particularly likely to have been born outside Australia, including four children in ten whose families came from China and five children in ten whose families came from other parts of East Asia. On the other hand, relatively few children whose families immigrated from Europe or Lebanon have been born outside Australia.

Table 4: Children in Immigrant Families, Australia, 2001

number and per cent of children

Family origin	*Total*		*First generation (born outside Australia)*		*Second generation (born in Australia)*	
	Number	*%*	*Number*	*%*	*Number*	*%*
All children	4,624,640	100.0	—	—	—	—
Children in non-immigrant families[a]	3,115,506	67.4	—	—	—	—
Children in immigrant families	1,509,134	32.6	305,107	20.2	1,204,027	79.8
Africa	60,379	4.0	20,989	34.8	39,390	65.2
Asia	359,136	23.8	113,487	31.6	245,649	68.4
China	43,991	2.9	16,919	38.5	27,072	61.5
Other East Asia	54,146	3.6	27,024	49.9	27,122	50.1
Other South Central Asia	64,915	4.3	20,915	32.2	44,000	67.8
Philippines	47,311	3.1	13,765	29.1	33,546	70.9
Viet Nam	62,909	4.2	10,202	16.2	52,707	83.8
Other South East Asia	85,864	5.7	24,662	28.7	61,202	71.3
Europe	608,573	40.3	63,861	10.5	544,712	89.5
Germany	20,610	1.4	1,681	8.2	18,929	91.8
Greece	22,085	1.5	1,158	5.2	20,927	94.8
Italy	45,070	3.0	1,049	2.3	44,021	97.7
Other EU-15, EEA and Switzerland[b]	414,545	27.5	37,696	9.1	376,849	90.9
Ireland and United Kingdom	374,681	24.8	33,353	8.9	341,328	91.1
Other Europe	106,263	7.0	22,277	21.0	83,986	79.0
Oceania	199,600	13.2	59,219	29.7	140,381	70.3
New Zealand	153,831	10.2	49,034	31.9	104,797	68.1
Other Oceania	45,769	3.0	10,185	22.3	35,584	77.7
Other countries	179,261	11.9	33,273	18.6	145,988	81.4
Lebanon	45,438	3.0	2,429	5.3	43,009	94.7
Inadequately described or not stated	102,185	6.8	14,278	14.0	87,907	86.0

Source: Census 2001 Household Sample File (Basic Confidentialized Unit Record File).
Note: For the data issues involved in this table and our other tables based on the Census 2001 Household Sample File, see subsection 5.1.3. First and second generation refer to the taxonomy of immigrant generations.
a. This includes children in families in which both parents have been born in Australia.
b. EU-15 = member states of the European Union before 2004: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom. Other EU-15 = Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Ireland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom. EEA = European Economic Area, which, in our case here, refers to Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway.

Table 5 shows that the age profile of children in immigrant families is generally similar to that of native-born Australian children, although children in families from some parts of Asia and Oceania have a somewhat younger age profile. Children in immigrant families from Asia and Oceania (other than New Zealand) tend to have a younger age profile than children in immigrant families from Europe.

Table 5: Children by Age, Australia, 2001

per cent of children

Family origin	*Age at last Birthday (%)*			
	0–4	*5–9*	*10–14*	*15–17*
All children	26.3	27.9	22.8	22.9
Children in non-immigrant families [a]	27.9	28.4	22.2	21.5
Children inimmigrant families	23.2	27.0	24.0	25.8
Africa	24.6	28.7	22.5	24.1
Asia	26.1	27.1	21.8	25.0
China	30.4	24.5	21.4	23.7
Other East Asia	18.6	27.0	22.2	32.1
Other South Central Asia	31.4	27.5	18.4	22.7
Philippines	22.0	23.2	27.9	27.0
Viet Nam	30.4	29.2	19.6	20.8
Other South East Asia	23.9	29.0	22.4	24.8
Europe	19.9	26.4	25.6	28.1
Germany	17.5	24.8	27.9	29.7
Greece	15.4	21.8	20.4	42.5
Italy	17.4	26.7	24.4	31.5
Other EU-15, EEA and Switzerland[b]	20.8	27.5	26.0	25.7
Other Europe	18.8	23.4	25.0	32.8
Oceania	27.5	29.4	23.7	19.3
New Zealand	26.0	30.4	24.0	19.6
Other Oceania	32.5	26.3	22.9	18.4
Other countries	24.6	28.0	24.3	23.1
Inadequately described or not stated	20.4	22.5	24.0	33.2

Source: Census 2001 Household Sample File (Basic Confidentialized Unit Record File).
Note: The age is the age at the last birthday.
a. This includes children in families in which both parents have been born in Australia.
b. see note to table 4

Table 6 shows that the majority of children in immigrant families are Australian citizens, as are most of their parents. However, relative to children in immigrant families from Europe, smaller shares of children in families from Asia and Oceania (including New Zealand) have Australian citizenship. The table also shows that large shares have parents who have originated from different countries, perhaps reflecting the multicultural characteristics of Australia.

4. CURRENT NATURALIZATION AND CITIZENSHIP POLICY

4.1 Immigration policy

The Australian Government has always encouraged immigration, but it has also always strictly controlled and regulated immigration. It drafts legislation on immigration, sets targets and ceilings for the various admissions categories for immigrants and, through the Department of Immigration and Citizenship, directly administers most aspects of the long-running immigration programme, which is centrally planned.

In Australia, as in most OECD countries, immigration may be broken down into four main categories: labour immigration and the immigration of skilled workers, family reunification, the immigration of refugees and other beneficiaries of humanitarian programmes, and

immigration from countries with reciprocal entry and residence requirements (known as non-programme immigration). Most immigration in Australia is organized on a points system whereby potential immigrants are assigned points according to factors such as health status, possession of a needed skill, proficiency in English, family ties in Australia and financial resources (Miller 1999). The aim of the system is to ensure that new immigrants are suitable for the domestic labour market. Australia also accepts refugees each year through the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

Table 6: Immigrant and Citizenship Profile of Children, Australia, 2001

per cent of children

Family origin	*Australian citizens*	*Moved in last five years*	*Only one parent is an Australian citizen*	*At least one parent in Australia for under five years (since 1996)*	*Parents are from different countries of origin*
All children	96.4	42.6	8.1	4.9	9.1
Children in non-immigrant families [a]	100.0	41.3	n.a	n.a	n.a.
Children in immigrant families	89.4	45.3	21.0	12.2	36.2
Africa	82.2	55.2	9.5	25.0	45.6
Asia	85.3	48.4	13.5	16.1	24.0
China	83.5	61.2	12.8	18.9	7.7
Other East Asia	77.7	52.8	18.4	25.4	26.6
Other South Central Asia	83.5	55.1	14.3	22.4	17.1
Philippines	91.6	45.7	9.4	12.0	51.7
Viet Nam	95.9	38.5	6.8	3.8	7.5
Other South East Asia	81.2	43.2	17.5	15.2	33.2
Europe	95.5	38.6	26.1	7.1	42.4
Germany	94.3	44.0	33.3	6.7	71.9
Greece	100.0	21.8	8.3	5.8	26.7
Italy	98.8	24.9	18.2	2.1	35.7
Other EU-15, EEA and Switzerland[b]	95.3	39.9	32.3	6.6	46.5
Other Europe	93.9	42.0	8.2	11.6	26.6
Oceania	72.1	53.7	32.9	19.8	43.3
New Zealand	68.6	53.5	37.2	20.3	43.5
Other Oceania	83.8	54.6	19.5	18.0	42.7
Other countries	93.5	47.5	15.5	14.4	29.1
Inadequately described or not stated	98.0	53.0	4.0	3.4	34.3

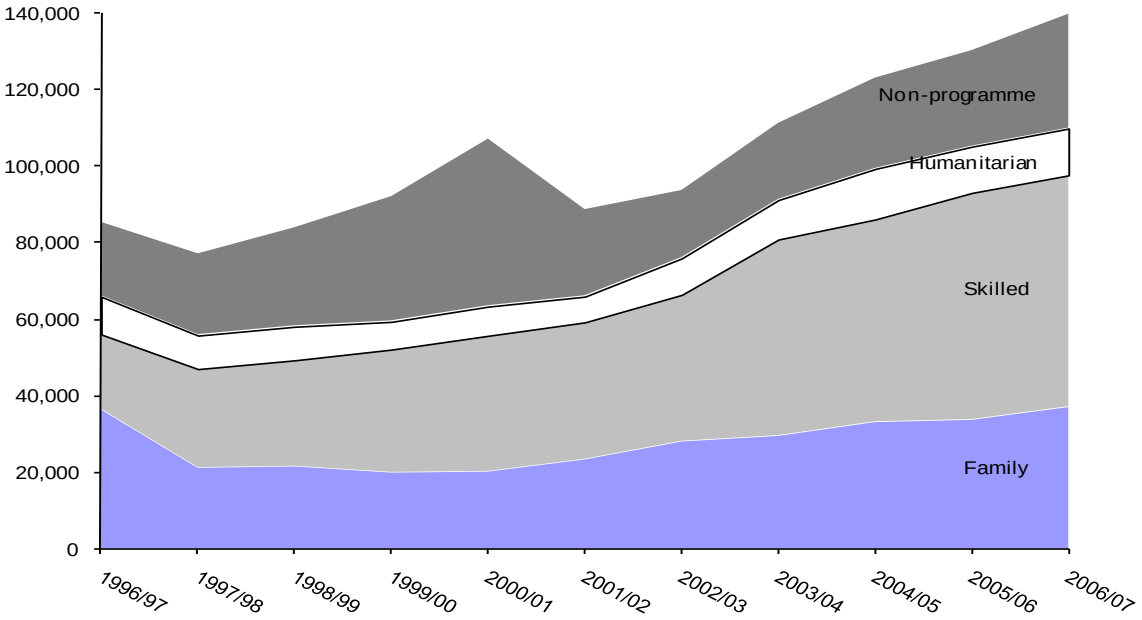
Source: Census 2001 Household Sample File (Basic Confidentialized Unit Record File).
Note: a. Thos includes children in families in which both parents have been born in Australia.
b. see note to table 4.
n.a. = a particular indicator is not available in the data or is not applicable to the population represented in the table cell.

Admissions of all categories of immigration may in theory be capped by the Government. In practice, skills-based immigration is demand driven; if particular skill shortages are shown to exist, space is made for the appropriate skilled immigrants. Family reunification allows parents and, sometimes, other close relatives of Australian residents to come to Australia. The numbers are capped annually. However, the immigration of spouses and dependent children of Australian residents, also part of the family immigration category, is not capped. Although the humanitarian settlement programme in Australia is one of the largest such programmes in the OECD, the number of refugees or persons living under difficult conditions who are sponsored for entry to Australia by non-governmental organizations or other organizations in Australia is also capped (Liebig 2007). The fourth category of immigration, non-programme immigration, consists essentially of people from New Zealand who settle in Australia. Since

they do not need visas to enter or reside in Australia, New Zealanders do not form part of any planned intake, and the numbers are not capped.

In 1996/97, family reunification was the most common reason for immigration to Australia (Figure 2). This category represented 42 per cent of the total immigrant intake of 85,400 in that year. Since then, however, the immigration of persons with particular skills has become predominant. In 2006/07, skilled immigrants comprised 43 per cent of the considerably larger intake of 140,000 that year. This is a much larger share than the corresponding share in most OECD countries (OECD 2001). Meanwhile, family reunification accounted for 27 per cent of the total, although, in absolute terms, the numbers were greater than they had been in 1996/97. In the decade after 1996, the annual number of persons settling in Australia as part of the humanitarian programme increased by about a fifth, from 10,000 to 12,000. However, this group's share in total immigration declined, from 12 to 9 per cent. The share of immigration from New Zealand, which made up more than 95 per cent of the non-programme immigration shown in Figure 2, remained fairly constant, hovering between 20 and 25 per cent of overall immigration.

Figure 2: Main Categories of Immigration, Australia, 1996/97 to 2006/07



Source: DIAC (2007a).
Note: Non-programme immigration covers mainly immigrants from New Zealand.

One remarkable feature of immigration in Australia is the small number of undocumented arrivals. Detected undocumented arrivals by boat peaked at about 4,000 in 2000/01, and the arrival of boat people became a major federal election issue. The number declined rapidly in subsequent years, a result of the Government's tough new policies, including efforts to ensure that onshore asylum applications were not facilitated (Hugo 2004). Although a more

substantial number of people stay on illegally after their visas have expired, the number in this group is also small, fewer than 6,000 in 2003 (Hugo 2004). The population of children of illegal or undocumented immigrants who are unable to gain access to education, health care and other social services for fear of detection and repatriation is therefore not likely to be large either. For this reason, the well-being of undocumented or otherwise illegal immigrants and their children is not discussed much in the Australian literature except in cases where these people have been detained. Moreover, the policy of detention has now been discontinued in the case of children (Jupp 2003).

4.2 Naturalization and citizenship policy

Australian and British citizenship were not distinguished until 1948 with the passage of the Nationality and Citizenship Act 1948, later renamed the Australian Citizenship Act 1948.

In the mid-1970s, multiculturalism had become Australia's policy towards minorities (Lopez 2000). Multiculturalism actively values the diversity of cultures and backgrounds among the population and encourages communication and exchange among Australians of different backgrounds. The policy has been controversial in some respects, and, partly in response to the perceived threat of home-grown Islamic terrorism, the policy has been increasingly questioned by the Government. Thus, in 2006, the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs was renamed the Department of Immigration and Citizenship, and an active policy of encouraging Australian values was initiated. The most concrete expression of this policy has been the introduction of a test for people who apply for naturalization as Australian citizens. The policy is significant because the controls over immigration are already much tighter in Australia than in any other OECD countries, and the policy has the effect of additionally restricting legal integration among immigrants in Australia.

Australian nationality law is based primarily on the principle of *ius soli*, the right (*ius*) of citizenship based on birth within the national territory (*soli*), though *ius sanguinis*, the right to citizenship conferred by a blood relationship (*sanguinis*) to a citizen, also has a role. Since 1986, people born in Australia become Australian citizens by birth if at least one parent is an Australian citizen or a permanent resident at the time of the birth. A child born in Australia to parents who are not permanent residents or Australian citizens acquires Australian citizenship automatically on his or her 10th birthday provided the child is ordinarily resident in Australia.

Until 2007, immigrants were eligible to apply for Australian citizenship after two years of permanent residence in Australia. In July 2007, the eligibility criteria were tightened so that people must have been lawfully resident for the four years immediately previous to the application. In addition, they must have spent 12 months as a permanent resident and must not have been absent from Australia for more than 12 months, including no more than 90 days in the 12 months before the application.

5. DATA ANALYSIS AND LITERATURE REVIEW: INCLUSION AND OTHER SOCIAL ISSUES

In the next subsections, we discuss the literature relating to particular outcome areas among children in immigrant families, including education, physical health, mental health and well-being, the labour market, poverty and crime.

5.1 Definitions and methodological clarifications

5.1.1 Definitional issues

In the sociological literature, a taxonomy has been proposed to account for the specific challenges faced by the children in immigrant families. The designations in this taxonomy are as follows:

- 1.0 generation: all foreign-born persons who have arrived in the country of settlement at the age of 18 or older;
- 1.5 generation: all foreign-born persons who have arrived in the country of settlement at 0 to 17 years of age (in some contexts, these ages may be different);
- 2.0 generation: persons born in the country of settlement and having two foreign-born parents;
- 2.5 generation: persons born in the country of settlement and having one foreign-born parent and one native-born parent;
- 3.0 generation: persons of foreign origin born in the country of settlement and having parents who were also born in the country of settlement.

Although interesting and useful, this taxonomy is difficult to implement in Australia. The definitional issue in discussing the well-being of children in immigrant families is a challenge because of the inconsistency in the various terms that have become current in Australian practice. There is no universally accepted breakdown of the population by ethnicity or background. Nearly every research project conducted in Australia has relied on different terms, and it is therefore difficult to compare research results across studies. The most widely used terms include the following:

- *Migrant* is used mainly in its narrowest sense to refer to children born outside Australia, but who have immigrated, usually with their families, and are now permanently resident in Australia (the 1.5 generation in the taxonomy of immigrant generations). Governmental entities such as the Australian Bureau of Statistics and the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare also define students and others who are only temporarily resident in Australia as migrants.[2] Moreover, the term is used in government publications to include children who have at least one parent born overseas (known as the second generation). Children whose grandparents or other ancestors were born overseas (the 3.0 generation) are never counted in Australia as migrants.
- *Non-English-speaking background* refers to immigrant families from countries of origin that are not English speaking, though the families themselves may (or may not) speak

[2] Hugo (2004) argues that temporary immigration to and emigration from Australia are growing in importance. This topic may therefore constitute a key area of research, particularly on the well-being of the children affected.

English. The Government decided, in 1996, to abandon the term in official documents because of the ambiguities (see below) (CICMA 2001). Instead, the Australian Bureau of Statistics has specified that all surveys must use a basic set of core data items (ABS 1999). However, this minimum set of items includes first language spoken, main language spoken at home and other language items. Non-English-speaking background is therefore still a relevant term.

- *Culturally and linguistically diverse* is now frequently used in place of non-English-speaking background, though it is also not used in official government documents. The term refers loosely to all Australians who are not Anglo-Australian or Indigenous (see below). Although now ubiquitous in Australia, the term is imprecisely defined. Like non-English-speaking background, it has tended to become attached to ethnic or linguistic groups that are disadvantaged in some way.
- *Indigenous Australians* refers to Aboriginal Australians and Torres Strait Islanders. *Aboriginals* originate from mainland Australia, whereas Torres Strait Islanders originate from the archipelago between Australia and Papua New Guinea. Non-English-speaking background and culturally and linguistically diverse are not used to refer to Indigenous Australians, although not all Indigenous Australians speak English as a first language. Indigenous status forms part of the core set of data items specified by the Australian Bureau of Statistics for those survey collections that are not focused on immigrants (ABS 1999).

These terms all pose difficulties, and none of them captures all the issues. Thus, Indigenous and non-Indigenous distinguish the true natives of Australia from all others given that virtually every Australian who is not Indigenous has an immigrant background of some sort. However, the terms are confusing in other contexts, such as discussions about visible ethnic minorities, cultural diversity and language proficiency. Meanwhile, dividing people into English-speaking backgrounds and non-English-speaking backgrounds conflates the Dutch and the Swedes with African and Burmese refugees, but dividing the population according to cultural and linguistic background tends to conflate immigrants from New Zealand and the United Kingdom with Australians. This is particularly true of children with English-speaking backgrounds who were born in Australia or who immigrated when they were young (generations 1.5 to 2.5). In many such cases, the children are already, for all practical purposes, Australian in both nationality and culture, and the concepts of immigrant children and children of immigrants do not have the same connotations as they might in Europe or North America.

In addition, the country and regional categories used to describe the origin of immigrant families are not used clearly and consistently even among studies produced by government agencies (see subsection 5.1.3 below). In any case, unaccompanied by data on other indicators of well-being, knowledge about the country of origin does not always reveal much about children. For example, many immigrant families from low-income countries may actually enjoy relatively high incomes, and vice versa. This is particularly true given the important inflow to Australia of the well-trained and highly skilled immigrants encouraged by government policy.

These definitional issues are not merely academic. As we show below, depending on the definition, different characteristics of well-being among children in immigrant families are found. The overall profile of children in immigrant families is therefore a patchwork.

5.1.2 Research issues

Compared with most other OECD countries, there is a dearth of research on children in immigrant families and on ethnic minority children in Australia and relatively limited administrative data that might allow us to compare immigrant families to other families in the general population. No recent studies track the educational, health, or employment trajectories of children in families in various immigrant groups. Few studies are available on child protection among children in immigrant families. There are no studies on the involvement of these children with the child welfare, juvenile justice, or out-of-home care systems, and it is therefore not known if these children are overrepresented or underrepresented. Studies tend to compare two or three ethnic or language groups, group all immigrants together, or classify immigrant groups according to English-speaking or non-English-speaking backgrounds. Little is known of the family circumstances of children in immigrant families, whether they experience difficulties in the relationships with their parents, how much contact they have with extended families and so on. Australians pride themselves on the harmony and the relative lack of racial tension in their society, but hard data on indicators of racial harmony are scarce.

Research on children in immigrant families undertaken since the 1970s has been sporadic and fragmentary. None of the flagship studies on child well-being provides specific information about culturally and linguistically diverse children or children in immigrant families (AIHW 2005, 2007a; ARACY 2008; DHS-Victoria 2006). The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, which is responsible for reporting on the condition of the population, routinely breaks the statistics down by Indigenous or non-Indigenous status, but does not routinely provide separate statistics on immigrant families. *A Picture of Australia's Children* (AIHW 2005), the institute's flagship publication on the state of Australia's children, contains no data on the health or welfare of children in immigrant families.

5.1.3 Our sample

The Social Policy Research Centre at the University of New South Wales in Sydney was commissioned by UNICEF to undertake the research on children in immigrant families in Australia. Our research has consisted of an analysis of the data on migrant children in the 2001 census and a review of the Australian literature on the well-being of children in immigrant families. We have calculated our results based mostly on the Basic Confidentialized Unit Record File (known as CURF) of the 2001 census, which contains data on a random sample of 1 per cent of all census respondents. The microdata sample we have used has been prepared and publicly released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics for academic research (ABS 2003).

We have used SAS software – the name of the programme is Census2001_UNICEF-11.sas – with numerators and denominators that are output directly to Microsoft Excel spreadsheets. We have calculated percentages within the Microsoft Excel spreadsheets. Some data have

been reweighted to take account of item non-response in the census, and, where appropriate, we present absolute numbers grossed up to represent the Australian population.

The definitions of the terms used in the data file are as follows:

- *Child*: person aged 0-17 years as of the last birthday.
- *Parent*: a natural, adoptive, step, or foster mother or father of a child or a person who is assigned as a nominal parent. This person is resident in the same household as the child.
- *Children in immigrant families*: children who are foreign born to at least one foreign-born parent or who have been born in Australia to at least one parent who is living in the same home and who is foreign born.
- *County of origin*: the country in which a foreign-born child is born. If the child is not foreign born, but the mother is foreign born, then the child's country of origin is the mother's country of origin. If neither the child nor the mother are foreign born, then the country of origin of the child is the father's country of origin.
- *Reporting results by country of origin*: we report our results in specific cells in our tables based on the Census 2001 Household Sample File if the numerator for the estimate is based on a sample size of five or more. If it is not possible to report results for a particular country of origin because of confidentiality requirements, the limited sample size, or another factor, we combine our results for that country with results for other countries. These combined results are reported in rows on the relevant continental subregion, or continent, or other country groupings.
- For convenience because of the existence of a significant Indigenous population in Australia, we sometimes use the term *ethnic minority*, which is seldom used in Australia.
- We use the term *native-born Australians* to refer to third-generation immigrants (born in Australia to persons of immigrant origin born in Australia) and to Australians born in Australia to persons of non-immigrant origin born in Australia, including the Indigenous Australian population.

For our analysis, we have calculated tables based on data of the 2001 census. In these tables, children in immigrant families are listed according to their countries of origin or the countries of origin of their families. Because of the requirement to respect respondent confidentiality, data on only a few countries are available (generally, China, Germany, Greece, Italy, New Zealand, the Philippines and Viet Nam). For most children in immigrant families, only aggregated data are available (for example, on south central Asia or South East Asia) or continent-wide data (Africa, the Americas). For some tables, we have derived statistics for a combined country category, Ireland and the United Kingdom, as this group represents the largest source of immigrants to Australia. We also sometimes show data for Lebanon. These data are not derived strictly from information on the countries of origin of children or parents in immigrant families, but on reported ancestry. They should therefore be treated with caution. Where possible, the denominators from which we have calculated percentages exclude missing data. The denominators therefore differ across variables even if the population group is the same, for example, all children aged 0–17 in immigrant families.

5.2 Family environment

The socioeconomic and demographic profile of immigrants in Australia is unusual with respect to corresponding profiles in Europe and North America. In particular, immigrants in Australia tend to be more well educated, to possess a wider range of skills and, overall, to enjoy higher levels of inclusion in mainstream society.

5.2.1 Size and structure of the family

Table 7 shows the share of children in various groups according to family household arrangement. The table indicates that children in native-born Australians are the most likely to live in one-parent households. This is the case of 26.5 per cent of this group compared with close to 17 per cent among the children in immigrant families. However, the rate of single parenthood among the families of children in a number of immigrant groups, including the groups from New Zealand and Viet Nam, is close to the rate among children in native-born Australian families. Based on data in the 1996 census, Khoo et al. (2002) observe that the high incidence of breakdowns in marriages in the Vietnamese community may be related to difficulties in settlement.

Table 7: Children according to Family Structure, Australia, 2001

per cent of children

Family origin	*Two-parent family*	*Mother-only family*	*Father-only family*	*No sibling 0–17 at home*	*One sibling 0–17 at home*	*Two siblings 0–17 at home*	*Three or more siblings 0–17 at home*	*One or more grandparents at home*
All children	76.8	20.3	3.0	21.0	41.9	25.6	11.4	1.1
Children in non- immigrant families [a]	73.5	23.2	3.4	20.3	41.3	26.4	12.0	1.0
Children in immigrant families	83.4	14.1	2.5	22.5	43.3	24.0	10.2	1.2
Africa	83.5	15.4	1.1	21.0	47.0	21.4	10.6	0.9
Asia	83.4	14.8	1.9	26.3	44.8	21.7	7.2	2.1
China	84.0	12.8	3.2	39.7	47.1	11.0	2.2	6.2
Other East Asia	80.3	17.8	1.8	26.9	48.7	19.8	4.7	1.2
Other South Central Asia	91.1	8.0	0.8	21.6	47.7	20.5	10.2	2.4
Philippines	84.4	14.9	—	29.4	44.2	20.0	6.4	2.2
Viet Nam	79.2	18.4	2.4	23.2	41.4	25.9	9.5	1.3
Other South East Asia	81.4	16.2	2.4	23.0	42.0	27.3	7.7	1.0
Europe	84.5	12.9	2.6	21.6	44.5	24.6	9.3	0.8
Germany	82.5	16.0	—	26.6	44.9	20.4	8.1	—
Greece	86.2	10.0	3.8	31.0	47.1	19.5	2.4	—
Italy	93.5	4.2	2.3	23.1	46.9	21.6	8.4	1.2
Other EU-15, EEA and Switzerland[b]	83.9	13.6	2.5	18.9	43.1	26.5	11.6	0.3
Other Europe	82.9	14.3	2.9	28.7	48.4	20.3	2.5	2.6
Oceania	78.0	18.0	4.1	19.8	39.6	28.1	12.5	1.1
New Zealand	76.6	19.0	4.4	19.6	39.4	29.3	11.7	1.1
Other Oceania	82.7	14.5	2.8	20.5	40.2	23.9	15.4	1.1
Other countries	84.6	13.4	2.0	16.9	42.9	24.3	15.9	1.2
Inadequately described or not stated	87.2	10.8	2.1	30.3	36.3	21.8	11.6	1.2

Source: Census 2001 Household Sample File (Basic Confidentialized Unit Record File).

Note: a. This includes children in families in which both parents have been born in Australia.

b. See note to table 4.

— = no persons are in the relevant cell in the study population, the sample size is too small to provide separate results for the category, or no information is available.

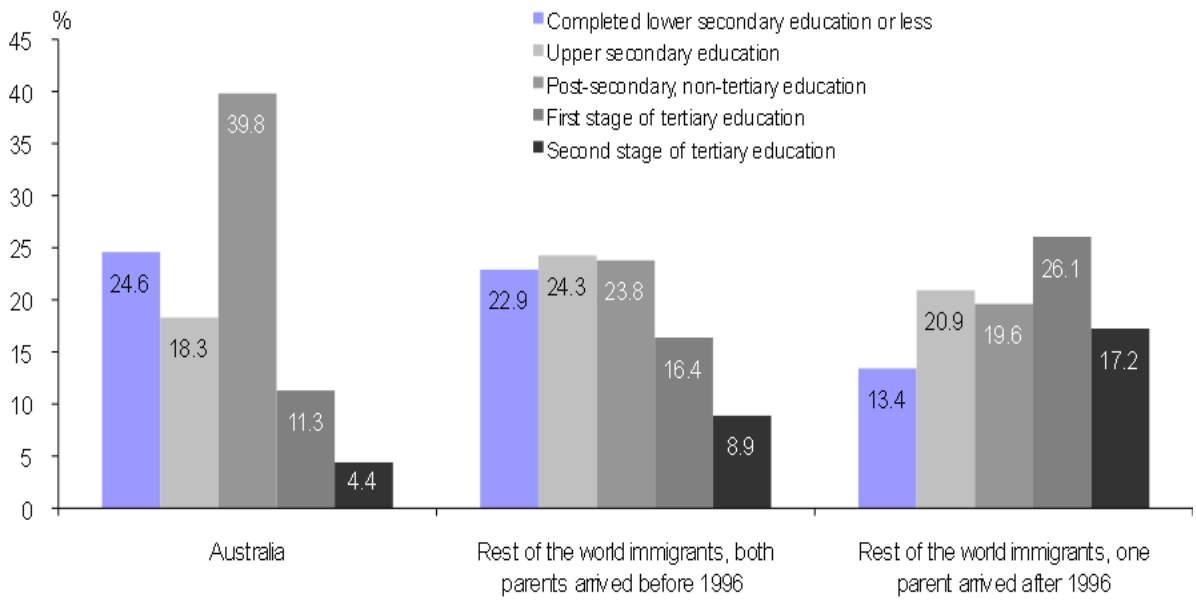
Table 7 shows that the number of siblings in the home tends to be similar across immigrant groups. However, children in the groups from China and the Philippines are more likely than

average to have no siblings. Children in the group from China are significantly more likely than children in other groups to have a grandparent living with them.

5.2.2 Educational attainment among parents

In general, adult immigrants have higher educational qualifications than native-born adult Australians. This is a result of the significant skills-based immigration to Australia. Recent immigrants, moreover, tend to be more highly skilled than immigrants who arrived some time ago. Figure 3 shows the educational attainment of the fathers of native-born Australian children and the fathers of two groups of children in immigrant families: rest of the world children whose parents arrived in Australia before 1996 and rest of the world children whose parents arrived after 1996. The differences in educational attainment among the fathers in the three groups are notable. Native-born Australian fathers have the lowest rates of attainment in the first and second stages of tertiary education; only 16 per cent in this group reached these levels. Among the rest of the world immigrants who arrived before 1996, 25 per cent of the fathers had a tertiary education, while, among those who arrived after 1996, the share jumped to 43 per cent. This difference among the groups clearly shows the impact of the skilled immigration programme on the characteristics of the immigrant population. If the immigrant sample is restricted to children who live in households where a language other than English is spoken at home, the picture does not change: the educational achievements of the parents of children in immigrant families still surpass the educational achievements of the parents of native-born Australian children.

Figure 3: Highest Educational Attainment among Fathers, Australia, 2001



Source: Census 2001 Household Sample File (Basic Confidentialized Unit Record File).

Table 8 shows more details on educational attainment among the parents in immigrant families. The parents of children in immigrant families from Africa and Asia tend to be the most well educated. For example, the fathers of a fifth of the children in immigrant families from south central Asia have attained second-stage tertiary education. Meanwhile, the parents

of children in families from Lebanon have, on average, much lower educational qualifications than the parents in other immigrant groups.

Table 8: Children according to the Level of Education of the Parents, Australia, 2001

per cent of children

Family origin	*Father completed*					*Mother completed*				
	Secondary		*Post-secondary, non-tertiary*	*Tertiary*		*Secondary*		*Post-secondary, non-tertiary*	*Tertiary*	
	Lower	*Upper*		*First stage*	*Second stage*	*Lower*	*Upper*		*First stage*	*Second stage*
All children	24.1	20.2	37.3	12.9	5.5	34.4	29.9	19.4	12.5	3.8
Children in immigrant families[a]	25.6	18.7	39.9	11.4	4.5	37.1	28.7	19.3	11.4	3.5
Children inimmigrant families	21.2	23.1	32.5	15.6	7.6	28.6	32.6	19.8	14.8	4.3
Africa	7.0	22.1	33.3	26.2	11.4	16.4	29.6	26.9	20.1	7.0
Asia	21.1	25.4	22.0	19.4	12.1	26.8	32.2	15.3	20.3	5.5
China	18.1	33.9	22.6	18.8	6.5	19.7	37.0	24.4	14.0	4.9
Other East Asia	16.7	30.5	16.1	21.3	15.4	17.3	35.3	16.4	24.2	6.7
Other South Central Asia	6.4	22.0	26.3	23.3	22.0	16.4	33.8	15.3	25.0	9.5
Philippines	18.3	20.9	32.7	23.5	4.6	21.2	24.7	14.5	37.6	2.0
Viet Nam	44.5	29.7	10.1	12.4	3.3	50.7	34.0	8.2	6.7	—
Other South East Asia	22.5	19.8	24.4	18.0	15.3	29.4	29.2	15.8	18.0	7.6
Europe	20.3	21.1	38.4	14.3	6.0	29.0	30.8	22.9	13.1	4.1
Germany	9.2	17.7	51.3	18.5	3.3	21.6	33.0	23.8	16.8	4.9
Greece	37.4	18.7	33.5	8.8	—	38.9	33.9	16.2	11.1	—
Italy	28.8	18.3	38.9	11.8	2.2	37.3	32.5	20.9	5.9	3.4
Other EU-15, EEA and Switzerland[b]	17.9	20.7	39.1	15.4	6.9	28.5	29.7	22.8	14.6	4.4
Ireland and United Kingdom	18.2	20.5	39.8	14.5	7.0	28.9	29.6	22.4	14.7	4.4
Other Europe	24.0	25.3	34.0	11.1	5.6	26.9	33.7	25.7	9.8	3.9
Oceania	23.5	25.4	34.1	12.1	4.9	28.9	36.3	22.8	10.0	2.1
New Zealand	23.0	23.9	37.2	10.8	5.0	29.4	36.9	22.3	9.2	2.1
Other Oceania	24.9	30.3	24.1	16.1	4.5	27.1	34.5	24.1	12.3	2.0
Other countries	25.0	23.4	27.1	16.4	8.1	29.3	37.8	12.6	15.2	5.0
Lebanon	47.1	19.6	25.2	4.5	3.7	51.0	35.5	8.3	3.8	1.5
Inadequately described or not stated	26.6	23.4	40.7	7.5	1.8	42.9	28.1	18.3	8.8	1.9

Source: Census 2001 Household Sample File (Basic Confidentialized Unit Record File).

a. This includes children in families in which both parents have been born in Australia.

b. See note to table 4.

— insufficient data available or small sample size.

5.2.3 Parental employment

Some observers and stakeholders dispute whether the strict immigration and naturalization policies and the focus on a skilled immigrant workforce are the main causes of the relative well-being of immigrant families in Australia, especially families with English-speaking backgrounds. Reitz (1998), for example, argues that the labour market is much more important than immigration policies in determining outcomes among immigrant groups.

Indeed, a number of smaller studies have found that immigrant families experience the same barriers in Australia as immigrant families in other countries, including racism, discrimination, identity issues and dislocation from the culture of origin (Dunn et al. 2007, Yasmeen 2008). So, the relative well-being of immigrants appears not necessarily to be accounted for by the more welcoming attitude of Australian society towards immigrant families, especially those with non-English-speaking backgrounds. Rather, it seems that, in Australia, immigrant families are able to find employment relatively quickly and to find jobs that are stable and lead to better prospects (Tables 9–11).

Table 9 shows that full-time employment rates among parents of children in immigrant families from most European countries are higher than the corresponding rates among parents in native-born families. However, the rates among parents in families from Lebanon and Viet Nam are somewhat lower than the average. (The data on Lebanon should be treated with caution; see elsewhere above.)

Table 9: Children according to Employment among the Parents, Australia, 2001

per cent of children

Family origin	*At least one parent works full time (36+ hours/week)*	*In two-parent families*	
		At least one parent works full time	*Two parents work full time*
All children	61.4	77.1	17.8
Children in non-immigrant families[a]	61.5	79.5	16.6
Children in immigrant families	61.3	72.6	20.0
Africa	66.3	76.9	15.3
Asia	59.3	69.3	25.3
China	61.1	68.2	30.9
Other East Asia	54.7	68.9	21.9
Other South Central Asia	72.3	78.0	26.7
Philippines	64.6	72.4	32.2
Viet Nam	46.3	57.9	24.7
Other South East Asia	58.2	69.1	19.6
Europe	68.8	77.8	18.5
Germany	74.5	86.3	16.2
Greece	56.7	63.0	15.5
Italy	77.1	80.0	20.7
Other EU-15, EEA and Switzerland[b]	70.5	80.0	17.0
Ireland and United Kingdom	70.7	80.8	17.0
Other Europe	60.0	69.6	24.1
Oceania	62.6	75.7	20.2
New Zealand	62.9	76.6	19.2
Other Oceania	61.8	72.7	23.7
Other countries	51.3	58.6	15.8
Lebanon	41.4	47.3	13.7
Inadequately described or not stated	35.4	66.5	20.9

Source: Census 2001 Household Sample File (Basic Confidentialized Unit Record File).

Note: a. This includes children in families in which both parents have been born in Australia.

b. see note to Table 4.

Table 10: Employment Status of Fathers, Australia, 2001

per cent of children

Family origin	*Not employed*	*Other**	*Part time (1–35 hours/week)*	*Full time (36+ hours/week)*			
				Total	*36–40 hours*	*41–48 hours*	*49+hours*
All children	13.5	2.4	9.0	72.3	30.0	13.9	28.5
Children in non-immigrant families [a]	11.5	2.4	8.6	74.7	29.2	14.5	31.0
Children in immigrant families	17.3	2.2	9.9	67.9	31.4	12.8	23.8
Africa	13.2	2.4	10.0	72.0	27.8	16.2	28.0
Asia	19.4	1.7	11.4	64.8	35.7	11.5	17.7
China	19.9	2.0	12.6	63.0	37.3	10.0	15.6
Other East Asia	19.7	1.5	11.2	65.3	27.4	12.0	25.9
Other South Central Asia	12.9	2.0	8.2	73.9	39.6	14.5	19.9
Philippines	20.6	1.3	11.5	63.8	40.8	12.6	10.5
Viet Nam	28.2	—	13.4	54.9	35.3	6.5	13.2
Other South East Asia	17.6	2.3	12.0	65.5	33.9	12.3	19.2
Europe	13.0	2.3	9.0	73.1	31.3	14.7	27.1
Germany	6.7	3.7	4.9	84.7	32.5	17.2	35.0
Greece	25.9	3.7	8.5	54.5	17.4	14.8	22.3
Italy	11.7	—	8.8	76.1	37.2	8.5	30.4
Other EU-15, EEA and Switzerland [b]	10.9	2.4	8.4	75.9	30.9	16.2	28.8
Ireland and United Kingdom	11.0	2.6	8.2	78.2	32.1	16.3	29.8
Other Europe	20.3	2.2	12.3	62.7	32.7	11.6	18.3
Oceania	16.4	2.8	8.1	70.0	30.2	12.8	27.0
New Zealand	15.3	3.0	8.8	70.7	27.3	13.5	29.9
Other Oceania	20.1	2.3	5.6	67.7	39.7	10.5	17.6
Other countries	27.6	2.3	11.8	55.3	26.7	8.5	20.1
Lebanon	44.0	3.5	9.2	43.2	19.8	7.6	15.8
Inadequately described or not stated	24.1	1.8	9.2	60.9	29.0	9.8	22.1

Source: Census 2001 Household Sample File (Basic Confidentialized Unit Record File).

Note: a. This includes children in families in which both parents have been born in Australia.

b. see note to Table 4.

— = no persons are in the relevant cell in the study population, the sample size is too small to provide separate results for the category, or no information is available.

* Other = for example, employed, but not now working.

Table 11: Employment Status of Mothers, Australia, 2001

per cent of children

Family origin	*Not employed*	*Other**	*Part time (1–35 hours/week)*	*Full time (36+ hours/week)*			
				Total	*36–40 hours*	*41–48 hours*	*49+hours*
All children	43.5	2.3	32.0	20.4	13.6	2.8	3.9
Children in non-immigrant families [a]	42.1	2.5	34.4	19.3	12.4	2.8	4.0
Children in immigrant families	46.6	1.9	27.1	22.6	15.9	2.9	3.7
Africa	46.8	0.9	30.8	20.0	14.0	2.5	3.5
Asia	51.0	1.6	18.9	27.1	20.1	3.1	4.0
China	49.4	1.3	13.0	34.8	22.5	5.9	6.4
Other East Asia	54.1	1.1	22.1	21.7	15.2	2.5	4.0
Other South Central Asia	45.6	2.0	21.4	29.8	22.8	3.7	3.3
Philippines	39.2	1.9	17.6	38.5	32.0	2.3	4.2
Viet Nam	62.4	1.1	12.5	22.1	17.2	2.3	2.6
Other South East Asia	52.0	2.1	23.3	21.9	15.3	2.6	4.0
Europe	40.2	2.2	34.0	21.5	15.1	2.9	3.5
Germany	42.5	2.6	34.0	17.8	10.5	—	5.8
Greece	43.5	—	29.2	21.8	13.4	3.0	5.5
Italy	35.2	1.9	36.6	23.9	19.6	2.2	2.2
Other EU-15, EEA and Switzerland [b]	39.9	2.1	36.2	20.0	13.3	2.9	3.8
Ireland and United Kingdom	40.3	2.2	37.6	19.9	13.6	2.8	3.6
Other Europe	42.5	3.0	25.3	27.3	21.5	3.5	2.3
Oceania	45.6	2.1	27.0	22.8	15.4	3.3	4.0
New Zealand	45.5	1.7	28.4	22.0	14.4	2.9	4.7
Other Oceania	45.7	3.4	22.4	25.3	19.0	4.4	1.9
Other countries	60.1	1.5	19.9	17.2	11.6	2.3	3.4
Lebanon	76.0	0.5	11.8	11.8	6.6	2.0	3.2
Inadequately described or not stated	48.0	2.1	23.2	24.2	16.0	3.7	4.5

Source: Census 2001 Household Sample File (Basic Confidentialized Unit Record File).

Note: a. This includes children in families in which both parents have been born in Australia.

b. see note to Table 4.

— = no persons are in the relevant cell in the study population, the sample size is too small to provide separate results for the category, or no information is available.

* Other = for example, employed, but not now working.

5.2.4 Family socioeconomic status

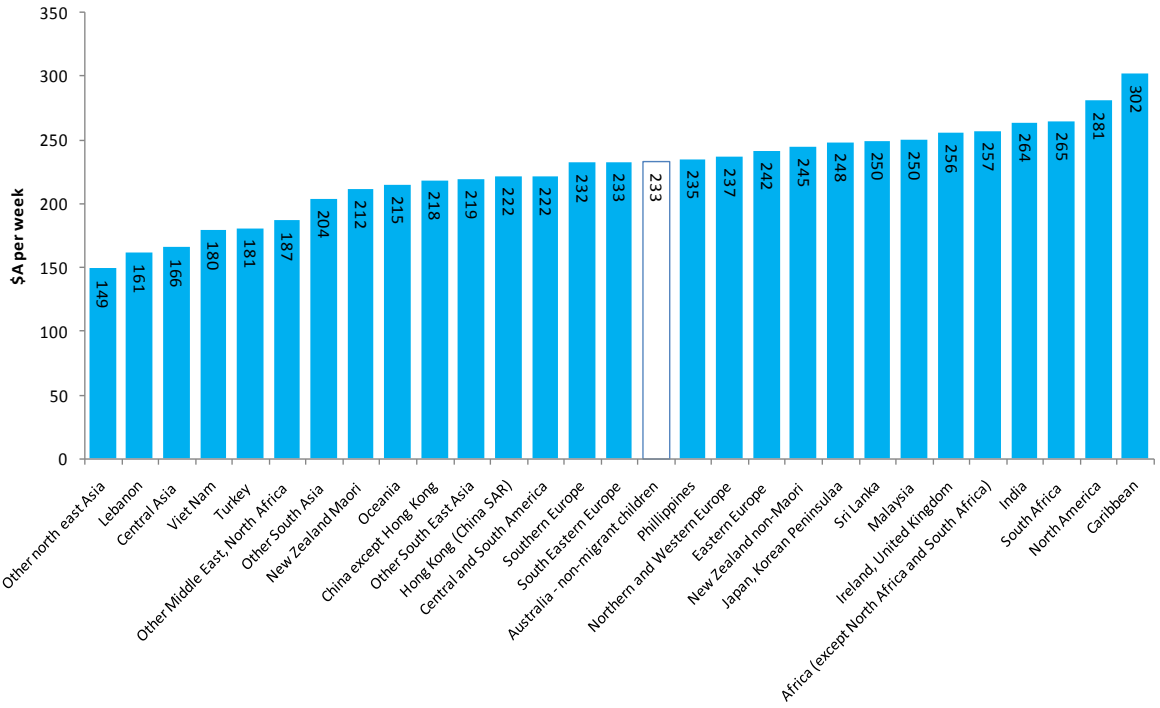
In most countries, immigrant families tend to have a low socioeconomic status within the population. In Australia, the picture is mixed. The average income among immigrant families is relatively high. Our analysis of the census data shows, however, that income among different immigrant groups varies considerably (Figure 4). Many studies have shown that particular immigrant groups are vulnerable to poverty.

Incomes among immigrant families are not necessarily in line with the average incomes in the countries of origin. Part of the explanation for this and other income differences lies in the points system used in Australia to select among applications for immigration. The system ensures that many successful applicants already enjoy relatively high socioeconomic status within their countries of origin and that they have access to relatively well-paid work upon arrival in Australia.

Some immigrant groups, mainly those with English-speaking backgrounds, earn generally higher incomes than native-born Australians, whereas others have much lower incomes. Thus, the census data show that, in 2001, the average income among various immigrant groups ranged from AUD 149 and AUD 161 per week for immigrants from other north east Asia and Lebanon, respectively, to AUD 302 per week among immigrants from the

Caribbean (Figure 4). Meanwhile, the average among native-born Australians was AUD 233 per week.

Figure 4: Per Capita Incomes among Households with Children, Australia, 2001



Source: Author calculations based on the 2001 census (Remote Access Data Laboratory).
Note: The Remote Access Data Laboratory dataset provides more country detail than the Basic Confidentialized Unit Record File used elsewhere in this report. However, it is only possible to obtain highly aggregated data from this dataset. Data on Lebanon are based on reports on the ancestry of children who were born abroad or whose parents were born abroad. They should be treated with caution.
Per capita household income is derived using the midpoints of household income bands reported in the census, divided by the number of persons in the household.
Korean Peninsula = the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea.

Wilkins (2008) has recently studied the incomes of immigrants relative to the incomes of native-born Australians based on an analysis of the data set of the household, income and labour dynamics in Australia survey. His analysis only includes immigrants aged 15 or above, so only a small number are children. He divided the survey cohort into non-English-speaking background, English-speaking background and native-born Australians and divided the two immigrant groups into recent arrivals (post-1991) and earlier arrivals (pre-1991). Wilkins found that:

- Overall, incomes among immigrants are similar to the incomes among native-born Australians.
- Immigrants with English-speaking backgrounds have higher incomes than native-born Australians, and their incomes are growing more rapidly than incomes among the overall population.
- Immigrants with non-English-speaking backgrounds have lower incomes and are more highly concentrated in the lowest income quintile.
- The incomes of recently arrived immigrant cohorts are growing more rapidly than the incomes of other segments in the population. However, those immigrants with non-

English-speaking backgrounds who arrived before 1991 are likely to experience less movement in their incomes than other groups (Table 12).

Table 12: Income Quintile Transitions, Persons Aged 15 or Older, Australia, 2001–2005

per cent

Population segment	*Up three or four*	*Up two*	*Up one*	*No change*	*Down one*	*Down two*	*Down three or four*
Australian born	2.4	6.1	17.8	44.3	17.5	6.5	3.5
Immigrants							
English-speaking background	3.0	7.4	15.0	44.7	19.5	6.5	3.4
Recent immigrant (post-1991)	4.9	9.7	10.7	47.5	18.0	5.0	2.9
Other	2.6	7.0	15.7	44.3	19.8	6.7	3.4
Non-English-speaking background	2.8	5.3	18.0	46.4	16.2	5.5	3.2
Recent immigrant (post-1991)	3.0	7.5	19.9	45.6	13.8	5.1	2.4
Other	2.8	4.4	17.4	46.9	16.9	5.7	3.6

Source: Wilkins (2008).
Note: The table shows the quintile distribution of household income equivalized among all persons. The columns show the direction and magnitude of quintile shifts among the population segments indicated. The results are weighted by population.

Table 13: Children according to Family Homeownership and Housing, Australia, 2001

per cent of children

Family origin	*Family owns home*	*Home is overcrowded*
All children	69.0	9.4
Children in non-immigrant families[a]	69.0	8.8
Children in immigrant families	69.1	10.6
Africa	63.9	6.7
Asia	69.0	12.5
China	72.7	11.6
Other East Asia	67.5	7.3
Other South Central Asia	66.1	15.8
Philippines	68.6	14.4
Viet Nam	67.5	18.9
Other South East Asia	71.5	8.0
Europe	78.2	5.6
Germany	77.4	2.6
Greece	88.0	—
Italy	91.7	6.8
Other EU-15, EEA and Switzerland[b]	77.8	5.5
Ireland and United Kingdom	78.0	5.8
Other Europe	72.4	7.0
Oceania	53.3	12.3
New Zealand	55.2	10.3
Other Oceania	47.0	19.1
Other countries	61.6	20.6
Lebanon	—	38.8
Inadequately described or not stated	61.1	15.8

Source: Census 2001 Household Sample File (Basic Confidentialized Unit Record File).
Note: a. This includes children in families in which both parents have been born in Australia.
b. see note to Table 4.
A family experiences overcrowding if the number of persons in the household, divided by the number of bedrooms, plus 2 is greater than 1 ([n / (b + 2) >1].
— = indicates a small sample size.

Wilkins points out that some of his findings may be explained by differences in age or other socio-demographic characteristics of the various immigrant cohorts rather than by the actual experience of immigration or by immigration policies. Thus, the likelihood that an immigrant will experience poverty is a function of a number of factors, including the country of origin, socioeconomic status, educational attainment, the economic situation in Australia when the immigrant arrived and, perhaps, proficiency in English, family circumstances and so on.

Our analysis shows that housing conditions are generally only slightly worse among immigrant families (Table 13). However, the households of children in families from New Zealand and other countries in Oceania exhibit relatively low levels of home ownership, while the households of children in families from Lebanon and Viet Nam appear to experience quite high rates of overcrowding.

5.2.5 The language shift

The numerical majority of immigrants are still from English-speaking countries, particularly Ireland, New Zealand and the United Kingdom, which, together, account for more than a third of all children in immigrant families, followed by China and Viet Nam at 4 per cent each (ABS 2007).

Table 14: Children Who Do Not Speak English at Home, Australia, 2001

per cent of children

Family origin	*Do not speak English at home*
All children	12.7
Children in non-immigrant families[a]	2.6
Children in immigrant families	33.8
Africa	13.3
Asia	66.0
China	91.9
Other East Asia	78.6
Other South Central Asia	51.9
Philippines	33.0
Viet Nam	95.3
Other South East Asia	51.2
Europe	17.8
Germany	25.4
Greece	64.7
Italy	25.6
Other EU-15, EEA and Switzerland[b]	2.9
Other Europe	62.5
Oceania	13.2
New Zealand	7.1
Other Oceania	34.7
Other countries	63.0
Inadequately described or not stated	21.1

Source: Census 2001 Household Sample File (Basic Confidentialized Unit Record File).
Note: a. This includes children in families in which both parents have been born in Australia.
b. see note to Table 4.

Two thirds of children in immigrant families speak English in the home, while a third speak another language (Table 14). Among children in immigrant families from rich countries, the shares speaking a language other than English in the home are relatively small, but, among children in immigrant families from Asia, the shares are high, rising to over 9 in 10 in the case of children in families from China. Nonetheless, among children aged 12 and above, over nine tenths of those who do not speak English in the home claim to speak it well. This finding tends to confirm findings from the 1996 census that English proficiency among second-generation Australians correlates poorly with the English proficiency of their parents. It suggests that the Australian education system – possibly in conjunction with other factors such as the commitment of immigrant families to education and the educational status of the parents in these families – may be rather effective in teaching English to the children of immigrants (Khoo et al. 2002).

The extent to which the parents and children in immigrant families speak English has important implications. As Marjoribanks (1985) argues, English proficiency must exist at a minimal level before other factors, such as education and skills development, begin to have an impact. However, speaking a language other than English in the home may also have a protective effect by, for example, facilitating mutual support across families within immigrant groups. Nor should it be assumed that immigrant families from English-speaking countries necessarily do better than others. Thus, Taft (1979) examined the relative levels of stress among immigrant children in families from Malta, South America and the United Kingdom. Taft was unable to confirm his hypothesis that familiarity with the English language would facilitate positive adjustment in Australia. He found that children from Malta exhibited higher levels of stress in Australia than South American children, even though the level of proficiency in English of the children from Malta was generally much higher. He concluded that other factors were more important than language proficiency.

5.3 Educational attainment among children

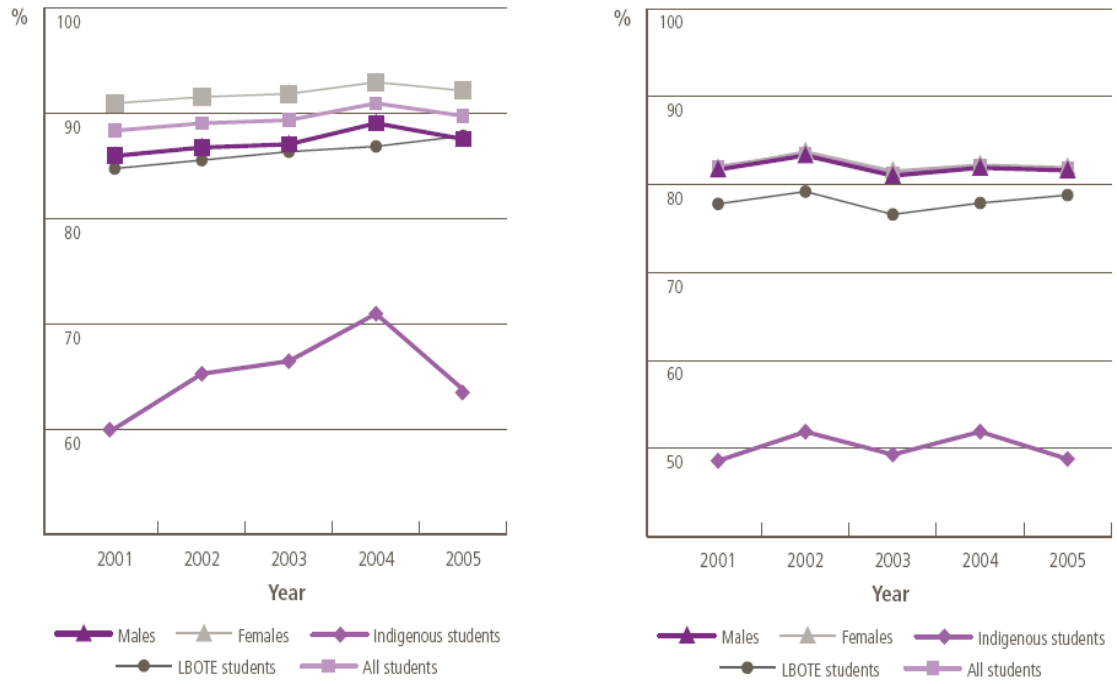
There are few studies on children in immigrant families in preschool care. A study conducted by the Australian Institute of Family Studies (Hand and Wise 2006) found that providers of childcare and preschool care experienced additional barriers in communication with parents of culturally diverse backgrounds.

Smaller scale studies confirm that children in families in some immigrant groups suffer considerable disadvantage in school, particularly racism expressed by teachers and other pupils (Mansouri and Kamp 2007, Mansouri and Trembath 2005).

However, most of the large-scale surveys of school outcomes show little difference among groups. The most authoritative source is the National Report on Schooling in Australia, which annually records the share of students of different ages who achieve performance benchmarks in reading, writing and literacy (MCEETYA 2007). Figure 5 presents data from the 2005 report. The data on reading and numeracy at year 3 (8- to 9-year-olds) show clearly that there is a considerable achievement gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students, but that children in immigrant families with non-English-speaking backgrounds were exactly at the national average in reading and only slightly below the national average in numeracy.

Figure 5: Year 3 Students Achieving the Reading and Numeracy Benchmarks, by Gender and Subgroup, Australia, 2001–2005

a. Reading **b. Numeracy**



Source: MCEETYA (2007).
Note: LBOTE = language background other than English.

Rothman and McMillan (2003) have analysed the data from the longitudinal surveys of Australian youth, a cohort study of educational attainment in Australia. They concluded that, at age 14, students had lower reading comprehension scores if they or their mothers were born in a non-English-speaking country, but that there were no differences between these children and native-born Australians in mathematics scores.

This generally positive picture is supported by analysis of the data gathered through the OCED's Programme for International Student Assessment. Thus, Liebig (2007) shows that, both with and without controls for a range of socioeconomic background variables, educational outcomes among 15-year-old children in immigrant families in Australia, as well as in Canada and New Zealand, are not significantly different from the educational outcomes among native-born children. This result stands in marked contrast to the situation in many other OECD countries (for example, Belgium and Germany), where the children in immigrant families almost invariably perform less well at school than the children of native-born parents.

This finding is largely borne out by analysis of the Census 2001 Household Sample File for 16- to 17-year-olds. Table 15 shows that native-born Australians in this age group who are living with their fathers exhibit the highest school drop-out rate, while corresponding children in immigrant families from rest of the world countries have the lowest rate, especially if a language other than English is spoken at home. The contrast between native-born 16- and 17-year-olds and children in the same age group in rest of the world immigrant families in which

the fathers have only completed basic education is particularly instructive: almost three in ten of the former had dropped out of school compared with fewer than two in ten of the latter.

Table 15: Drop-Outs among 16- and 17-Year-Olds by Family Origin and Father's Educational Attainment, Australia, 2001

per cent of children who have dropped out of school

Family origin	*Father completed basic education or less*	*Father completed secondary education*	*Father completed tertiary education*	*All*
Australia				
Speaks English at home	29.6	22.3	22. 6	24.5
Does not speak English at home	—	—	—	—
Europe or New Zealand				
Speaks English at home	25.2	20.8	21.1	21.8
Does not speak English at home	20.7	18.5	—	22.5
Rest of the world				
Speaks English at home	—	22.0	—	20.7
Does not speak English at home	19.8	12.5	—	15.2

Source: Census 2001 Household Sample File.
Note: "Father completed secondary education" includes the completion of some post-secondary, non-tertiary education. — = insufficient observations for a reliable estimate.

5.4 Youth and the labour market

Our analysis of the Census 2001 Household Sample File reveals that most youth aged 15 to 24, including youth in immigrant families, are attending school (Tables 16–21). Some of these youth may also be working.

Table 16: Young People Aged 15–17 in School and Work, Australia, 2001

per cent of children

Family origin	*In school*		*Not in school*	
	Total	*Academic track*	*Working*	*Not working*
All children	100	87.7	8.4	5.7
Children in non-immigrant families[a]	100	87.0	9.2	6.7
Children in immigrant families	100	89.0	6.9	4.0
Africa	100	93.0	—	—
Asia	100	95.4	3.1	1.5
China	100	94.1	—	—
Other East Asia	100	98.4	—	—
Other South Central Asia	100	96.9	—	—
Philippines	100	88.0	—	7.2
Viet Nam	100	97.8	—	—
Other South East Asia	100	95.0	5.0	—
Europe	100	88.5	7.7	3.5
Germany	100	93.1	—	—
Greece	100	84.2	10.6	—
Italy	100	90.0	7.0	—
Other EU-15, EEA and Switzerland[b]	100	86.6	8.9	4.6
Other Europe	100	94.1	4.2	—
Oceania	100	84.0	8.4	5.6
New Zealand	100	82.2	10.7	7.1
Other Oceania	100	90.5	—	—
Other countries	100	92.0	4.0	4.0
Inadequately described or not stated	100	75.6	14.7	9.7

Source: Census 2001 Household Sample File (Basic Confidentialized Unit Record File).
Note: a. This includes children in families in which both parents have been born in Australia.
b. see note to Table 4; — = small sample size.

Table 17: Young People Aged 18–24 in School and Work, Australia, 2001

per cent of children

Family origin	*In school*		*Not in school*	
	Total	*Academic track*	*Working*	*Not working*
All children	100	34.9	51.6	15.9
Children in non-immigrant families[a]	100	32.0	55.2	17.0
Children in immigrant families	100	39.1	46.6	14.3
Africa	100	47.9	41.8	10.2
Asia	100	67.1	24.8	8.1
China	100	81.7	14.5	3.8
Other East Asia	100	78.0	15.4	6.6
Other South Central Asia	100	63.4	27.3	9.2
Philippines	100	45.4	41.1	13.5
Viet Nam	100	53.7	33.5	12.8
Other South East Asia	100	70.6	23.3	6.1
Europe	100	34.3	52.6	13.0
Germany	100	34.3	53.7	12.0
Greece	100	34.1	50.2	15.7
Italy	100	28.0	62.3	9.7
Other EU-15, EEA and Switzerland[b]	100	33.8	53.8	12.4
Other Europe	100	38.6	45.9	15.4
Oceania	100	25.3	54.6	20.1
New Zealand	100	23.1	56.9	20.1
Other Oceania	100	33.6	46.1	20.3
Other countries	100	39.9	37.9	22.2
Inadequately described or not stated	100	22.1	59.9	18.0

Source: Census 2001 Household Sample File (Basic Confidentialized Unit Record File).
Note: a. This includes children in families in which both parents have been born in Australia.
b. see note to Table 4.

Table 18: Young Men Aged 15–17 in School and Work, Australia, 2001

per cent of children

Family origin	*In school*		*Not in school*	
	Total	*Academic track*	*Working*	*Not working*
All children	100	85.9	10.0	5.9
Children in non-immigrant families[a]	100	85.0	11.1	6.8
Children in immigrant families	100	87.5	8.2	4.3
Africa	100	87.5	—	—
Asia	100	95.0	3.8	1.3
China	100	90.9	—	—
Other East Asia	100	98.5	—	—
Other South Central Asia	100	96.0	—	—
Philippines	100	89.1	—	—
Viet Nam	100	98.1	—	—
Other South East Asia	100	94.0	—	—
Europe	100	86.6	9.1	3.6
Germany	100	90.9	—	—
Greece	100	80.9	14.3	—
Italy	100	90.6	—	—
Other EU-15, EEA and Switzerland[b]	100	84.8	10.9	4.3
Other Europe	100	91.6	5.0	—
Oceania	100	80.8	10.7	5.7
New Zealand	100	79.3	13.5	7.2
Other Oceania	100	85.9	10.0	5.9
Other countries	100	85.0	11.1	6.8
Inadequately described or not stated	100	87.5	8.2	4.3

Source: Census 2001 Household Sample File (Basic Confidentialized Unit Record File).
Note: a. This includes children in families in which both parents have been born in Australia.
b. see note to Table 4. — = small sample size.

Table 19: Young Women Aged 15–17 in School and Work, Australia, 2001

per cent of children

Family origin	*In school*		*Not in school*	
	Total	*Academic track*	*Working*	*Not working*
All children	100	89.7	6.6	5.6
Children in non-immigrant families[a]	100	89.1	7.3	6.6
Children inimmigrant families	100	90.6	5.6	3.8
Africa	100	98.1	—	—
Asia	100	95.9	2.4	1.7
China	100	97.1	—	—
Other East Asia	100	98.3	—	—
Other South Central Asia	100	97.9	—	—
Philippines	100	86.6	—	—
Viet Nam	100	97.4	—	—
Other South East Asia	100	96.0	—	—
Europe	100	90.4	5.6	3.3
Germany	100	95.3	—	—
Greece	100	88.3	—	—
Italy	100	89.4	10.6	—
Other EU-15, EEA and Switzerland[b]	100	88.5	6.7	4.8
Other Europe	100	96.6	—	—
Oceania	100	88.0	5.5	5.5
New Zealand	100	86.0	7.0	7.0
Other Oceania	100	95.6	—	—
Other countries	100	93.5	—	3.6
Inadequately described or not stated	100	75.9	14.3	9.8

Source: Census 2001 Household Sample File (Basic Confidentialized Unit Record File).
Note: a. This includes children in families in which both parents have been born in Australia.
b. see note to Table 4. — = small sample size.

Table 20: Young Men Aged 18–24 in School and Work, Australia, 2001

per cent of children

Family origin	*In school*		*Not in school*	
	Total	*Academic track*	*Working*	*Not working*
All children	100	31.3	56.4	14.5
Children in non-immigrant families[a]	100	28.0	60.9	14.9
Children in immigrant families	100	36.0	50.0	14.1
Africa	100	45.6	42.5	11.9
Asia	100	66.7	25.3	8.0
China	100	80.4	16.8	—
Other East Asia	100	79.6	13.9	6.5
Other South Central Asia	100	67.5	26.9	5.6
Philippines	100	45.6	40.3	14.1
Viet Nam	100	55.8	29.5	14.7
Other South East Asia	100	67.3	26.7	6.1
Europe	100	28.3	56.5	15.2
Germany	100	36.8	48.1	15.1
Greece	100	31.3	48.9	19.7
Italy	100	25.3	63.3	11.4
Other EU-15, EEA and Switzerland[b]	100	27.6	59.1	13.3
Other Europe	100	28.4	51.6	20.0
Oceania	100	23.9	57.3	18.8
New Zealand	100	22.7	57.3	20.0
Other Oceania	100	28.4	57.2	14.3
Other countries	100	32.7	44.1	23.2
Inadequately described or not stated	100	21.3	64.6	14.1

Source: Census 2001 Household Sample File (Basic Confidentialized Unit Record File).
Note: a. This includes children in families in which both parents have been born in Australia.
b. see note to Table 4. — = small sample size.

Table 21: Young Women Aged 18–24 in School and Work, Australia, 2001

per cent of children

Family origin	*In school*		*Not in school*	
	Total	*Academic track*	*Working*	*Not working*
All children	100	38.7	46.7	17.2
Australia[a]	100	36.2	49.3	19.1
In immigrant families	100	42.4	43.1	14.5
Africa	100	50.8	41.0	8.2
Asia	100	67.5	24.2	8.3
China	100	82.9	12.6	—
Other East Asia	100	76.7	16.6	6.7
Other South Central Asia	100	58.1	28.0	14.0
Philippines	100	45.2	41.9	12.9
Viet Nam	100	51.4	37.9	10.7
Other South East Asia	100	73.4	20.5	6.1
Europe	100	41.3	48.2	10.5
Germany	100	30.7	61.6	—
Greece	100	37.9	51.8	10.3
Italy	100	31.0	61.2	7.8
Other EU-15, EEA and Switzerland[b]	100	41.2	47.5	11.3
Other Europe	100	49.1	40.2	10.8
Oceania	100	26.6	52.1	21.3
New Zealand	100	23.4	56.5	20.1
Other Oceania	100	38.3	35.9	25.8
Other countries	100	48.2	30.8	21.0
Inadequately described or not stated	100	22.8	55.5	21.6

Source: Census 2001 Household Sample File (Basic Confidentialized Unit Record File).
Note: a. This includes children in families in which both parents have been born in Australia.
b. see note to Table 4. — = small sample size.

In a recent analysis of inclusion in the labour market among immigrants in Australia, Liebig (2007) argues that the key test of a country's success in including immigrants in the economy is the labour market outcomes among the second generation, that is, children with at least one immigrant parent. With respect to Australia, Liebig concludes (2007: 46): "The limited available evidence suggests that the labour market integration of the second generation is not a major issue in Australia, as the outcomes are quite positive: in contrast to what is observed in many European OECD countries."

After controlling for demographic variations, Liebig finds no significant differences in probability of employment between the second immigrant generation and the native-born population. An interesting feature of his analysis is his finding that the labour market participation of the offspring in immigrant families from OECD countries – roughly comparable with the results among the immigrant families with English-speaking backgrounds in other research discussed here – is no different from that of the offspring in immigrant families from non-OECD countries. This finding contradicts the generally held view that children in immigrant families with non-English-speaking backgrounds are more disadvantaged than children in immigrant families with English-speaking backgrounds.

The analysis carried out by Wilkins (2008) on the data set of the household, income and labour dynamics in Australia survey provides a slightly different picture. Wilkins finds that, once in the labour force, immigrants with non-English-speaking backgrounds earn wages that are similar to the wages of native-born Australians. (Immigrants with English-speaking backgrounds have higher earnings.) However, immigrants with non-English-speaking

backgrounds show lower labour force participation rates than native-born Australians, largely because of lower female labour force participation rates. Wilkins also finds that more recent immigrants (especially men) have higher participation rates than previous waves of immigrants. He points out that many of the differences between immigrants and the native-born population may be accounted for by demographic factors such as age and educational attainment, which he does not control for in his analysis.

However, both Liebig and Wilkins rely on combined figures for a wide range of immigrant groups. The qualitative literature suggests that detailed analysis is likely to show that immigrants from particular areas of the world or particular countries are more disadvantaged.

A promising piece of research that throws light on these issues is the third longitudinal survey of immigrants to Australia (DIAC 2007b). The survey sampled approximately 10,000 primary applicants (the persons upon whom the approval to immigrate was based) in either the family reunification or the skills-based immigration stream who had arrived in Australia or had been granted their visas onshore between December 2004 and March 2005. The baseline data were collected in August 2005 approximately six months after the end of the sample period. A second wave of the survey was run 12 months later. A third wave was run in 2008. The second wave found that there had been a considerable reduction in the unemployment rate since the baseline wave. This improvement was evident among both immigration streams. Unemployment among the skills-based stream fell from 9 per cent at the first wave to 3 per cent at the second wave. Unemployment among the family reunification stream fell from 20 to only 6 per cent. However, the skill level of the jobs was relatively low. A worrying finding was that over 40 per cent of those surveyed thought that there is either significant racism or some racism in Australian society. This was slightly more than the share who thought that Australia has little or no racism. Former students from overseas, people from (mainly) English-speaking countries and people who speak English as their best language were more likely to say that there is racism in Australia.

Evans and Kelley (1991) provide an interesting perspective on the relationship between racism and the employment prospects of immigrants. They show that immigrants to Australia do as well as the native-born population in finding and remaining in jobs, despite high levels of racism among employers. They conclude that there is a difference between economic and social exclusion, and that immigrants suffer social exclusion, but are not excluded economically. Despite the racism, there are enough employers who are willing to accept immigrant workers. The employment opportunities among immigrants are therefore not appreciably restricted. In addition, some employers, particularly employers who are of immigrant origin, actively seek workers from immigrant communities.

5.5 Children and health

5.5.1 Physical health

Health status is generally better among immigrant families than among native-born families. According to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW 2002), this is because of the health checks to which all immigrants are subject before they are allowed into Australia. However, comprehensive data are lacking on the physical health of children in immigrant

families. Routine health data collections such as records on hospital separations and accidents do not cover immigrant status or country of origin. This gap in the data is confirmed by a recent report on the health of children in the state of Victoria (DHS-Victoria 2006), which acknowledges that the data available on this area of health are poor. Nonetheless, some adult health surveys conducted by states do include country of birth, and some of the questions are relevant to child health. *The Health of the People of New South Wales* is a report based largely on the New South Wales continuous health survey. On the relative health of native-born and overseas-born citizens, the 2007 report (NSW Health 2007) confirms the findings of the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare that overseas-born people generally have good health, though the patterns in health conditions and the factors in health risk vary by country of birth. Thus, compared with the native born, people born in some overseas countries:

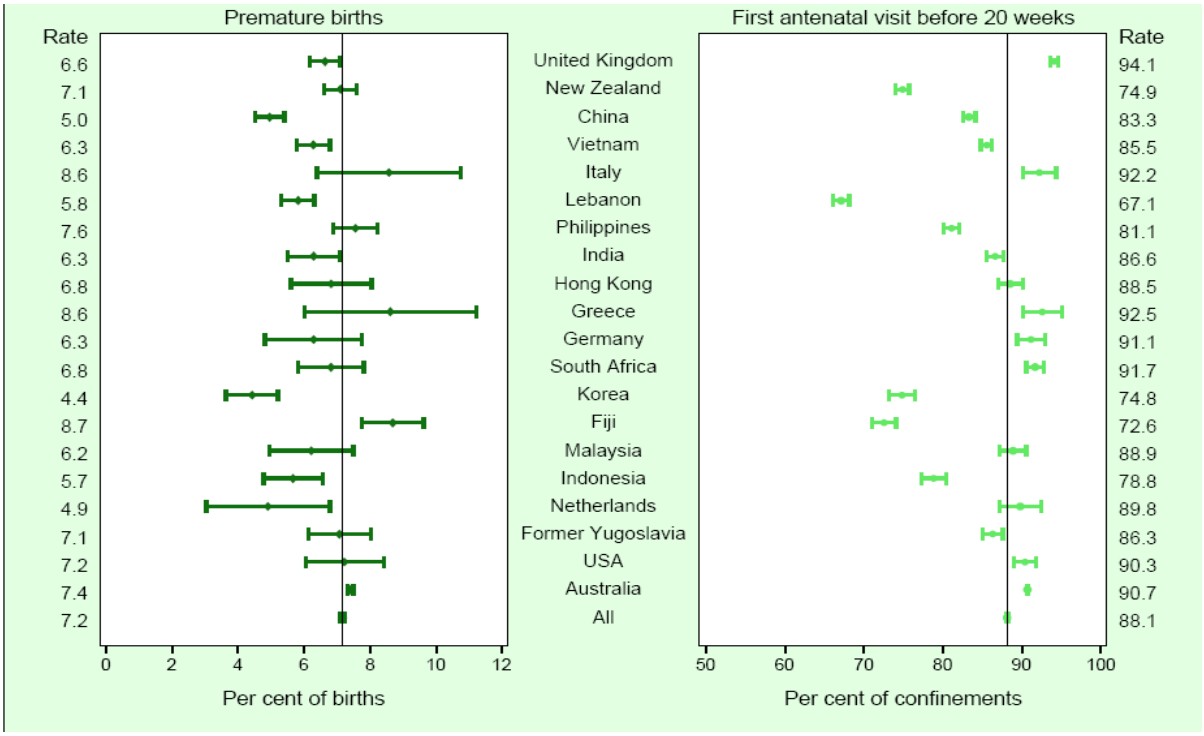
- are more likely to have premature babies (mothers born in Fiji);
- are less likely to have their first antenatal visit before 20 weeks gestation (mothers born in China, Fiji, India, Lebanon, New Zealand, the Philippines, Republic of Korea, Viet Nam, or the countries of the former Yugoslavia);
- have high rates of self-reported risk of excessive alcohol consumption (women born in New Zealand);
- have high rates of self-reported tobacco consumption (men born in Lebanon);
- have high rates of self-reported overweight and obesity conditions (men and women born in Italy, women born in Greece);
- have high rates of self-reported diabetes (people born in Greece, Italy, or Lebanon) and of hospitalization for diabetes or for related complications (people born in Fiji, Greece, India, Italy, or Lebanon);
- have high rates of hospitalization for coronary heart disease (Fiji, India and Lebanon) and cardiac revascularization procedures (Fiji, Greece, India and Lebanon);
- have high rates of liver cancer (China, Egypt, Hong Kong [China SAR], Malaysia, the Philippines, Republic of Korea and Viet Nam);
- have high rates of cervical cancer (women born in China, Fiji, New Zealand, the Philippines, or Viet Nam);
- have high rates of tuberculosis (China, Fiji, Hong Kong [China SAR], India, the Philippines, Republic of Korea and Viet Nam);
- have high rates of self-reported psychological distress (men and women born in Greece or Lebanon, women born in Italy).

Compared with people born in many overseas countries, people born in Australia:

- are more likely to have premature babies;
- have high rates of self-reported risk of excessive alcohol consumption;
- have high rates of self-reported overweight and obesity conditions;
- have high age-adjusted death rates for all causes combined.

Figure 6 shows the rates of premature births and first antenatal visits in the state of New South Wales. In the five-year period from 2000 to 2004, 7.2 per cent of all babies born in the state were born before 37 weeks of gestation. Among most overseas-born groups, rates of prematurity were lower than the state average. Babies of mothers born in Fiji (8.7 per cent) and Australia (7.4 per cent) were more likely than the average to be born prematurely.

Figure 6: Premature Births and First Antenatal Care Visit before 20 Weeks of Gestation, by Maternal Country of Birth, New South Wales, 2000–2004



Source: NSW Health (2007).
Note: The figure shows data for 2000 to 2004 combined.

5.5.2 Mental health and well-being

The paradoxical evidence showing pockets of disadvantage being smothered by generally positive averages is also apparent in international studies of mental illness among immigrants and their children. Aronowitz (1984) reviewed the international literature up to the early 1980s and found that earlier studies had uncovered high levels of mental illness in children in immigrant families. However, recent research provides a more complex picture indicating that, although overall levels of mental ill health among children in immigrant families are similar to and, in some cases, better than among native-born populations, children in immigrant families are more likely to display problems in conduct or behaviour and less likely to show neurotic or psychotic symptoms. The outcomes are also dependent on the country or culture of origin, the country of settlement, the length of time in the new country, economic circumstances, pre-immigration experiences and a range of other factors.

The issues raised by Aronowitz are probably rendered even more complicated in the case of Australia because of the huge differences in the cultural, socioeconomic and personal backgrounds of immigrants there with respect to immigrants in other countries. In particular, the large share of immigrants from relatively wealthy English-speaking countries and from Western European countries means that the average level of well-being among immigrants is not such a meaningful indicator in Australia.

Additional complexity has been uncovered in several recent studies. Alati et al. (2003) have examined the mental health of the children of immigrants as part of the Mater Misericordiae Mothers' Hospital–University of Queensland Study of Pregnancy, a longitudinal study of

5,000 children born in one hospital in Brisbane in the early 1980s. They tested three competing hypotheses about the mental health and well-being of children of immigrants:

- The migration-morbidity hypothesis proposes that immigrants may be expected to exhibit more mental ill health than the population of the country of settlement.
- The healthy migrant effect proposes that immigrants have better mental health than the population of the country of settlement.
- The transitional effect hypothesis proposes that the mental health advantage that some immigrant groups show in the early years of immigration gradually disappears.

Their overall findings are that mental health is initially better among immigrants than among native-born Australians, but that the average incidence of mental illness gradually converges with the average among the native-born population. Thus, the findings of Alati et al. seem to support the transitional effect hypothesis.

> The MUSP [the Mater–University of Queensland] longitudinal study of mothers and children does not support a hypothesis of 'migration-morbidity' in respect to the mental health of 'second-generation' Australians. The mental health of children and adolescents did not appear to be adversely affected by migration according to the regions of origin from which their mothers came. This finding is not a consequence of the socio-economic status of some migrant groups when compared with Australian-born mothers. Overall, these second-generation Australians do not appear to experience either worse or better mental health than their Australian counterparts, and migrant groups do not appear to differ significantly amongst each other. (Alati et al. 2003: 880)

The study by Alati et al. seems to contradict two elements of the prevailing consensus, first, that the trauma and dislocation of immigration generate higher levels of mental ill health among immigrant groups (the migration morbidity hypothesis) and, second, that, to the extent that the well-being of immigrant children is better than that of the native-born population, this is a result of the significant immigration from OECD countries. It confirms that disaggregating immigrants into immigrants with English-speaking (or OECD) backgrounds and immigrants with non-English-speaking (or developing country) backgrounds does not always reveal large differences in well-being. To deconstruct the differences in outcomes, one must examine individual countries of origin and conditions among each immigration cohort. There is a related factor that may be operating as well: immigrants from relatively poor countries may not themselves be poor, and, so, even the specific country of origin may not be a good indicator of the socioeconomic backgrounds of children. Since socioeconomic status is known to be tied to mental health and educational attainment (Katz and Redmond 2008), it may be that the well-being of immigrants is relatively more dependent on the socioeconomic status of the immigrants relative to the average in their countries of origin rather than the average in Australia.

The New South Wales continuous health survey, a telephone survey of a random sample of about 40,000 adults in the state, shows large discrepancies in levels of psychological distress among immigrant groups. Figure 7 shows that, in most groups, women exhibit higher levels of psychological distress than men. However, in some groups, especially the Greeks, Lebanese and, to a lesser extent, Italians, the levels of distress are much higher than the

average in the native-born population. These findings are difficult to interpret. Although it may be surmised that the mental health and psychological well-being of many Muslims and people from the Middle East may have been negatively affected since the events of 11 September 2001, there is no documented reason why Greek and Italian immigrants should feel high levels of distress given that they are among the oldest and most well established immigrant communities in Australia. In addition, the survey shows that immigrants from some of the poorest countries, such as the Philippines and Viet Nam, show relatively low levels of psychological distress.

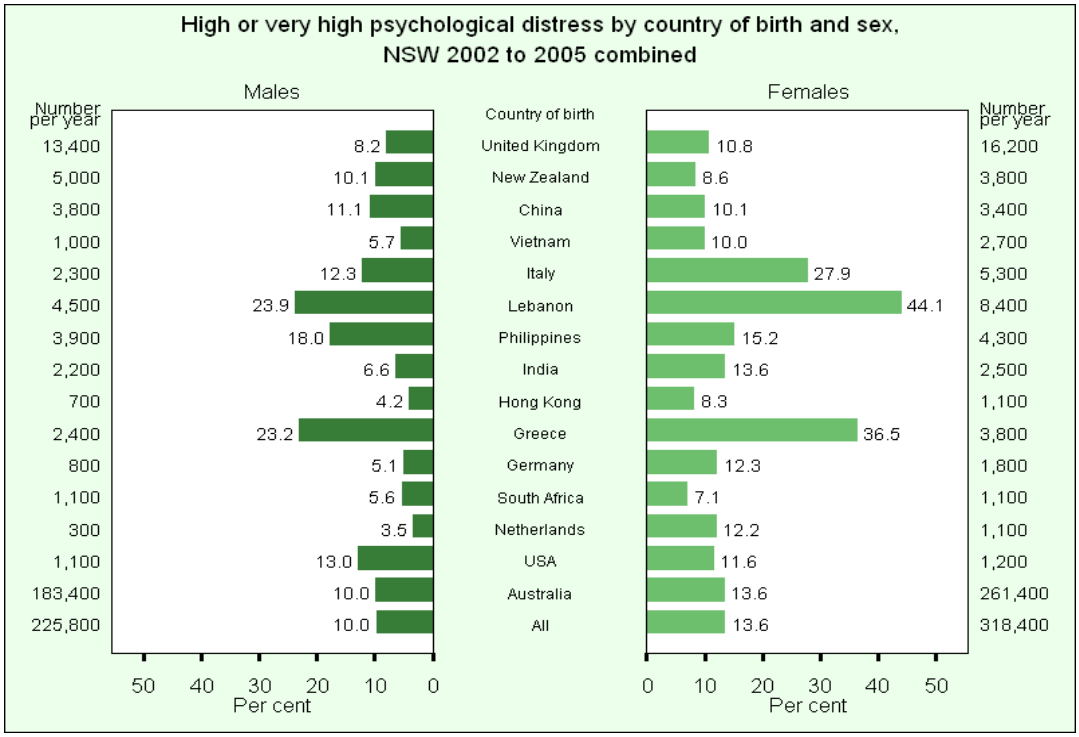
Sonderegger and Barrett (2004) have studied 273 children from the former Yugoslavia and from China who are living in Brisbane or Melbourne. They have studied both primary school and secondary school cohorts and administered a range of tests to ascertain self-esteem, cultural adjustment, social support, future outlook, trauma and sense of Australianism. They found that children and youth in immigrant groups from the former Yugoslavia had a greater sense of Australianism. However, the findings on self-esteem and overall well-being were more complicated in that they depended on age, gender and length of residence in Australia, as well as cultural origin. The authors found that, among both groups, the sense of pride in their own immigrant or ethnic origin increased rather than diminished with the length of residence in Australia.

One of the most important sources of information about outcomes among children in Australia is Growing Up in Australia, a longitudinal cohort study of a representative sample of approximately 10,000 children in Australia being carried out by the Australian Institute of Family Studies (AIFS 2008). The study is divided into two cohorts, the birth cohort (children born in 2004, sampled at the first wave aged around 9 months) and the kindergarten cohort (children born in 2000, sampled at the first wave aged around 4 years). Although the study is representative of the population of 0- and 4-year-olds as a whole, certain groups of children, particularly children of refugees and asylum seekers and children of newly arrived immigrants, are less likely to be represented in the study. (However, as a proportion of all children in Australia, refugee children are not statistically significant.) To date, there have been three waves of data collection, although, at the time we write, the third wave of data have not been released. The following analysis applies to children aged 4 at the first wave, that is, in 2004.

Figure 8 shows the distribution of outcomes among children in the whole sample, among Indigenous children and among children who speak languages other than English at home. The outcomes are measured according to the study's composite outcomes index developed by Sanson et al. (2005). The index is a composite of three dimensions: physical health and well-being, cognitive development, and social and emotional development. The analysis confirms that, overall, 4-year-olds in households speaking a language other than English have lower levels of well-being than the population as a whole, but their well-being is still considerably better than that of Indigenous children. We note also, however, that parents with non-English-speaking backgrounds tend to exhibit higher levels of distress and hostility relative to Indigenous parents. In any case, if one controls for demographic variables such as family income, structure, size and geographical location, most of these parenting and child outcomes more or less disappear, indicating that factors such as socioeconomic status and

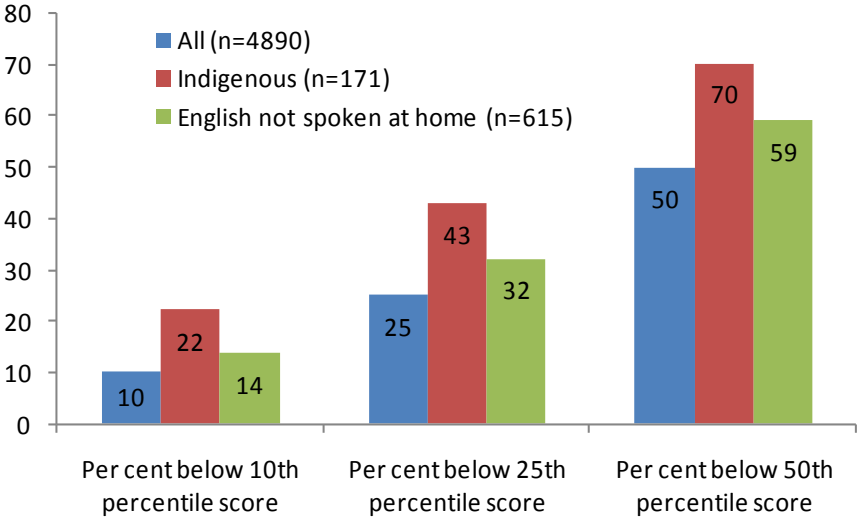
neighbourhood location are more important than immigrant or Indigenous status in determining the outcomes among children.

Figure 7: High or Very High Psychological Distress among Immigrant and Native-Born Adults, New South Wales, 2002–2005



Source: NSW Health (2007).
Note: The figure shows data for 2002 to 2005 combined.

Figure 8: Outcome Index on Indigenous Children and Children Speaking a Language Other Than English at Home, Australia, 2004



Source: Author calculations based on Growing Up in Australia, a longitudinal study of Australian children, wave 1, kindergarten cohort.

5.6 Children and poverty

There is little specific research on poverty among the offspring in immigrant families. Most of the information on this issue refers to adults rather than children or youth. The only direct examination of income, poverty and the socioeconomic status of children in immigrant families was a series of studies conducted by the Bureau of Immigration and Population Research (now disbanded) in the early 1990s (Taylor and MacDonald 1992, 1994). The studies compared the circumstances of children in immigrant families with non-English-speaking backgrounds, children in immigrant families with English-speaking backgrounds and native-born Australian children. The bureau found that the children in immigrant families with English-speaking backgrounds were typically more advantaged than native-born Australian children, while children in immigrant families with non-English-speaking backgrounds suffered from higher levels of poverty and more economic, educational and social exclusion than native-born Australian children.

However, in the early 1990s, when the bureau's studies were carried out, Australia was experiencing economic recession. Though the evidence is mixed regarding the persistence of these differences today among children and youth according to the English-speaking backgrounds of their immigrant families, more recent research and our own analysis of the census data generally confirm that children in immigrant families with English-speaking backgrounds tend to exhibit higher levels of socioeconomic well-being than the general population of Australian children. Children in immigrant families with non-English-speaking backgrounds show similar or slightly below-average levels of socioeconomic well-being in many areas.

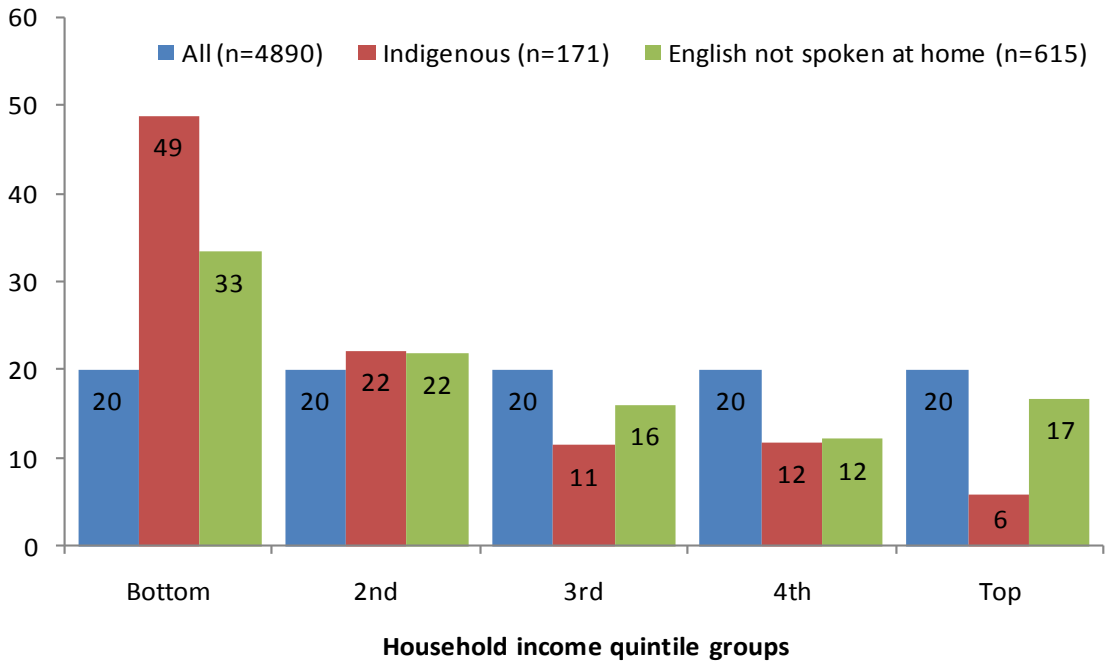
Nonetheless, several investigations into child welfare testify to the serious disadvantages in well-being that children in certain immigrant groups face relative to the overall population. The disadvantages include higher levels of poverty, poorer educational outcomes, exposure to racism, vulnerability to substance abuse and crime, the trauma of separation from the cultural and social networks of their countries of origin, challenges to adjusting to the Australian culture and life style, identity problems and less access to services and social support (Collins 2002, Leung 2001, Reid et al. 2001, Rissel et al. 2000, Windle 2004). In particular, Windle (2004) is highly critical of the standard position that compares people in all minorities, taken together as a group, with native-born Australians, arguing that the diversity of experience among immigrant groups requires that the groups be studied separately.

To examine more closely the specific issue of socioeconomic disadvantage among children in immigrant families, we have carried out a preliminary analysis of the data from wave 1 of the kindergarten cohort in the longitudinal study of Australian children being conducted by the Australian Institute of Family Studies (see the previous subsection). We find that the average incomes of the households of children in immigrant families with non-English-speaking backgrounds are lower than the average incomes of the households of children in immigrant families with English-speaking backgrounds. Figure 9 shows the distribution of all children, Indigenous children and children with a language other than English – a category equivalent to children in immigrant families with non-English-speaking backgrounds – across household income quintiles according to the data of the longitudinal study (see also AIFS 2008). The figure shows that children in immigrant families with non-English-speaking backgrounds are

more likely than the overall population (though much less likely than Indigenous children) to be living in households in the lowest income quintile. This is consistent with other studies such as the study of Wilkins (2008) described elsewhere above (see Table 12 and the associated text).

However, unlike Indigenous children, among whom the distribution is skewed towards the lower end of the income range, children in immigrant families with non-English-speaking backgrounds are almost as likely as children across the population as a whole to be living in households in the highest income quintile. The distribution of incomes among the households of children in immigrant families is more variable. Unfortunately, the sample is too small to allow us to analyse household incomes according to country of origin. The analysis nonetheless shows that children in immigrant families with non-English-speaking backgrounds are generally similar to children in native-born families in terms of household income levels and rates of poverty. Meanwhile, children in families in some immigrant groups are suffering material deprivation with respect to children in families in the native-born population. Thus, Figure 4 (elsewhere above) shows that families in the immigrant groups from Lebanon and Viet Nam are receiving low average incomes. More recent waves of immigrants, especially immigrants who have arrived through the skilled immigration or family reunification streams, tend to earn higher incomes than people who enter the country as refugees or on humanitarian grounds.

Figure 9: Distribution of Indigenous Children and Children Speaking a Language Other Than English at Home, by Household Income, Australia, 2004



Source: Author calculations based on Growing Up in Australia, a longitudinal study of Australian children, wave 1, kindergarten cohort.

5.7 Youth and deviant behaviour

There is little information on the criminal justice system and children and youth in immigrant families. The most comprehensive study of the involvement of these young people in crime was carried out by Baker (1998) for the New South Wales Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research. The study involved an analysis of the 1996 alcohol and drugs survey among Australian school students. Baker notes that young people in specific immigrant groups with non-English-speaking backgrounds appear to be overrepresented within the juvenile justice system in the state of New South Wales. The largest such group in relative terms is the Vietnamese, followed by the Lebanese and then Maori and non-Maori young people from New Zealand. None of these groups approach the level of overrepresentation among Indigenous youth, however (see below).

According to Baker's analysis, this overrepresentation of Indigenous youth and youth in certain immigrant groups reflects discrimination in the juvenile justice system and a bias in the enforcement of the law across different groups rather than appreciably higher levels of criminal involvement. She finds that neither immigrant background nor the language spoken in the home are associated with higher levels of crime. She concludes: "If we take language spoken at home as a measure of ethnicity, then [our] finding is inconsistent with the popular view that suggests juveniles from an ethnic background are more likely to be involved in crime" (Baker 1998: 32).

This is similar to findings in numerous studies across the world that the overrepresentation of ethnic minority youth in the juvenile justice system does not reflect faithfully the differential levels of criminal activity in the population.[3] Nonetheless, it should be borne in mind that Baker's study covers only one Australian state; it is thus not possible to generalize from it to the Australian population as a whole.

5.8 Indigenous children

In contrast to children in immigrant families, there is a considerable amount of research on Indigenous Australian children and youth.

Population surveys indicate that the Indigenous population is at considerable disadvantage in terms of a range of health and social indicators in comparison with the majority population. With regard to health, the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare concludes:

> Young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people had higher rates of death, injury and some chronic diseases compared with other young Australians. During 2002–2004, the death rate for Indigenous young people was almost 4 times the rate for other young Australians, and the injury death rate was almost 5 times that of other young people. Indigenous young people had higher hospital separation

[3] Morenoff (2005) provides a detailed discussion of the disjunction in the United States of America between juvenile justice statistics, which consistently show the overrepresentation of minority youth in crime, and research relying on self-reporting among youth, which shows little or no difference across groups. Morenoff concludes that there is some underreporting in the self-reporting, but that there is also overrepresentation in the system.

> rates for injury (1.7 times the rate for other young Australians), asthma (1.3 times) and diabetes (more than 3 times). Young Indigenous Australians were also more likely than other young Australians to experience health risk factors such as obesity, physical inactivity, smoking, imprisonment, and lower educational attainment. (AIHW 2007a: xii)

Various studies have found that Indigenous children are significantly disadvantaged within the education system (for example, see MCEETYA 2007, Rothman and McMillan 2003).

With regard to juvenile justice, in 2004/05:

- Among young people under juvenile justice supervision, 37 per cent identified themselves or were identified as young people of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander origin.
- About 42 per 1,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander 10- to 17-year-olds were under juvenile justice supervision compared with about 3 per 1,000 non-Indigenous young people.
- Among children aged 13 or less who were under juvenile justice supervision, over 60 per cent identified themselves or were identified as children in families of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander origin (AIHW 2007b).

Indigenous children are almost five times more likely than non-Indigenous children to be victims in cases of substantiated allegations of abuse, although the ratio is different in different states (Table 22). Similarly, the rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care is over seven times the rate among other children.

Table 22: Substantiated Cases of Abuse of Children Aged 0–16, by Indigenous Status, Australia, 2005–2006

per cent and rate per 1,000 children

State, territory	*Number of children*			*Rate per 1,000 children*			*a/b*
	Indigenous	*Other*	*All children*	*a. Indigenous*	*b. Other*	*All children*	
New South Wales	2,696	9,931	12,627	44.2	6.9	8.4	6.4
Victoria	834	6,453	7,287	67.7	6.0	6.7	11.3
Queensland	1,340	8,737	10,077	23.0	10.1	10.9	2.3
Western Australia	316	603	919	10.9	1.4	2.0	7.8
South Australia	360	1,101	1,461	32.3	3.5	4.5	9.2
Tasmania	34	635	669	4.4	6.2	6.1	0.7
Australian Capital Territory	99	754	853	56.8	10.9	12.0	5.2
Northern Territory	354	108	462	15.2	3.2	8.1	4.8
All	6,033	28,322	34,355	29.4	6.5	7.6	4.5

Source: AIHW (2006).
Note: The annual statistical reports of the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare on juvenile justice and child protection do not contain data on immigrant or culturally and linguistically diverse children.

Thus, Indigenous children show significantly lower levels of well-being relative to the population as a whole and to the population of children in immigrant families. Their lack of

well-being has deep historical roots. It is a result of several generations of marginalization among the Indigenous community.

6. CONCLUSIONS

Because of specific patterns of immigration, the situation among children in immigrant families in Australia differs somewhat from the situation among children in immigrant families in other countries. The selective nature of the Government's immigration policies and the preponderance of immigrants from OECD countries has created rather unique conditions for immigrants and their children. Children in immigrant families do as well as or better than native-born Australian children in various dimensions of well-being, including physical and mental health, education and participation in the labour market.

The research literature in Australia often disaggregates children according to whether they live in households with English-speaking backgrounds (often synonymous with immigrant families from OECD countries) or in households with non-English-speaking backgrounds (often synonymous with immigrant families from developing countries). In many dimensions, outcome indicators among children in immigrant families with English- or non-English-speaking backgrounds are similar.

Systematic differences only emerge if specific countries of immigrant origin are considered. Thus, on several measures, children in families of Lebanese and Vietnamese origin fare worse than the native-born population.

In general, the limited available research indicates that children in immigrant families in Australia, like their counterparts in other countries, face difficulties in accessing services, encounter discrimination and significant racism in the workplace and elsewhere and suffer the trauma associated with separation from social networks in their countries of origin. These issues are heightened among certain groups of immigrants, particularly immigrants who have come to Australia with fewer skills and fewer resources, as well as less knowledge of English (Bloul 2008, Foroutan 2008).

However, despite these challenges, even the most disadvantaged immigrant groups do relatively well on some measures and generally tend to fare reasonably well, possibly because they have been able to find steady employment at a good level relatively quickly. This finding seems to indicate that immigration does not, by itself, necessarily produce poor outcomes.

None of the trends reported here are stable because the immigrant population is constantly changing. Global and local events, economic conditions and changes in policy all affect who applies and is admitted as an immigrant to Australia and the nature of the experiences once the immigrant settles in the country. Each new cohort of immigrants imports specific issues and responses.

Much more research is needed in Australia on children in immigrant families and their parents. However, it is clear that the Australian case is rather unique in showing that immigrant families from advanced industrialized countries are not necessarily well off, and

immigrant families from developing countries may be relatively wealthy. Moreover, the relative success of immigrants in Australia suggests that, even though the experience of immigration may be difficult, given the proper set of conditions (and it is not always evident what these are), immigrants may achieve success in a country of settlement rather quickly.

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