Understanding Attitudes to Refugees and Immigrants in Australia

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A brief overview of Australian migration

- **1800s – present**: Indigenous Australians dispossessed by British (now ~2% of population of 22 million)
- **1901-1970s**: “White Australia” policy - ‘Repatriation’ of Asian communities in 1901; closed doors to non-White migrants
- **Post-WW2 economic growth / European immigration**

**Now:**
- ~23% of Australians born overseas; only 17% 2nd generation.
- ~10% Asian Australian (i.e., still 85% White)
- Increasing % immigrants = skilled immigration stream
- Net overseas migration 2007-8 = 213k
  - Largest groups: China (29k); NZ (27k); UK (24k); India (24k)
- 2001 4 in 10 spoke **only** English, vs 6 in 10 < 1996.
- Tiny but contentious refugee program accepts 13k/year
Why do citizens support or oppose immigration?

Group-level explanation – Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979)

- Perceptions of group threat motivate support for exclusionary measures
- Group norms, or standards for behaviour, determine when and how competitive attitudes are expressed
Study 1: Tides of Change

- Rise of Pauline Hanson in Australia in 1990s with One Nation party
  - 1996 maiden speech warns of the danger of Australia’s being “swamped by Asians”
  - At her peak attains 25% of the vote in a state election
  - Worldwide increase in political exploitation of anti-immigration sentiments

- 667 Australian voters who identified as White Australians

## Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Opponents (34%)</th>
<th>New Conservatives (56%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>40.6</td>
<td>46.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>57% F</td>
<td>47% F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>4.06</td>
<td>3.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Own support for Asian immig.</td>
<td>5.21</td>
<td>3.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceptions Australians support (norm)</td>
<td>3.78</td>
<td>2.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceptions increasing conservatism</td>
<td>4.77</td>
<td>5.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceptions threat to White Aus</td>
<td>2.82</td>
<td>5.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involvement in debate ***</td>
<td>3.84</td>
<td>5.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public outspokenness *</td>
<td>4.07</td>
<td>4.68</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What predicts involvement / speaking out politically?

- **Among new conservatives:**
  - Threat to White Australians
  - Perceptions Australians opposed Asian immigration (norms)

- **Among opponents:**
  - Education
  - Support for Asian immigration (and more so when perceived low threat to Whites)
  - Perceptions of *increasing conservatism*

**Conclusions:**

- Find overall polarisation, conservative race-based mobilisation
- Support for importance of group-level predictors
- Contrary to spiral of silence research (Noelle-Neumann, 1993), see counter-mobilisation against tides of change
Study 2 - Asylum Seekers & Australia

- Increasing world-wide need (UNHCR, 2001)
  - 12 million refugees and 1 million asylum seekers in 2001
  - Over 33% increase from 1990
  - Tiny #s in Australia – 13000 refugees / 4100 AS

- Both offshore (refugee camp) and onshore (asylum seeker) claimants considered
  - Increasing proportion of on-shore applicants
  - Increasingly restrictive measures

The special role of fairness?

- **Asylum seekers: a unique context**
  - UNHRC: “owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, [a refugee] is outside the country of his nationality” (1996: p. 16)

- **Procedural justice concerns** (Tyler, 1994)
  - Abuse of refugee process by economic migrants: violation of “first refuge” principle, ‘queue jumping’ (Commonwealth of Australia, 2001)
Why do citizens support restrictive measures?

- Group-level explanations

- Individual difference explanations
  - Social Dominance Orientation (Pratto & Lemieux, 2001)
    - “Propensities for prejudice” lead individuals to favour their own groups over other groups
A model of support for restrictive measures

Intergroup factors:
- Threat (Grp)
- Legitimacy
- Norms

Individual factors:
- SDO
- Threat (Ind.)

Support for Restrictive Measures

Fairness of unequal outcomes
Fairness of Harsh Process
Participants

- 2500 Queensland voters mailed survey
  - After screening 206 participants completed 2 waves before and after election
- Broadly representative of census
  - 49% women; median age 51; regional representation (SE vs North/Central Q)
## The polarized sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The number of asylum seekers in Australia is...</th>
<th>Too low</th>
<th>Ok</th>
<th>Too high</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Dominance</td>
<td>2.01</td>
<td>1.74</td>
<td>2.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threat to Australians</td>
<td>2.13</td>
<td>2.70</td>
<td>4.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legitimacy of inequality</td>
<td>1.89</td>
<td>3.14</td>
<td>3.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hostile Norms</td>
<td>4.03</td>
<td>4.39</td>
<td>5.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairness</td>
<td>2.26</td>
<td>4.11</td>
<td>5.87</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Group variables affect attitudes and action indirectly via fairness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Willingness to take action vs AS</th>
<th>T2 Hostility</th>
<th>T2 Reported Spoke Out</th>
<th>T2 Reported Voted re AS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Threat to Group (Stability, Permeability)</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legitimacy threat</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td></td>
<td>.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norms against AS</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDO</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual threat</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Summary of direct effects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Threat to Group (Stability/Permeability)</th>
<th>Willingness to take action vs AS</th>
<th>T2 Hostility</th>
<th>T2 Reported Spoke Out</th>
<th>T2 Reported Voted re AS</th>
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<tr>
<td>Threat to Group (Stability/Permeability)</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legitimacy threat</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norms against AS</td>
<td>.35</td>
<td>.18</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDO</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual threat</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Conclusions: Fairness as rationalisation

- Support for group factors
- Support for individual factors
- Support for Fairness

- But fairness perceptions in turn were driven by group threat & norms (sense of change, legitimacy)
  - beliefs about intergroup discrimination / inequality rationalise intergroup competition
Study 3: The human identity?

- 242 Australians, 16-74, 80 male 162 female
- 103 first year psychology students in lab; 139 online participants

Procedure
- Measured RWA, SDO
- Pre-measured identification with Australia, humans
- Salience manipulation (failed)
- Post-measured salience and norms related to attitudes, affect, and action (political letter)

# Variance accounted for ($R^2$)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Neg. Atts</th>
<th>Neg. Emo.</th>
<th>Act against</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Block 1:</strong> RWA+SDO</td>
<td>.54***</td>
<td>.44***</td>
<td>.29***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>B2:</strong> Aus + Human ID, Norms</td>
<td><strong>.12</strong>*</td>
<td><strong>.10</strong>*</td>
<td><strong>.15</strong>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>B3:</strong> Interactions</td>
<td>.03***</td>
<td>.02**</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Final model</strong></td>
<td>.69***</td>
<td>.61***</td>
<td>.39***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Identities and norms ($\beta$s)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Neg. Atts</th>
<th>Neg. Emo.</th>
<th>Act against</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aus ID</td>
<td>0.18***</td>
<td>0.21***</td>
<td>0.21*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human ID</td>
<td>-0.23***</td>
<td>-0.20***</td>
<td>-0.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hostile Aus norm</td>
<td>0.12**</td>
<td>0.11*</td>
<td>0.16+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hostile human norm</td>
<td>0.16***</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>0.01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Aus ID x Norms : Conformity

- High Aus ID had more negative attitudes and more hostile emotions when Australian norms hostile
- Low Aus ID unresponsive to the norms
Aus ID x Human ID: Inclusive ID defuses Aus ID

- For those with high human ID, Aus ID was unrelated to negative attitudes.
- For low human ID, Aus ID was linked to negative attitudes.
Study 4 – Take 2 on manipulating human ID again unsuccessful

- 2005 context – even more subdued (non-election year)
- 135 Australian uni students in sociology, history or political science – more liberal than psychology 1\textsuperscript{st} years
- 54% female
- Age 17-59 but 73% <20
- Salience manipulation preceding measured attitudes and affect
### Humanising / Personalising is associated with lower prejudice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Hostile Attitude $\beta$</th>
<th>Negative emotions $\beta$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>3.21</td>
<td>2.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian ID</td>
<td>.26**</td>
<td>.17†</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human ID</td>
<td>-.19*</td>
<td>-.28*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal ID</td>
<td>-.15†</td>
<td>-.21*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$R^2$</td>
<td>.11**</td>
<td>.10**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Couldn’t replicate cool interaction of AI x HI
- Manipulation of human ID salience didn’t work
Study 5: Pro-social behaviour

- 178 participants recruited by Brenda Major
  - 73.4% women; Average age: 32 years ($SD = 15.5$), ranging from 17-71 years; 85.8% Anglo-Australian ethnicity

- Design: Pre-measured prejudice

- Respond to scenario where volunteer at organisation and help **grateful vs ungrateful refugee**
Main effects of prejudice and refugee reaction

- Higher prejudice associated with:
  - Less liking of individual aid recipient
  - More negative stereotypes of refugees (coldness, incompetency)
  - Lower intentions to continue volunteering in scenario

- Ungrateful refugee associated with:
  - Less liking of individual aid recipient
  - More negative stereotypes of refugees (coldness)
  - Lower intentions to continue volunteering
More prejudiced individuals more reactive to an ungrateful refugee

Aversive racism?

Liking individual

Ungrateful Reaction | Grateful Reaction
Low hostile prejudice | High hostile prejudice

Coldness ratings

Ungrateful Reaction | Grateful Reaction
Low hostile prejudice | High hostile prejudice

Intentions to continue volunteering

Ungrateful Reaction | Grateful Reaction
Low hostile prejudice | High hostile prejudice

Liking individual

Ungrateful Reaction | Grateful Reaction
Low hostile prejudice | High hostile prejudice

Coldness ratings

Ungrateful Reaction | Grateful Reaction
Low hostile prejudice | High hostile prejudice

Intentions to continue volunteering

Ungrateful Reaction | Grateful Reaction
Low hostile prejudice | High hostile prejudice
And another thing (Study 5)

- Help type manipulation had no effects
  - Empowering help vs help that affirms recipient’s dependency (Nadler & Halabi, 2006; Jackson & Esses, 2000)
Study 6: Prejudice against skilled immigrants

- Not likely to be burdens on the welfare system
- High status may protect against aversive prejudice
- But foreign credentials allow for selective discounting (Esses, Dietz, & Bhardwaj, 2006); Visible minority groups may be especially vulnerable (e.g., Rietz, 2001)

- 93 Australian-born students who identify as of Anglo/European heritage evaluate job candidates for student health clinic:
  - All candidates registered to work in home state, with 3 degrees and 2 relevant jobs 1 of which = in home state
  - All candidates have same average personality
  - Differ re where born (Australia vs Pakistan) where received medical training (home country vs UK)

## Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Trained in birth country</th>
<th>Foreign-trained in UK</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Foreign background (Pakistani)</td>
<td>Native background (Australia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommend for interview</td>
<td>5.24</td>
<td>5.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal acceptability</td>
<td>4.86</td>
<td>5.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social suitability</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>4.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>4.97&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>5.86&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work history</td>
<td>4.87&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>5.85&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Conclusions Study 6

- Supports international medical students’ quest for overseas training
  - Aversive racism may be defused, if not by high status of job then by high status of first world unis

- Extends research on prejudice vs foreign professionals and selective discounting of credentials
  - Even where candidate had explicitly been legally registered in Ps’ home state w/ 2 years’ work experience!

- Anti-immigration prejudice hurts immigrants – but against foreign-born doctors bigots also hurt selves (e.g., Thiede, 2005)
Katie Greenaway’s PhD work: Threat and control

Threat

Perceived control

e.g., Fritsche et al., 2008; De Castella et al., 2009

Intergroup prejudice

Sharpening of group boundaries → Outgroup derogation

Study 7: Terrorist threat

Negative attitudes towards refugees

Perceived terrorist threat associated with prejudice against refugees – but only when perceive low control over source of threat

Low Control

High Control

Low Threat

High Threat
Study 8: Terrorist threat

Negative attitudes towards immigrants

Perceived terrorist threat associated with prejudice more strongly when perceive low control over own life

Scale from 1 - 10
Study 8: Terrorist threat

Support for excluding immigrants*

Scale from 1 - 4

Low Threat  
High Threat

Low Control  
High Control

*Scale from 1 - 4
Take home points: Theory

✓ 1/ For anti-immigration sentiment in Australia, groups matter
   ▪ threats, identities & norms

✓ 2/ Inclusive human ID is associated with more favourable attitudes and action

✓ 3/ Context specific ideologies motivate hostility
   – Fairness re asylum seekers (Study 2)
   – “Ungrateful” reactions (Study 5)
   – Unfamiliar foreign credentials (Study 6)

■ Or rationalise group-based threats
Reducing anti-immigrant prejudice

1/ defuse intergroup hostility with counter-mobilisation re group norms, and/or with inclusive (e.g., human) ID

2/ Ideological challenge re threat/fairness may be less successful?

3/ defuse aversive prejudice with unambiguous positive attributes – e.g., strong credentials

4/ defuse defensive reactions to threat by affirming individuals’ control over source of threat – or life (!)
   – Social dangers of culture of fear?
What now?

- Injunctive vs descriptive norms and counter-mobilisation vs hostile climate
- Ego-depletion in conflict
- Collective action as an IV: what works?
- Successful intervention campaigns
Thank you!

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