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Online Publication Date: 01 January 2004
To cite this Article: Windle, Joel (2004) 'The Ethnic (Dis)advantage Debate Revisited: Turkish background students in Australia', Journal of Intercultural Studies, 25:3, 271 - 286
To link to this article: DOI: 10.1080/0725686042000315768
URL: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/0725686042000315768

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The Ethnic (Dis)advantage Debate Revisited: Turkish background students in Australia

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ABSTRACT This paper re-examines the widely accepted proposition that students of non-English-speaking migrant background generally achieve well in Australian schools and are over-represented in higher education. It argues that the terms of this thesis exclude key factors influencing success and are insensitive to differences between and within migrant groups. Focusing on Turkish migration, I discuss the approaches and explanatory models developed since the presence of large numbers of post-war migrants in Australian schools was first recognised as an issue in the 1970s. Much of this research based its conclusions on the experiences of first waves of Italian and Greek migrants, neglecting groups such as the Turks. I argue that the ‘ethnic success’ explanation does not adequately account for the range and specificity of student experiences, and present some data suggesting that equity remains an issue into the second generation.

The publication of the government report Second Generation Australians in April 2002 marked another step in the ascension of the ‘ethnic success’ thesis, first argued by Bullivant and Birrell in the 1980s. It is 15 years since the last major riposte in the debate over measurement of migrant educational disadvantage (Kalantzis & Cope, 1988), subsequent to which discussion has increasingly been closed down, and government support for students of non-English-speaking migrant background scaled back (Keceli & Cahill, 1998).

It is timely therefore to reconsider the conceptual foundations of approaches to migrant educational achievement and the current emphasis on aggregate data. Government and OECD data collection rely on broad categories such as ‘Non English Speaking Background’ (NESB) and ‘Language Background Other Than English (LBOTE)’. Meanwhile Khoo and his colleagues point to important distinctions in socio-economic circumstances, but conclude from responses to a general census question on English proficiency that educational disadvantage is unlikely to arise from migrant background for the second generation (Khoo et al., 2002). Arguing for the need to distinguish between groups occupying different social
and cultural positions, this paper follows shifting accounts of the school experiences of migrants in relation to Turkish background students, a group neglected in recent literature.

Being among the last of the massive wave of post-war migration drawn to Australia to fill unskilled labour shortages, and the first to feel the effects of the new period of economic uncertainty, Turkish migrants occupy a special place in the history of Australian migration. Their first experiences of Australian schools came at a time of rapid educational change, a time when multiculturalism was emerging as an official policy, but schools had yet to encounter large numbers of non-European migrants (for a discussion of multiculturalism see, for example, Henry & Lingard, 1982; Jakubowicz, 1984; Kalantzis & Cope, 1999; Knight et al., 1990).

Although Turkish students were initially of interest to researchers as new arrivals whose cultural and religious differences were perceived to be particularly alien (Mackie & Dept. of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs, 1983; Young et al., 1980), their experiences of education were largely subsumed under the weight of arguments, primarily based on the experiences of earlier arrivals, that children of migrants are able to overcome the obstacles they face at school (Birrell, 1986, 1994; Birrell & Seitz, 1986; Birrell et al., 1995; Bullivant, 1988; Meade et al., 1983; Mistilis, 1986; Sturman, 1985). To understand this situation it is important to revisit the concerns of the researchers who traced the distinguishing features of Turkish migration to Australia, and reconsider the current situation of Turkish students in relation to the dominant modes of measuring educational experience.

**Turkish Migrants in Australia**

Turkish migration to Australia began in earnest after the signing of a bilateral agreement with Turkey in 1967, and was at its peak until the mid-1970s. Despite their massive concentration in factory work on arrival, Turkish migrants left heterogeneous prior occupations (Elley, 1985, p. 130). In common with many who arrived before them, Turkish migrants had high aspirations for social mobility, although they did not initially see their futures as being in Australia (Elley, 1985). By 1980, permanent settlement had become the dominant perspective (MSJ Keys Young Planners & Dept. of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs, 1980), and the 2001 census counts 50,692 Turkish speakers. The first generation has retained a strong occupational concentration in factory and unskilled work (Keceli, 1998; Young, 1988), although many have left the workforce completely, often as a result of workplace: 44.1% of the second generation aged 0–14 years live in households where neither parent is employed, compared to 19.1% of children whose parents were born in Australia (Khoo et al., 2002, p. 33).

Situated in industrial suburbs close to migrant hostels and workplaces, the schools their children entered were struggling under the weight of large classes, poorly trained teachers and a lack of materials. As retention rates grew in the 1970s, the presence of large numbers of NESB students began to attract official attention in the context of optimism for the democratising potential of school, and a questioning of its aims and relevance more broadly. English as a Second Language (ESL) classes were funded in
1970 through the Child Migrant Education Program—and recognition of language needs has remained in subsequent research, at least for new arrivals.

By the time of the first major investigations devoted to Turkish migrants (Mackie & Dept. of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs, 1983; Young et al., 1980) the most influential study of the decade—The Educational Experience of Sydney High School Students—was already arguing against pessimistic assessments of the experiences of migrant students based on a comparative analysis of student retention and performance by ethnicity (Martin et al., 1979; Meade et al., 1983).

Martin and Meade's investigations found that students from a range of NESB backgrounds (not including Turkish) were better off than their ESB peers, calling into question the existence of any long-term difficulties for migrant groups, particularly those difficulties labelled ‘cultural deficit’. However, for students of Turkish background at the same time, despite strong parental encouragement, staying on at school was not a rewarding experience. In Young et al.’s sample only 27% of those who left school at 18 or older completed HSC (High School Certificate) (1980, p. 156).

Martin and Meade’s findings for longer established groups suggested to some researchers documenting Turkish migrants that their disadvantage too might fade with time, and that it arose from the initial shock of adjustment to an alien social and cultural environment (Young et al., 1983).

**Initial Shock**

In the years immediately following migration, the difficulties faced by Turkish migrants were interpreted as an ephemeral phenomenon. This focus produced policy proposals for making government services in high demand areas more open and responsive to different patterns of organisation and communication of particular cultures. New arrivals were understood as being disadvantaged in two ways:

(a) Mismatched expectations and ignorance of the workings of both the education system and other social institutions handicap new arrivals. The solution presented was community education and awareness raising, particularly through ‘ethnic organisation’ channels (Young et al., 1980).

(b) Language difficulties were seen as inhibiting effective communication, aggravating (a) and preventing students from performing to the level of their ‘ability’ (De Lemos & Australian Council for Educational Research, 1975). This focus led to recommendations for more effective ESL programs aiming at bringing NESB students ‘up to speed’, but failed to offer suggestions for culturally sensitive mainstream curricula.

Comparing differences recorded in the early 1980s between the achievement of Greek and Italian students on the one hand and Lebanese and Turkish students on the other, Young et al. found that length of time spent in Australia is positively associated with:

- mastery of English
• ‘sufficient schooling in Australia to have reached secondary level and to have gained an understanding of Australian society’

• access to sources of vocational information and support from parents, schools and bureaucracies (Young et al., 1983, p. 254).

Looking back from the mid-1990s, Cahill et al. drew similar conclusions (1996, p. 39). However, comparing the difficulties of newly arrived groups with the success of earlier arrivals to establish a direct link between length of time spent in Australia and social mobility remains problematic (as Cahill et al. acknowledge). This reasoning assumes that circumstances affecting each group are broadly similar, and the structures of opportunity (access to housing, job security, wage levels, etc.) are consistent over time. In addition, the high academic achievement of recently arrived overseas students who have studied English as a foreign language in academic settings suggests that cultural and economic capital may be more important than length of stay in determining success. Bullivant has gone as far as to negatively associate length of stay with success, as students face ‘contamination from Anglo values denigrating drive and success’ (1987, p. 190).

Research into newly arrived refugees underlines the massive disadvantages they face (Warrick, 2001). Such work highlights not just the saliency of length of stay, but the importance of the context and cultural resources separating the experiences of, to take two extremes, refugees with no prior schooling and skilled migrants with strong financial and academic resources.

However, the ascribed cultural traits of migrant groups remain the primary focus in ‘ethnicist’ accounts (Brah, 1992), whether positing cultural deficit or ethnic advantage, thereby placing together, for example, ethnic Chinese refugees from East Timor and economic migrants from Hong Kong.

Cultural Deficit

In this view cultural difference is understood as an impediment to the culturally and socially unquestioned realm of academic success (Meade et al., 1983). Early reports on the experiences of Turkish students, often mediated through the opinions of parents and teachers, focused on family lifestyles and their ‘deficits’ of knowledge and language, rather than on the demands and operation of schools (Mackie & Dept. of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs, 1983; Young et al., 1980), and so tended to leave the latter unscrutinised.

By the early 1990s improvements in retention were still not matched by improvements in attainment (Inglis et al., 1992) and Turkish background students struggled to translate their commitment into success even as length of stay increased. Cultural practices, rather than transitional difficulties, increasingly became the locus of research (Akçelik & Australian-Turkish Friendship Society, 1993; Inglis et al., 1992). Community structures, such as religious organisations, came to be seen as the scaffolding to bridge the deficit between migrants and schools, and their absence for Turkish migrants at the time of arrival put them at a disadvantage in relation to earlier arrivals (Keceli, 1998). It is worth noting that weak connection between Turkish
parents and schools remains an ongoing problem (Keceli, 1998), and also that the attention to Turkish migrants shown in the preceding investigations is rare in the much larger literature on migrant background students.

After Shock: the second generation

With many migrant background students now born in Australia, the success of the second generation becomes a test of the fairness of structures of opportunity and earlier policies. The potential basis for an after shock in the second generation has been identified in parents’ low socioeconomic status and educational levels, lack of modelling of English in the home, the persistence of prejudice, and the psychological trauma of attempting to reconcile competing value systems at home and in broader society (Hartley, 1993; Kagitçibasi, 1988; Peköz, 1993; Smolicz & Wiseman, 1971). Inglis et al. have convincingly argued for the importance of socio-economic conditions:

Although the lived world of the daily experiences of the Turkish people may have changed in many respects, the material circumstances of their lives have not changed so significantly ... Turkish Australian young people are still predominantly growing up in families where material disadvantage, and family experience of limited English, and often limited formal education, are the norm. (1992, p. ix)

Birrell et al. argue that the educational ground made up by the second generation in relation to their parents suggests that the second generation can escape the effects of these conditions (1995). However, it needs to be remembered that the educational opportunities in parents’ countries of origin were generally not comparable with those of Australia for the same period, therefore parents’ educational levels carry a different social meaning (Kalantzis & Cope, 1988). Differences in second generation experiences of school between groups who started from similar positions on the factory floor suggest that there is more at work than a psychological process inherent in migrant generational change.

Ethnic Advantage

In formulating their criticism of the assumption of migrant cultural disadvantage, Martin and Meade suggested that the scholastic progress, albeit uneven, of migrant students, might be derived from shared group characteristics, such as greater motivation and parental ambition. In the time following their report, researchers have consistently found an aggregate advantage for NESB students. For example Marks found that 84% of NESB students completed VCE (Victorian Certificate of Education) compared to the average of 79% across Victoria (Marks & Australian Council for Educational Research, 2000, pp. 10, 67), concluding that higher aspirations and family support were able to compensate for linguistic and social disadvantage.

Bullivant, the most enthusiastic advocate of the powers of motivation and ambition,
has termed this the ‘ethnic success ethic’ (1988). However, both Birrell and Bullivant, in promoting this thesis, perceive cultural credit as counterbalancing rather than removing factors which disadvantage NESB students (class, prejudice, socially and culturally narrow definitions of academic value in schools, etc.). Admitting the existence of some deleterious factors, their work implies that a focus on migrant background students is both unnecessary and unfair to other students whose competitiveness would be further reduced.

**Some Criticisms of the Ethnic Advantage Thesis**

Both the figures and the interpretations supporting the ethnic advantage thesis demand closer investigation. Criticisms of the validity of quantitative data as an accurate measure of the experiences of students are longstanding (Cahill *et al*., 1996; Kalantzis & Cope, 1988), and recent rehearsals of the ethnic advantage thesis have not addressed these. For example, Marks takes ethnicity as a ‘key issue’ in participation—defined by migrant status and NESB. He notes ‘migrant families have tended to emphasise their children’s education as the key to a better life so that their educational performance is much higher than for non-migrant children’ (2000, p. 24). Participation rates for students grouped into broad regions such as ‘Asia’ or ‘Middle East & North Africa’ based on their fathers’ birthplace are measured for Year 12 and higher education. Since participation in higher education combines university and vocational institutions, sectors which set students on significantly different social and economic pathways are not distinguished between. Participation rates in further education of students from the Melbourne schools with the highest numbers of Turkish students look good, but university enrolments account for as little as 13% of the total number participating in higher education, compared to a state-wide figure of 60% (Department of Education and Training, 2003). Although this figure does not distinguish between students by background, it suggests that university is rarely a realistic prospect for Turkish background students in the areas where they are most highly concentrated.

Low participation in universities is unsurprising in light of the low Tertiary Entry Ranks recorded for a sample of 1996 Turkish background students attending Victorian state schools (Fig. 1). The blunt tool of retention, although frequently relied upon (Birrell *et al*., 1995; Meade *et al*., 1983; Williams & Australian Council for Educational Research, 1980), does not capture the importance of such scores for future opportunities.

**(Dis)aggregation**

Even using these measures, when NESB is broken down its positive impact appears less certain. Meade *et al*. found greater variation between NESB groups than between NESB and ESB students (1983, pp. 109–110), and recent data have continued to show wide variation between groups (Birrell, 1986, 1994; Birrell *et al*., 1995; Cahill *et al*., 1996; Dobson *et al*., 1996; Marks & Australian Council for Educational Research, 2000). This suggests the salience of factors associated with the history of migration,
specific cultural background, or evolving economic and political climates as differentiating variables in what is frequently labelled ‘ethnicity’. Persistent disparities between and within groups suggest that the categories NESB, migrant or ‘ethnic’ have no unified meaning outside of these factors and their interplay with specific contexts and structures of schooling, the specific conditions of arrival and subsequent social trajectories of migrants.

Simplistic links between motivation and success liquidate intervening processes and obstacles contributing to success and failure, leaving ethnic motivation as a sufficient or overriding characteristic. Studies of Turkish students from the early 1990s onwards indicate the strong role of parent and student motivation, but also refer to the frustration of being unable to realise high hopes and the existence of continuing impediments (Inglis et al., 1992; Latifoglu, 2001). In addition, focus on traditional markers of educational hierarchy such as discipline, respect, rote learning and homework (Donohoue Clyne, 2003; Inglis & Manderson, 1991, p. 113; Latifoglu,
Family structure and cohesion is often the only link between motivation and success proposed for NESB migrant families (once again, usually en bloc) (Birrell & Seitz, 1986; Bullivant, 1988; Meade et al., 1983). Caution needs to be shown in both evaluating the relationship between family structure and culture, and the impact of historical and prevailing family structures on educational performance. The influence of family structure alone on attainment has been shown to be weak (Machin, 1998), and indeed the predominance of the nuclear family household amongst Turkish migrants is the product not of culture but policies restricting which family members could migrate (Bottomley, 1984; Mackie & Dept. of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs, 1983). This shift has been described as catastrophic for those migrant women who come from countries where kin provide a ready network of support, particularly female support ... in addition the absence of family networks leaves them unprotected from domestic violence or desertion. (Bottomley, 1984, p. 117)

**Gender**

It is worth pausing to consider the place of gender in the debate. While directionality varies widely from study to study, an overall picture emerges of patterns of attainment, participation and outcomes strongly affected by gender (Bottomley & De Lepervanche, 1984; Bottomley et al., 1991; Brookes, 1985; Cahill et al., 1996; Hartley, 1988; Inglis, 1988; Inglis et al., 1992; Myhill et al., 1994; Polesel, 1997; Tsolidis, 1986; Young, 1985; Young et al., 1980).

A focus on the perceived cultural characteristics of migrant groups without an analysis of the conditions (economic and institutional) under which these characteristics are associated with advantage or disadvantage and how this process might occur is unhelpful, as Tsolidis has noted (1986). Often restricted roles, prejudice and stereotypes are evoked as ways in which sets of characteristics work against students. However, the historical and social basis of the attachment of prejudice and stereotypes to a given group may still escape notice, leading to an impression that difference ipso facto is responsible for discrimination, and that ‘ethnic’ constructions of gender demonstrate a reified cultural difference.

Inglis suggests some teachers use preconceptions of ‘ethnic’ gender roles to justify perceived differences in male and female behaviour and performance, thus reinforcing differentiation (see also Kenway & Willis, 1997). These attitudes, and students’ perceptions of how they are viewed, rather than sitting in a causal relationship with educational disadvantage, sit in a more complex relationship with structural and material factors.

To give an example of how this complexity emerges, gender appears as a strong indicator of performance in data coming from settings with low proportions of Turkish background students (Fig. 2), however, the processes leading to these distinctions, which are in any case inaccessible from such data, may not operate in the
same way in other areas. Indeed, contrasting preliminary data from my own fieldwork in Australian schools with high proportions of Turkish background students suggest that Turkish background girls in these contexts express greater academic confidence than boys in a range of pedagogical and social situations.

Class and Culture

Discussions about the extent to which ‘ethnic’ difference stood in for class divides in the period of mass migration came early in the debate (Jakubowicz, 1984; Jakubowicz & Castles, 1986; Meade et al., 1983), but were not primarily concerned with the interaction of specific cultures and educational institutions as a site for class formation and reproduction. The current discussion of class has been limited to an interrogation of whether the negative effects of concentration of low SES migrants in areas where the school systems are of allegedly poor quality will disturb the patterns of success identified for older members of the second generation (Khoo et al., 2002).

Turkish migrants’ aspirations for home ownership and community regrouping have certainly led to their concentration, with other low income earners, in areas close to
heavy industry where housing is cheap, but services are scarce (Keceli, 1998). Research shows parental concern that the type of schools their children attend will limit their potential (Donohoue Clyne, 2003; Hartley et al., 1988). Their fears are confirmed in the ‘Ontrack’ data for the Victorian government schools which accommodate most Turkish students. These show that only 8–14% of graduating students made it to university in 2003, compared to 41% state-wide (Department of Education and Training, 2003).

The relationship between factors deemed cultural in nature and those deemed economic remains problematic. Existing data do not shed light on how residential polarisation affects what goes on in the classroom, nor why experiences differ, particularly in relation to gender outcomes, between Turkish and non-Turkish background students sharing these classrooms. While many low socio-economic status schools also have high proportions of NESB students (Teese & Polesel, 2003) there exists little policy analysis of the implications of the combination of these characteristics. A quick comparison of students of different language backgrounds receiving Austudy, taken from the 1996 Educational Outcomes Survey (Fig. 3), shows the impossibility of pinpointing achievement to either socio-economic status or a global NESB status, or even a combination of the two. Using Austudy as a control for socio-economic status, NESB status shows no consistent effect.

One proposed solution to this confusion is the concept of ‘ethclass’ (Bullivant, 1987; Gordon, 1964; Mackie & Dept. of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs, 1983). The problem with ethclass, and implicit in many other explanations, is that it is essentially a cumulative model. The relative importance of and relationship between distinct factors is unaccounted for. Kalantzis and Cope, while acknowledging that they work together in complex ways, maintain a distinction in the attributes of ethnicity and class: while ‘certain aspects of ESB working-class culture, education and structural context, portend limited education’, ‘language learning context, racism, the particular non-commensurability of family culture and the culture of educational success’ count amongst explanations peculiar to NESB students (1988, p. 55).
Marjoribanks suggests that certain factors may be contingent on other threshold factors, such as English proficiency (1978), which must exist at a minimum level before others start to have a positive effect. However, as Marjoribanks himself admits, the notion of a single model for success is misleading. In fact, there exist many ways to achieve the same ends (the acquisition of socially and academically powerful knowledge and dispositions) and some of the preconditions of the ‘ideal’ model may be absent in successful families. Speaking Chinese at home, for example, in the case of Hong Kong migrants (mainly skilled and business), has not prevented the success of their children, whose VCE results by the late 1980s were in the top 25% (Chan, 1987). Importantly, more Hong Kong families exclusively speak English at home than longer-resident Turkish migrants, although fewer claim fluency in spoken English (Table 1).

It could be argued that well-educated parents’ own proficiency, or at least academic experiences of English, combined with their general academic culture, may well be able to compensate for the lack of spoken English in the home. The effectiveness of school interventions—in the context of private schools or high performance government schools in affluent areas—for such well-placed students should also be taken into account.

**Language and Class**

I wish to finish with some comments on the linguistic demands of education in relation to class and migration. *The Second Generation* report concludes that high levels of spoken language proficiency for children of migrants (recorded from the census on a four-point scale) ‘holds promise of better educational and labour market outcomes for them in the future’ (Khoo *et al*., 2002, p. 143). It is clear that mastery of English and a strategic understanding of the workings of education and broader society are crucial to positive educational experiences. In retrospect it is less clear that length of stay, or even length of time spent in education, have been sufficient to provide them in all cases. Nor has it been established that these resources alone are sufficient to guarantee educational mobility, as the persistence over time of class-based patterns of attainment has shown (Teese, 2000; Teese & Polesel, 2003).

The cultural and cognitive literacies demanded by school must be separated from a global understanding of English as simply spoken, or even written communication. This is the project of language proficiency theory, which distinguishes between basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS) and cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP) (Cummins, 1979). Cummins argues that the linguistic skills required

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parents or father only born in:</th>
<th>Spoke English only at home (%)</th>
<th>Spoke English well/very well (%)</th>
<th>Total proficient (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>87.9</td>
<td>97.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hong Kong</td>
<td>44.3</td>
<td>54.1</td>
<td>98.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TABLE 1.** English proficiency of second generation aged 15–24 by parents’ or father’s birthplace (Khoo *et al*., 2002, p. 51)
for the more decontextualised CALP are not easily available outside of school, and require a knowledge of discourse conventions and specialised vocabulary, syntax and concepts (2000).

It is worth, therefore, considering class-based linguistic approaches (Bernstein, 1973; Heath, 1983) in relation to the intercultural work of Cummins. The notion of ‘second language instructional competence’ (SLIC) has emerged from a critique attending to class effects (MacSwan & Rolstad, 2003). The English learnt by high status NESB students, often from a very young age, while it may not have been well modelled orally, will have more often been directed towards academic ‘type’ purposes and cognitive styles, and been supported in academically oriented and resourced home environments by parents who are ‘highly educated and socially astute’, and who extensively use home tutoring (Cahill et al., 1996). By contrast, the English learnt in the home by working-class migrants may well be poorly modelled, and combined with another language (Cahill et al., 1996, p. 39), or modelled on a non-standard variety of English that will disadvantage them in formal situations—if they speak English in the home at all.

They share with other working-class students a distance from academic culture, which has remained relatively unscrutinised, and whose hidden expectations and demands fall unevenly according to differences between ‘ethnic’ cultures, as well as differences within them. Even though ‘critical’ multiculturalism has at times adopted some of the categories of power developed by Bourdieu and others in the context of social class, this work has tended to substitute one form of domination for another (May, 1999, p. 32). This approach does not easily account either for the difficulties encountered by struggling working-class Anglo students or the success of children of recently arrived business migrants from ‘minority’ cultures. Attention needs to be turned to the existence of inter-linguistic and inter-cultural cognitive patterns, dispositions and practices that are a feature of both middle-class life and education systems in many countries. Ethnographies coming from the USA increasingly pay critical attention to the lifeworlds of working-class migrant students, but find difficulty in influencing policy on a macro level (for a review, see Foley, 2001).

**Conclusion**

In testing the impact of ‘ethnicity’ on educational achievement researchers such as Birrell, Khoo and Bullivant find mixed results, which when aggregated are positive. This is in contrast with the more consistent effect of social class. Rather than concluding that social class shows a greater effect because of its coherence as a sociological construct, and searching for improved indicators to measure the diversity of migration to Australia, these researchers retain the naturalised category ethnic/migrant as it stands. The ‘ethnicist’ position starts from a brittle conceptual base, and as such risks producing untenable conclusions that do not relate to the social realities of the diverse populations it purports to describe. The real experiences of students slip away as they are decontextualised for the purposes of comparison and reduced to ethnicity and outcomes mediated by length of stay.

While contextually rich studies of Turkish families capture some of these, they are often without a complex understanding of either school processes or the use of
‘ethnicity’ as a social category. The vastly differing school experiences of Australia’s current heterogeneous mix of labour migrants, refugees, fee-paying overseas students, skilled professionals and business migrants, demand of future research attention to specific conditions of arrival and differential demands made by educational systems.

With the growth of mass secondary education through to the twenty-first century, we must look beyond demonstrating strong representation of migrant background students in educational institutions to an investigation of the segregations and relegations operating within and between educational sectors. Ultimately, this must be based upon a sociologically sound understanding of why and how mapping patterns in participation through categories such as gender, class and ethnicity can contribute to the improvement of education for all.

Notes

1. This paper draws the author’s doctoral research documenting the school experiences of Turkish background students in Australia and France.

2. Data drawn from the 1996 Educational Outcomes Survey were collected from limited areas of Victoria, excluding many areas of high migrant density, resulting in inevitable distortion. The analysis suggests trends of concern, but cannot be readily generalised to the population.

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