

AJSI

<i>Social Capital and Community Building Through an Electronic Network</i>	Hopkins, Thomas, Meredyth and Ewing	369-379
<i>Privacy, Sexual Identity and Aged Care</i>	Hughes	381-392
<i>Living Conditions of Women Who Experience Violence From Their Partners: Norway and Australia Comparisons</i>	Weeks and Hutchinson	393-407
<i>Constructing Racism in Australia</i>	Dunn, Forrest, Burnley and McDonald	409-430
<i>An Evaluation of a Parenting Payment Intervention Program</i>	Dockery and Stromback	431-442
<i>Specialised Supported Education for Australians with Psychotic Disorders</i>	Waghorn, Still, Chant and Whiteford	443-458
<i>The Aging of Australia: Fiscal Sustainability, Intergenerational Equity and Inter-Temporal Fiscal Balance</i>	Coombs and Dollery	459-470
<i>Book Reviews</i>		471-476
<i>Book Notes</i>		477-479

Constructing Racism in Australia

Dr Kevin M Dunn, Associate Professor James Forrest,
Professor Ian Burnley, Ms Amy McDonald

Abstract

There is a dearth of empirical evidence on the extent of racist attitudes, broadly defined, in Australia. A telephone survey of 5056 residents in Queensland and NSW examined attitudes to cultural difference, perceptions of the extent of racism, tolerance of specific groups, ideology of nation, perceptions of Anglo-Celtic cultural privilege, and belief in racialism, racial separatism and racial hierarchy. The research was conducted within a social constructivist understanding of racisms. Racist attitudes are positively associated with age, non-tertiary education, and to a slightly lesser extent with those who do not speak a language other than English, the Australia-born, and with males. Anti-Muslim sentiment is very strong, but there is also a persistence of some intolerance against Asian, Indigenous and Jewish Australians. Those who believe in racial hierarchy and separatism (old racisms) are a minority and are largely the same people who self-identify as being prejudiced. The 'new racisms' of cultural intolerance, denial of Anglo-privilege and narrow constructions of nation have a much stronger hold. Nonetheless, sociobiologically related understandings of race and nation remain linked to these new racisms. Narrow understandings of what constitutes a nation (and a community) are in tension with equally widely held liberal dispositions towards cultural diversity and dynamism. Encouragingly, most respondents recognise racism as a problem in Australian society and this is a solid basis for anti-racism initiatives.

Dr Kevin Dunn is a Senior Lecturer in the Geography Program, University of New South Wales, where he teaches social and cultural geography. Associate Professor Jim Forrest is head of the Department of Human Geography at Macquarie University, Sydney. His interests are in ethnic segregation, racism and social conditions. Professor Ian Burnley is Visiting Professor in Geography Program, University of New South

Wales. His areas of research are Immigration and its impact on cities; the adjustment of immigrant communities and generations; and mobility of people in Australia.

Ms Amy McDonald was Research Assistant, Geography Program, University of New South Wales. Her research interests are the geographies of racism and health.

Racism is a historic and yet varied societal problem. It has taken particular forms in societies such as Australia, Canada, Israel, the United States and New Zealand, where massive immigration and the multicultural basis of recent immigration policy has resulted in ever more ethnically diverse populations. Recently in Australia racism has been most discussed during the so-called race debates of 1996 and 1997, associated with the rise of Pauline Hanson and her One Nation Party. Yet these debates occurred amidst what Jayasuriya (2002: 40) has criticised as the “paucity of thinking about race and racism in Australia”. The examination of racism in the 1990s has been championed by cultural studies scholars (Goodall et al. 1994; Hage 1998), although there has been a continued interest among social psychologists (Pederson et al. 2000). However, there is a dearth of recent empirical evidence about the nature and extent of racism in Australia. McAllister and Moore’s (1989) study is the most recent academic survey. Between 1996 and 1998, the Australian Federal Government commissioned an inquiry into racism in Australia but the results have not been publicly released (DIMA 1998:1). There is, therefore, an information gap on the extent, variation and impact of racism in Australia which this study sought to address.

Sources of racist attitudes

The emphasis in this study was to interrogate racist attitudes in Australia, building on Dunn and McDonald’s (2001) pilot study in New South Wales. Among applicable theories, we include the thinking of traditional urbanists (Simmel 1903; Wirth 1938), neo-Marxist explanations (Solomos 1986), the Chicago School (Park 1950) and more recently, social constructivism (Bonnet 1996; Kobayashi & Peake 1994; Miles 1989). Each of these retains substantial explanatory potential, but here we focus on social constructivism. Constructivism, according to Jackson and Penrose (1993, 3) works by identifying the components and processes of category construction: categories of cultural identity as well as what constitutes racism itself. This approach is particularly useful for uncovering background ideologies that sustain both racist attitudes (broadly defined) and anti-racism.

Racist and anti-racist (or non-racist) attitudes are often coexistent, and a social constructivist approach also aids an understanding of that apparent contradiction. For example, contested discourses of the nation – as multicultural in official rhetoric of the Office of Multicultural Affairs (and its successors), or as Anglo-Celtic in political debate and in the media – feed into varied and complicated everyday understandings of nation and citizenship. Social constructivist perspectives identify different forms of racist beliefs and contexts, focusing especially here on links between racism and national ideology, critiques of sociobiological understandings of race, critical analyses of cultural privilege, and specific assessments of the disparagement and lesser regard experienced by Australians who belong to certain cultural groups.

In this theorization, two main types of racism are recognised: ‘old racism’ and ‘new racism’. The first of these, highlighting inferiority, prevailed from the time of Federation in 1901 until the early 1970s and the end of the White Australia policy. Then this ‘old racism’ was largely supplanted by a ‘new racism’ or ‘cultural racism’ based on the ‘insurmountability of cultural differences’ (Markus 2001). Thus ethnic minorities are no longer viewed as inferior; rather they are differentiated as threats to ‘social cohesion’ and

‘national unity’, that is, to the cultural values and integrity of the dominant (Anglo-Celtic) ‘host’ society (Jayasuriya 2002, 41-42). The ‘new racism’ operates more through stereotypes of cultural traits of groups, or surrounding notions of ‘self’ and ‘other’ and the national space (Cole 1997; Gilroy 1987; Hall 1992: 256-8; Parekh 1987). The latter are reproduced in the media and in political debates (Barker, 1981; Goodall et al. 1994; van Dijk, 1991). Arguably, *overt* racism has been replaced by new constructions of *covert* racism, manifest as cultural intolerance (Sniderman et al. 1991; Sniderman and Tetlock 1986). Hall (2000, 222-224) has argued that these two logics of racism are nonetheless strongly inter-dependent, and that they combine in effective ways, citing examples of Rwanda, the Balkans and Islamophobia.

The ‘old racism’ embodies a broadly sociobiological understanding of race. It includes arguments that ‘racial groups’ should be separated from one another, or that some ‘racial groups’ are naturally superior to others. These have also been referred to as ‘blatant’ or ‘old fashioned’ racisms (Pettigrew and Meertens 1995). These include belief in racial hierarchy and racial separatism (see Jayasuriya, 2002; Wieviorka 1995). The three old racism themes operationalised in our survey were *belief in a racial hierarchy, in racial separation, and in ‘race’ itself*.

The ‘new racism’ embraces three main and somewhat inter-related aspects:

1. *Out-groups*: Contemporary racism in Australia, and intolerance towards specific cultural groups, is seen by many researchers as linked to historic constructions of Australian national identity and who does and does not belong. Asian-Australians, Muslims, and Indigenous people have long been identified as key Others to the Australian national imaginary (Hamilton 1990; Rajkowski 1987; Rizvi 1996: 176-7). Intolerance of these groups, as stated in attitudinal surveys, had been detected in previous studies. Intolerance of Indigenous Australians, for example, has been a feature of attitude polling, with specific findings that such intolerance is sustained through core stereotypes. These stereotypes surround complaints about supposed welfare dependency, drunkenness, and failure to ‘assimilate’ (Brian Sweeney & Associates 1996a: 2-23; 1996b: 17-27; Dunn & McDonald 2001: 35; Larsen 1981: 115-7,121; Pedersen et al. 2000: 110-2). Anti-Asian sentiment, and anti-Muslim feeling, has also been strongly recorded in attitude polling in Australia (McAllister & Moore 1989: 7-11). The stereotypes that sustain such intolerances have been best outlined in qualitative work and media studies (Goodall et al. 1994: 61-5; Hage 1991; Lowe 1985; Shboul 1988).
2. *Cultural diversity and nation*: The ideology of nation is important to understanding racism (Hage 1998: 27-55; Goodall et al. 1994: 16,188): what is an Australian? (Rizvi 1996: 174). The findings of public opinion polling on Australian national identity and support for multiculturalism are varied and often quite contradictory. On the one hand respondents have tended to respond favourably to questions asking them about the desirability of cultural difference. Yet poll findings have also reported concerns regarding cultural maintenance amongst migrant groups. For example, surveys in the mid-1990s found that while 60 per cent of those polled agreed that migrants should not maintain their own cultural traditions, only 20 per cent thought that multicultural policy should be abolished (see Dunn & McDonald 2001: 35). Yet cultural maintenance is a core principal of official multiculturalism (Commonwealth

of Australia 1999: 19; Office of Multicultural Affairs 1989: vii). Similarly, recent work by Ang et al. (2002: 17-20) found that 60 per cent of Australians are positive about cultural diversity, although support for the policy of multiculturalism was only about 50 per cent. Clearly, there is an unresolved, and widespread, tension in attitudes towards cultural diversity in Australia.

3. *Issues of normalcy and privilege*: Critical race theorists have commented on what they have called the 'normalcy' of racism (Kobayashi and Peake 2000: 394-6). Some argue that there is a privilege of Whiteness, which is associated with a way of life and perspective where racism is unseen or is considered an exceptional aberration (Bonnnett 1997; Dyer 1988; Gabriel 1998; Kobayashi & Peake 2000: 393-7; McGuinness 2000). These twin themes of denial of racism, and denial of privilege, were examined in the survey. The survey questions tested the extent to which respondents recognised a problem of racism in Australia, and the extent to which they recognised that Australians of a British background enjoy a privileged position (as an indicator of Anglo-Celtic (or British) cultural privilege). Most respondents (83 per cent) recognised that there was a problem with racism in Australia, and about 8 per cent denied any problem. This accords with Brian Sweeney and Associates (1996a: 23; 1996b: 11-2) who found that 79 per cent of telephone survey respondents (sample of 1250) were concerned about the level of racism in Australia and felt that racism was "rife". This suggests that at the everyday level, a substantial majority of the population would appreciate a need to speak about racism and for anti-racism initiatives.

Surveying racist attitudes

This study is based on a sample survey of persons aged 18 years and over in New South Wales and Queensland (about half of Australia's population) undertaken in October and December 2001 which generated 5056 valid responses. The sample was area-stratified, drawing randomly from within every second postcode, but in such a way as to include at least one postcode from every Statistical Local Area (Local Government Area) in both states. Sixty-four per cent of the sample was from NSW, and the remainder from Queensland, which is close to proportional to the relative population sizes of the two states. The questionnaire was available in six community languages, but despite this the sample is a little under-representative of those who speak a language other than English (LOTE); it tends to over-represent women and under-represent Indigenous Australians (Table 1). On the other hand, failure to respond to the questions varied very little across the sample; females for instance were only slightly more likely than males to provide a 'not stated' response to any of the questions.

In this research we refocus on intolerance of Indigenous people and on other groups of Australians including major 'out groups' who are subject to disparagement in media, political debates and everyday conversation. The selection of these groups was informed by earlier survey work by social scientists in the 1980s, and by the gamut of cultural and social research on tolerance, discrimination and culture in Australia, reviewed above. The survey questions were in part adapted from existing work in this field – especially aspects of the 'old racisms': belief in racial hierarchy, racial separatism, and belief in racial categories (racialism) (Jayasuriya 2002; Wieviorka 1995; Miles 1989). These included

attitudinal questions to gauge respondents' tolerance towards (or comfort with) specific ethnic groups, as well as their opinion of the desirability of cultural diversity. Respondents were also asked to self-diagnose themselves as prejudiced or not.

Table 1: Characteristics of the telephone survey sample, compared to ABS Census 2001.

Total persons		Racist attitudes survey, October-Dec 2001	ABS Census, mid-June 2001
		n: 5056	n: 9,896,807
Gender*	Male	41.3%	49.4%
	Female	58.7%	50.6%
Ethnicity indicators*	Aboriginal or TSI	1.9%	2.4%
	Australia-born	76.5%	73.1%
	English only at home	85.8%	80.3%
Age	18-34	25.6%	31.7%
	35-64	54.8%	51.1%
	65 +	17.2%	19.6%

*These ABS Census figures refer to all people enumerated, whereas the Survey excluded people aged under 18 years. Sources: The UNSW/MQU Racism Survey, telephone survey, Oct-Dec 2001; Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Census, 2003.

New question formats were also developed in some areas, mainly to operationalise aspects of the 'new' racisms. These referred to hostility to the cultural traditions of disparaged groups, to constructions of national identity (or of a cultural norm), the protection of cultural privilege, and to the uneven citizenship and belonging that these act to facilitate. Questions on perceptions of Anglo-Celtic cultural privilege and ideologies of nation were also included. In summary, the telephone survey utilised seventeen separate indicators grouped around disposition towards cultural difference, perceptions about the extent of racism, tolerance of specific groups, the ideology of nation, perceptions of Anglo-Celtic cultural privilege, and belief in racialism, racial separatism and racial hierarchy, and four sociodemographic indicators relating to gender, age, education and birthplace. A total sample interview time averaging 6.5 minutes each, which was pre-tested to gauge acceptance and response, precluded a more extensive panel of questions.

Results

Analysis of the survey results takes two forms:

1. A construction of each of the main areas bearing on racist attitudes discussed above, also using, where appropriate, chi-square analysis of relevant tables; and
2. A composite social construction embracing all the attitudinal and socio-economic responses generated by the survey, using principal components analysis.

Who are the out-groups?

Respondents were asked whether they believed there were any cultural or ethnic groups that did not fit into Australian society, and if so, to nominate up to three such groups. Forty-five per cent of respondents identified a cultural group or groups they felt did not belong in Australia. Commonly mentioned groups were Muslims (28 per cent of mentions) and people from the Middle East (28 per cent of mentions). Cultural groups from, and those born in, Asian countries were a further source of concern for many respondents (33 per cent of all mentions). Ten per cent were unable to name any groups they thought did not belong in Australia, referring broadly and vaguely to “Foreigners” or “Ethnics”. Two-and-a-half per cent of the mentions were to Indigenous Australians – as a cultural group who do not fit into Australian society! The results overwhelmingly indicate the outsider status of Muslims, as well as Australians of Middle-Eastern and, less so, Asian origin.

The second indicator of the extent of ‘out-groups’ status, using Bogardus (1933) tolerance measures, has also been referred to as ‘comfort’ or social distance indicators in attitudinal survey work (see Berry & Kalin 1995: 306-7; Peach 1976). The construction of ‘out-groups’ and ‘in-groups’ is a core outcome of the so-called new racism discourses (Jayasuriya 2002: 42). Respondents were asked for the extent of their concern, if any, if a close relative were to marry a member of seven specific groups. Such data have traditionally been analysed as indicators of tolerance. We are, of course, mindful of the rhetorical (and political) repercussions of using ‘tolerance’ as a key concept. The discussion of tolerance can have the conservative effect of awarding power to the culturally powerful in society (by asking them to be tolerant), and constructs the disparaged as guests about whom the powerful must be charitable and tolerant. Hage (1998) discusses this critique of tolerance politics in Australia, drawing upon the philosophical work of King (1976; see also Galeotti 2002). These critiques should be borne in mind when using the data presented here on uneasiness regarding specific cultural groups.

Table 2: Levels of concern regarding out-marriage of a relative, to specific groups

Level of concern*	Muslim %	Aboriginal %	Asian %	Jewish %	Italian %	Christian %	British %
Not at all	46.0	70.5	71.8	74.9	87.3	90.7	91.8
Slightly	16.1	13.8	13.0	12.0	7.2	4.6	4.6
Somewhat	12.3	7.7	7.9	6.5	3.3	2.3	1.9
Very	9.7	3.5	3.3	3.0	0.9	0.8	0.7
Extremely	14.7	3.9	3.2	2.5	0.8	1.2	0.7
Don't know	1.2	0.7	0.8	1.0	0.5	0.4	0.4
Total n:	100.0 5056	100.0 5056	100.0 5056	100.0 5056	100.0 5056	100.0 5056	100.0 5056

*Question wording: In your opinion how concerned would you feel if one of your close relatives were to marry a person of ... background.
Source: The UNSW/MQU Racism Survey, telephone survey, Oct-Dec 2001

The comfort or distance data reveal an unevenness of esteem. There was a substantial level of stated concern regarding Muslim Australians. Only 46 per cent replied they would not be concerned at all if a relative married a Muslim (Table 2); 24 per cent indicated they would be 'extremely or very concerned'. This was more than three times the rates of high concern expressed for any other groups. Aboriginal, Asian and Jewish Australians are clearly significant out-groups, but not to the extent of Muslims. Anti-Aboriginal and anti-Jewish sentiment was in evidence for only one-in-four respondents. These results indicate a very culturally uneven allocation of tolerance in Australia.

Cross-tabulations and Chi-square testing demonstrate a strong positive association between age groups and the level of intolerance of Muslim Australians, Aborigines, Asian- and Jewish Australians (Table 3). The age categories used here were chosen to reflect three main social stages affecting Australians: those aged 65+ were brought up in an era when Anglo-Celtic immigrants absolutely dominated immigrants to this country; those aged 35-64 were largely the product of the European immigrant dominant period of the 1950s to the mid-1970s; those aged under 35 were a product of the post-White Australia period from the mid-1970s. Older persons show greater intolerance, reflecting different official treatment of cultural diversity (in both schooling and public policy statements) during their lifetimes, and reinforcing the importance of progressive educational anti-racism initiatives and inclusive government rhetoric. Tolerance progressively increases (except with regard to people of Jewish background) into the two younger age categories. Among gender groups, concerns about inter-marriage are also strongest towards Muslims, though significantly more so among females, while about one quarter of respondents react against the other out-groups, more strongly so among males than females towards Aborigines, but otherwise equally between the two gender groups.

Table 3: Any stated concern regarding inter-marriage, to selected 'out-groups', by gender and age

Would be concerned if a relative were to marry a person of ...		Muslim faith %	Aboriginal background %	Asian background %	Jewish faith %
Age	18 to 34	44.9	20.3	21.0	22.3
	35 to 64	52.7	28.7	27.2	24.0
	65 +	63.7	40.6	36.7	26.7
Gender	Male	48.9	30.7	28.5	24.1
	Female	55.6	27.6	26.8	24.1
All n:		52.8 5056	28.9 5056	27.5 5056	24.1 5056

*Question wording: In your opinion how concerned would you feel if one of your close relatives were to marry a person of ... background.

Chi Square tests of the significance of associations for Age were Muslim ($p < .000$), Aboriginal ($p < .000$), Asian ($p < .000$) & Jewish ($p < .026$); and for Gender were Muslim ($p < .000$), Aboriginal ($p < .021$), Asian ($p < .218$), and Jewish ($p < .935$).

Source: The UNSW/MQU Racism Survey, telephone survey, Oct-Dec 2001

These findings support other evidence that Muslims suffer quite dramatically from the stereotypes of Islamic misogyny or sexism (Chafic 1985: 52; Dwyer 1993: 156). Older people showed greater intolerance on this measure, especially regarding Muslims and Aborigines. McAllister and Moore's (1989) social distance surveys had indicated that Muslim and Arab Australians were key 'out groups', just ahead of Asian and Aboriginal Australians. Generally the 2001 results indicate an expanding Islamaphobia, probably linked to recent geopolitical events, media representations of Muslims, and an accumulating heritage of antipathy towards Islam in Australia (Dunn 2001; Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, 2004, 3-4,43-52; Islamic Council of NSW 1989; Said 1981). The social distance of other 'out-groups' also appears to have an enduring longevity in Australia, with Indigenous, Asian and Jewish Australians encountering a similar social distance to that which had been found in earlier survey work.

Views on cultural diversity and nation

Questions tested support for cultural diversity or multiculturalism, respondents' own comfort with cultural difference, and with the impacts of diversity on the nation. Almost 85 per cent of respondents were of the view that it is a good thing for a society to be culturally diverse (Table 4, 1st column), and very few people are opposed to it (only about seven per cent). Just over one-in-ten feel insecure when in the company of people of a different ethnicity from their own (Table 4, 2nd column). Some forty-five per cent of respondents gave quite strong support for the proposition that cultural diversity was a threat to nationhood in Australia. This contradicts the pro-diversity view of the 85 per cent reported in the 1st column. Interpretation of this contradiction can be related to competing discourses of the nation and nationalism. A belief that strong societies and communities can only be constructed in circumstances of cultural homogeneity is widespread.

Table 4: Support for diversity, and concern with difference

	Cultural diversity is good* %	Feel secure with ethnic difference** %	Ethnic diversity weakens nation*** %
Disagree	7.3	10.7	37.8
Neither disagree/agree	7.7	13.6	16.4
Agree	84.6	74.5	44.8
Don't know / Not sure	0.4	1.2	1.0
Total n:	100.0 5056	100.0 5056	100.0 5056

*Question wording: It is a good thing for a society to be made up of people from different cultures?

**Question wording: You feel secure when you are with people of different ethnic backgrounds?

***Question wording: Australia is weakened by different ethnicities sticking to their old ways?

Source: The UNSW/MQU Racism Survey, telephone survey, Oct-Dec 2001

The contradictory views on multiculturalism among respondents are likely to be outcomes of two powerful but different discourses that continue to have everyday

currency in countries that proclaim their diversity, such as Australia and the United States (Jayasuriya 2002; Stratton & Ang 1994). The first is a pro-cultural diversity discourse based on liberal values of cultural equality, reproduced in the official rhetoric about multiculturalism that has been generated by government and non-government agencies over the last twenty years or so. The second is a much older, more pessimistic and conservative ideology that borrows from sociobiological understandings of identity and community. This posits that community, even nations, can only be wrought in circumstances of cultural sameness (Ardrey 1967: 253). Since the evolution of modern nation-states, a central problem has been the promotion of a single identity; composed of a culturally uniform or homogeneous people, bounded within a definitive territory (Renan 1882). A similar argument was advanced by Thomas (1999, 56) to explain intolerance of Vietnamese-Australians. Her view was that Vietnamese-Australians' cultural expression was valued only insofar as it did not challenge everyday White (Anglo) hegemony, such that it remains confined within White control (ie. as an exotic artifact to be consumed).

The cultural homogeneity ideology clearly undermines a multicultural society and represents a conceptual tension that lies unresolved within official multiculturalism in Australia. The potential threats from sociobiological views in fact go beyond the generating of community opposition to multiculturalism to provide an ideological base for racist politics, and to undermine the citizenship of those considered to be different from an Anglo-Celtic, 'host' society 'norm'.

A recent survey of 3501 Australians (of whom more than half were Australians of a non-English speaking background) found that 74 per cent of long-present Australians (principally Anglo and Indigenous Australians) identified themselves as "Australian" (Ang, et al. 2002: 40). However, only ten per cent of those of a non-English speaking background were prepared to identify as "Australian". Of the 400 Vietnamese-Australians surveyed only three per cent were prepared to identify as Australian (Ang, et al. 2002: 40). The authors concluded that "mainstream definitions of Australian cultural identity still tend to ignore or overlook the social diversity of the overall population", and the national imaginary remains 'white'. Results of the 2003 Australian Survey of Social Attitudes indicate some evidence for exclusionary understandings on belonging. Over a third of respondents thought that Christianity and Australian ancestry were important to being 'truly Australian', over half thought being born in Australia was important, and two-thirds thought it required a person having lived in Australia most of their life (Australian Survey of Social Attitudes, 2004).

Hage (1998) has persuasively suggested the utility of the binary concepts of 'spatial managers' and the 'spatially managed' to better understand belonging and nationalism. The spatial managers are those who feel empowered to express an opinion about the nation, and about who belongs, and who should be allowed into the national space. The spatially managed are those who have opinions expressed about them, where they should be put, what they are doing, or where they should be sent back to. As mentioned earlier, forty-five per cent of survey respondents felt able to say that some cultural groups did not belong in Australia. Almost half of the sample acted as spatial managers. Such management – and strength of belonging – was slightly lower among indigenous respondents (49 per cent), those born overseas (39 per cent), and those who

spoke a language other than English at home (37 per cent) (Table 5). In other words, almost half of the respondents, and Anglo-Celtic-Australians more so than others, felt able to make judgments about who does fit, and who does not, in Australia. The data lend some support to the argument of theorists like Hage (1998), and the research mentioned above, that there is a cultural unevenness to belonging (see also Butcher and Thomas 2001). Representations of the nation, of Australia and Australian-ness, remain too narrow to allow for a wide enough sense of belonging. The link between cultural background and the confidence to judge who is an outsider is through the everyday repetitions of what constitutes national identity. The Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission's (HREOC) 'Consultations with Civil Society' (2001: 10,19-20) found consensus that:

"The White Australia Policy has had a lasting impact on the national social development of Australia. It allowed the construction of a populist national identity which excludes and marginalizes groups This has led to popular ideas of the need for people to conform to a set of perceived cultural and social norms if they are to be truly 'Australian'" (HREOC 2001: 19).

Exclusionary articulations of national identity, of Australian-ness, are repeated daily in the media, by politicians, community leaders and in everyday interactions of everyday spaces.

Age was significantly associated with the ability to make a judgment about who does not belong in Australia, most especially among the 65+ age group who were brought up under the White Australia policy and a dominantly Anglo-Celtic immigration program. Those with a non-tertiary education were similarly significantly less tolerant than those with tertiary training (Table 5). Not unexpectedly, respondents with a language other than English (LOTE), and of course those born overseas with non-English speaking backgrounds, were much less inclined to identify out-groups than were the Australian born or immigrants with English speaking backgrounds. There was no significant difference between males and females on this issue. These findings indicate the importance of educative anti-racism programs to engage this high level of exclusionist sentiment. They also confirm arguments that the nation's media and cultural industries should offer much more inclusive articulations of nation-ness (Goodall et al. 1994).

Normalcy and privilege

Only 8.5 per cent of respondents disagreed that there was racial prejudice in Australia, with 83 per cent agreeing that there was (Table 6). This is suggestive of a substantial level of recognition of this societal problem. Recognition of cultural 'winners' from racism was less apparent. Denial of Anglo-Celtic privilege ('People from a British background are privileged?') was reported by 43 per cent of respondents. Pedersen and Walker (1997: 565) observed that in the contemporary era, alongside an "apparent egalitarianism" there was a strong strain of new racism that operated to "defend the privileges of the dominant culture". This is a portent of the strategic sensitivities that the politics of anti-racism must negotiate (Johnson 2002).

Table 5: Preparedness to identify groups that do not belong in Australian society, by ethnicity, gender, age and education.

Demographic characteristics & Chi Square test		Are there groups that do not belong in Australian society?*
		% Yes
LOTE ($p < .000$)	Yes	37.2
	No	46.2
Birthplace ($p < .003$)	Overseas	39.2
	UK/NZ	45.1
	Australia	46.0
ATSI ($p < .404$)**	Yes	40.4
	No	45.0
Gender ($p < .129$)	Female	43.4
	Male	47.1
Age ($p < .000$)	18 to 34	30.6
	35 to 64	44.4
	65 +	65.4
Education ($p < .000$)	Tertiary	34.1
	Non-tertiary	49.3
ALL Yes (n: 2272)		44.9

*Question wording: Do you believe that there are any cultural or ethnic groups that do NOT fit into Australian society? ** Data set for ATSI (n: 94) was too small for meaningful Chi Square testing.
Source: The UNSW/MQU Racism Survey, telephone survey, Oct-Dec 2001

Table 6: Recognition of racial prejudice and Anglo-Celtic privilege in Australia

	There is racial prejudice in Australia?*	British Australians enjoy a privileged position?***
	%	%
Disagree	8.5	42.6
Neither disagree or agree	7.7	16.0
Agree	83.2	38.9
Don't know / Not sure	0.6	2.5
Total	100.0	100.0
n:	5056	5056

*Question wording: There is racial prejudice in Australia? **Question wording: Australians from a British background enjoy a privileged position in our society? Source: The UNSW/MQU Racism Survey, telephone survey, Oct-Dec 2001

Older people, males and Anglo-Celts were more likely than younger respondents, females and non-Anglo-Celts, to deny racism and cultural privilege. Fewer than five per cent of Indigenous respondents denied there was racism, and only a third denied there was Anglo-Celtic privilege. Of those born overseas (excluding UK and NZ) only 15 per cent did not see racism as a contemporary problem in Australia and one-third denied that British-Australians enjoyed a cultural privilege. Similarly, only 36 per cent of respondents who spoke a language other than English (LOTE) denied there was a cultural privilege for Anglo-Celtic Australians. For those respondents who only spoke English, the denial of Anglo-Celtic privilege was higher at forty-four per cent. The recognition of a problem, and of cultural privilege, were both significantly associated with those possessing a LOTE background and with the overseas born: recognition of racism and privilege was stronger among those of a non-Anglo-Celtic background.

Belief in racial hierarchy, racial separatism and 'race'

Questions were also developed to test for 'old racist' sentiment. Respondents were asked whether they agreed that all 'races' of people are equal. Disagreement with that proposition was operationalised as an indicator of support for racial hierarchy. Almost 12 per cent of respondents believed there was a natural racial hierarchy of some form, indicating that more than one-in-eight Australians hold beliefs akin to racial supremacy (Table 7). Stated belief in the need to keep 'races' sexually separate was a little stronger. Just over 13 per cent are racial separatists, as indicated by the stated undesirability of inter-marriage between 'racial groups' (Table 7). Stated belief in the old racisms is clearly confined to a minority of Australians, as anticipated by Jayasuriya (2002: 41-2).

Table 7: Belief in racial hierarchy, racial separatism, and racialism.

	Do not believe in racial equality*	Belief in sexual separation**	Belief in 'races'***
	%	%	%
Disagree	11.7	75.5	15.1
Neither disagree /	4.8	10.6	6.2
Agree	83.1	13.2	77.6
Don't know / Not sure	0.4	0.7	1.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
n:	5056	5056	5056

* Question wording: All races of people are equal? ** Question wording: It is not a good idea for people of different races to marry one another? *** Question wording: Humankind is made up of separate races? Source: The UNSW/MQU Racism Survey, telephone survey, Oct-Dec 2001

Older people and those without tertiary qualifications were much more likely to agree that 'races' are unequal. By these measures, belief in racial hierarchy is positively associated with age and negatively associated with education. The associations with age and education were even stronger for the proposition regarding racial inter-marriage. For example, 24 per cent of those aged 65 and over think it a bad idea for people of different 'races' to marry one another, while only seven per cent of those aged 18 to 34 have the

same view (Table 8). Males are slightly more likely to oppose racial inter-marriage than females. Statistical associations between old racisms, socio-demographic characteristics, birthplace and language confirm the abovementioned positional differences in terms of tolerance/intolerance (Table 8). The statistical associations with support for sexual separation (opposition to 'racial' inter-marriage), show that those respondents with a language other than English and the overseas born, were significantly more accepting of sexual separation than all others. Males were also more supportive of this form of racial separatism. Older respondents were especially more separatist, as compared with those in the 18-34 age group for whom the issue was of much lesser concern. As was the case for most attitudes, the non-tertiary educated were statistically more separatist and supremacist. These data again point to the conservative legacy of sociobiology, as found in White Australia ideology, but also to the progressive role of anti-racist initiatives within the education system.

Table 8: Belief in racial hierarchy, racial separatism, and racialism, by ethnicity, gender, age and education.

Demographic characteristics		Do not believe in racial equality*		Belief in sexual separation**		Belief in 'races'***	
		%		%		%	
LOTE	Yes	13.4	p=<.179	15.6	p=<.004	70.2	p=<.000
	No	11.4		12.8		78.9	
Birthplace	Overseas	12.7	p=<.365	15.3	p=<.040	68.5	p=<.000
	UK/NZ	13.9		12.2		78.1	
	Australia	11.2		12.9		79.2	
ATSI	Yes	9.6	nb	12.8	nb	71.3	nb
	No	11.7		13.2		77.7	
Gender	Female	10.9	p=<.062	12.1	p=<.004	76.3	p=<.034
	Male	12.8		14.9		79.6	
Age	18 to 34	8.7	p=<.000	6.9	p=<.000	72.7	p=<.000
	35 to 64	11.3		12.6		77.6	
	65 +	16.6		23.5		84.2	
Education	Tertiary	9.8	p=<.001	10.2	p=<.000	75.6	p=<.042
	Non-tertiary	12.5		14.4		78.4	
ALL		11.7		13.2		77.6	
n:		5056		5056		5056	

* Question wording: All races of people are equal? **Question wording: It is not a good idea for people of different races to marry one another? *** Question wording: Humankind is made up of separate races? Nb: Data set for ATSI (n: 94) was too small for meaningful Chi Square testing. Source: The UNSW/MQU Racism Survey, telephone survey, Oct-Dec 2001

The belief that there are natural 'racial' categories of humankind has been defined as racialism, and is thought to be linked to discourses of nature, such as taxonomic division and natural orders (Hannaford 1997; Miles 1989). UNESCO (1983) in the 1950s and 1960s condemned the sociobiological premise that humankind can be sorted by a biological category called 'race', and recent work within genetics refutes any substantive or meaningful biological category called 'race' (Human Genome Diversity Committee 1993). Yet racialism emerged as a widespread belief in the 2001 attitudes survey. About 78 per cent of respondents believed that human kind could be sorted by natural categories called 'races'. The belief was prevalent. The demographic variables most strongly associated with this belief were older age, followed by birthplace (Australian or UK/NZ born rather than elsewhere overseas), those without a language other than English, and the less well educated (Table 8).

It has been argued that racialism is a core ideology on which racism draws (Anderson 1998: 125-7; Bonnett 1996; Kobayashi & Peake 2000: 393; Miles 1989). Without the notion of separate and distinct 'races', racial discrimination would lack an ideological basis. Our findings could suggest that the prevalence of racialism provides a fecund circumstance for old racisms. Most of those respondents who believed in racial separation and hierarchy also accepted the notion of racial categories. Indeed, associations among these three variables generated significant results. Clearly, belief in the category 'race' may be a foundation of the old racisms, including belief in racial hierarchy and the need for racial separatism. However, the statistical associations between racialism and the attitudes outlined in earlier sections – on out groups, diversity and nation, and privilege – were all weak. Our findings indicate that belief in 'race' in Australia has a very limited link with the new racisms. Indeed, the influence upon the new racisms, the supposed role of racialism as a core ideology for all racisms, is not supported in these findings. The new racisms are more likely sustained by social constructions of nation, and to media stereotypes and other portrayals of specific cultural groups (most dramatically in regards to Muslim Australians at the turn of the Millennium). However, as we show later, there is evidence of strong links between the old racisms (of supremacism and separatism) and the new racisms.

Symbolic racism

Respondents were asked if they were prejudiced against other cultures, in other words to self-identify as racist or not. This has been characterized as symbolic racism, where respondents' name their own dissatisfaction or unease with cultural difference. They perceive out-groups as having 'violated cherished values' of one sort or another (cf. Sniderman et al., 1991, 424). About 12 per cent self-diagnosed their own racism (Table 9). This compares with one third of respondents to a European Union survey of racism and xenophobia (Eurobarometer Opinion Poll 1997). In common with most of the racism indicators discussed above, older people, males and those without tertiary education were significantly more likely to indicate prejudice against other cultures, especially as between males (more racist) and females. However, there was no significant difference between the overseas and Australia born, nor between those respondents with a language other than English, and those with only English. Nonetheless, the 12 per cent of respondents reflect a 'hard-core' body of racists who more often than not also stated this

way of thinking to the interviewers with pride. These respondents were also those most likely to believe in the ‘old racisms’.

Table 9: Self-identification as a racist, by ethnicity, gender, age and education.

Demographic characteristics & Chi Square test		I am prejudiced* % Yes
LOTE ($p < .858$)	Yes	12.0
	No	12.0
Birthplace ($p < .201$)	Overseas	12.1
	UK/NZ	10.8
	Australia	12.0
ATSI ($p < .731$)**	Yes	9.6
	No	12.0
Gender ($p < .000$)	Female	9.6
	Male	15.2
Age ($p < .006$)	18 to 34	9.1
	35 to 64	12.8
	65 +	13.2
Education ($p < .003$)	Tertiary	9.5
	Non-tertiary	12.9
ALL Yes (n: 605)		12.0

*Question wording: You are prejudiced against other cultures? ** Data set for ATSI (n 94) was too small for meaningful Chi Square testing. Source: The UNSW/MQU Racism Survey, telephone survey, Oct-Dec 2001

On the other hand, eighty per cent of respondents disagreed (disagree or strongly disagree) with the proposition that they are prejudiced against other cultures. This may seem to contradict the finding that 83 per cent of respondents recognise that there is a problem with racism in Australia generally in another question (see Table 6). Clearly, while the problem of racism was well recognised by respondents, it was seen as a problem that afflicted *other* people at the personal level. This tends to support an everyday assumption that racism is a spatial and temporal aberration, expressed infrequently by a deviant minority (Kobayashi & Peake 2000: 393-7).

A construction of racisms (old and new) in Australia

Previous discussion identified two main forms of racial logic, an old racism based on inferiorisation, and a new racism, based on cultural differentiation. The latter, in turn, were seen to comprise several different though potentially related aspects of the culture of difference. To test for the validity of this form of social construction, we used a factor

analytic approach to data reduction of variation among the 5056 individual respondents, using the principal components model.

Principal components analysis of questions 1-10 (the questions on specific group inter-marriage were not relevant to this analysis), and socio-demographic variables on individual age (using the full age range), gender and education (tertiary level or not) produced four components with values near 1 (unity) and accounting for 43 per cent of variation among respondents. Varimax rotation was used to reduce the components towards a simpler structure (Table 10); oblimin and promax solutions produced very low correlations among the components and were discarded. The relatively low level of variation accounted suggests a fair degree of independence among the variables. Nevertheless, the four components emerging from the analysis indicate the nature of generality, the structuring of people's thinking about racism. Importantly, however, the results do not differentiate at all cleanly between the old and new racisms.

Table 10: Varimax rotated component matrix

	Components			
	I	II	III	IV
Different cultures a good thing	-0.29	0.57	0.18	0.02
Secure with different cultures	0.04	0.64	-0.47	0.08
Racial prejudice exists in Australia	-0.06	-0.02	0.74	0.11
Self-identification as a racist	0.20	-0.60	0.10	0.18
Keep races separate re inter-marriage	0.57	-0.21	0.07	-0.03
There is Anglo privilege	0.02	0.01	0.70	-0.13
Groups sticking to old ways is bad	0.51	-0.25	0.02	0.01
All races are equal	-0.18	0.57	0.02	0.03
There are separate races	0.34	0.25	0.14	0.61
There are out-groups (Y=1; N=0)	0.52	-0.30	-0.06	0.16
Gender (M=1; F=0)	-0.18	-0.24	-0.16	0.71
Age (continuous)	0.71	0.10	-0.06	0.20
Tertiary education (Y=1; N=0)	-0.40	0.12	0.10	0.31
Per cent variance accounted for	13.98	13.51	8.84	8.15

The first component brings out an assimilationist, anti-multicultural perspective among mainly older respondents and those with non-tertiary qualifications. Antagonism to inter-marriage among different 'races' is the one aspect of the old racism brought out in this first component of our statistical construction of racist attitudes in Australia (Table 10). The socio-demographic associations are consistent with results presented in Tables 5 and 8. That is, separatism is positively associated with age, and negatively with tertiary education. A link between the old racism of separatism and some of the new racisms is apparent among component I. Pro-separatism is also linked to a concern that cultural diversity weakens nationhood, and also with the preparedness to identify cultural

groups that do not belong in Australia. Here we see the old racisms, with the narrow sociobiological understanding of the cultural bases upon which communities (or nations) can be built, linked strongly with the new racism of cultural intolerance. Component II in Table 10 demonstrates some of the inverse relationships to those just reviewed. Disagreement with the racial supremacist position (agreeing that 'races' are equal) is linked with a pro-diversity stance (different cultures are good), a sense of security regarding different cultures, and a self-identification as not racist. These associations confirm Hall's (2000) suggestions on the strong link between old and new racisms. The third component demonstrates an expected link between recognition of racism in Australia and recognition of Anglo privilege. So that while the latter (recognition of privilege) had a lesser hold among the respondents (Table 6), the two forms of denial / recognition are nonetheless statistically associated. Finally, component IV highlights how the belief that there are natural racial groupings (separate races) is linked quite strongly with males generally rather than females. This is the only component where an old racism stands out on its own, unattached to any of the other two aspects of the old racism or to any aspects of the new.

The old racisms, based in socio-biological forms of racial logic, have not disappeared, although it is clear that the new racisms are most pervasive in contemporary Australian society (perceptions that there are groups that don't fit, intolerance of specific groups, and of cultural difference and diversity more generally). In Sniderman et al's (1991, 424) terms: 'racism is now regarded as socially undesirable, so people favour disguised, indirect ways to express it'. It may well be that the higher levels of agreement to new racism propositions relative to old racisms is a reflection of a strategic move in the way that common or everyday racism is expressed in Australian society. Racism in modern Australia may also be seen as a conjunction of the logics of both the old and the new racisms. For example, the pessimistic sociobiological preference for racial separatism (implying homogeneity) may be the ideological basis of the concern that cultural diversity weakens nationhood. Similarly, rejection of the core precepts of old racism is strongly linked to a supportive disposition toward cultural diversity.

Conclusions

Despite official reticence about acknowledging racism in Australia, the majority of people seem prepared to recognize that there *is* a problem. This is a strong popular basis upon which to justify the further development of anti-racism public policies. There is nonetheless a substantial minority who deny that there is a problem (about 8 per cent). About twelve per cent of respondents self-identify themselves as prejudiced and hold beliefs that are racially separatist and supremacist. But old racism has an ideological hold on only a minority of Australians. Even so, this minority (about one-in-eight, compared with one in five in European Union countries (Eurobarometer Opinion Poll 1997), has the potential to generate substantial inter-communal tensions in the workplaces and other public realms of Australian society.

As with the findings of earlier research, most of our respondents (85 per cent) demonstrate a contradictory set of attitudes regarding cultural diversity. Liberal attitudes to equality of opportunity mixed with official celebratory rhetoric and education about multiculturalism are likely to have facilitated the generally positive disposition towards

cultural diversity. Another important factor may be the respondents' own positive experiences of diversity, although the role of that variable remains to be tested. In stark contrast, however, a substantial proportion of respondents (almost half) perceived cultural diversity to be deleterious to a strong and harmonious society. This contradiction suggests a widely held, and largely unchallenged, assumption that successful societies can only be wrought in circumstances of cultural uniformity. In concurring with Jayasuriya's (2002: 43) analyses of racism, we suggest that the confrontation of this sociobiological and pessimistic understanding of nation remains an unfinished public policy imperative of Australian multicultural policy.

Age and education are important attributes to the possession of racist attitudes: older people, and those without tertiary education, were much more likely to express attitudes that we have defined as old racism, and also more likely to make an assessment that a particular cultural group, or groups, do not belong in Australia. Older respondents also express much stronger levels of antipathy towards Muslims and Aboriginal Australians. Both the age and education associations suggest the effectiveness of anti-racism initiatives and messages within the education sector. The age element also reminds us of the legacy of the White Australia policy, of white national identity and white (and Anglo) constructions of nationhood. These periods were times when people were socialized into a very narrow and hierarchical understanding of nation and community. More positively it also indicates that the shift to a multicultural definition of national identity is having a structural impact upon understandings of nation – although that message may be unevenly received. One public policy implication is that education initiatives and public pronouncements (even celebratory cosmo-multicultural rhetoric) have important roles to play.

The survey findings have revealed a substantial degree of intolerance of Muslim and Arab-Australians. Most likely, geopolitical events, international media and local moral panics have generated these heightened levels of Islamophobia. This confirms the dynamic and socially constructed nature of intolerance. There is considerable scope for successfully engaging such intolerance, as present within all age groups, in the here and now, which runs counter to the generally pessimistic findings of previous attitudinal work where it was felt that societies will inevitably have an out-group, or groups, who are the focus of contemporary disparagement (McAllister and Moore, 1989: 37-8). Such pessimism is supported by a long history of commentary and academic analyses that associate poor ethnic relations with diversity. The scholarship on positive aspects of diversity, and more radical forms of multiculturalism, is by comparison more recent and still poorly developed. A social construction take on inter-communal relations can imagine a culturally inclusive, diverse and dynamic articulation of nation, which could theoretically challenge the apparent inevitability of out-groups.

The social construction of cultural groups as problematic, by dint of supposed and generalised cultural practices, is a key aspect of the new racism. Another is the culturally exclusive construction of what constitutes the mainstream, the normal, or indeed the nation. There were more respondents who denied there was Anglo cultural privilege in Australia than there were those who recognised it. Recognition of privilege was especially associated with those born overseas, and with those who used a language other than English. Preparedness to make judgments on whether some groups do not

belong in Australian society was itself culturally uneven. This culturally varied recognition suggests that privilege itself is culturally uneven. Given the findings on out groups and privilege, the degree of fit of cultural groups was most likely judged along an Anglo (or Anglo-Celtic) yardstick. This provides yet another indicator of the unevenness of national belonging. The survey findings reported here generally suggest that the Australian national imaginary still remains very Anglo-Celtic.

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