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**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Opponents (34%)</th>
<th>New Conservatives (56%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong>*</td>
<td>40.6</td>
<td>46.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong>*</td>
<td>57% F</td>
<td>47% F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education</strong>*</td>
<td>4.06</td>
<td>3.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Own support for Asian immig.</strong>*</td>
<td>5.21</td>
<td>3.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Perceptions Australians support (norm)</strong>*</td>
<td>3.78</td>
<td>2.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Perceptions increasing conservatism</strong>*</td>
<td>4.77</td>
<td>5.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Perceptions threat to White Aus</strong>*</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>
</tbody>
</table>

| Social Dominance                             | 2.01<sup>a</sup> | 1.74<sup>a</sup> | 2.60<sup>b</sup> |
| Threat to Australians                        | 2.13<sup>a</sup> | 2.70<sup>a</sup> | 4.04<sup>b</sup> |
| Legitimacy of inequality                      | 1.89<sup>a</sup> | 3.14<sup>b</sup> | 3.80<sup>c</sup> |
| Hostile Norms                                 | 4.03<sup>a</sup> | 4.39<sup>a</sup> | 5.82<sup>b</sup> |
| Fairness                                      | 2.26<sup>a</sup> | 4.11<sup>b</sup> | 5.87<sup>c</sup> |
Group variables affect attitudes and action indirectly via fairness

<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>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Threat to Group (Stability, Permeability)</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>0.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legitimacy threat</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norms against AS</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>0.08</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>
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</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>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Threat to Group</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</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>.15</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual threat</td>
<td></td>
<td>.12</td>
<td></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>.12***</td>
<td>.10***</td>
<td>.15***</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 (βs)

<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>.18***</td>
<td>.21***</td>
<td>.21*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human ID</td>
<td>-.23***</td>
<td>-.20***</td>
<td>-.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hostile Aus norm</td>
<td>.12**</td>
<td>.11*</td>
<td>.16+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hostile human norm</td>
<td>.16***</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
- 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 1st 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 β</th>
<th>Negative emotions β</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>R²</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?
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><strong>Recommend for interview</strong></td>
<td>5.24</td>
<td>5.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Personal acceptability</strong></td>
<td>4.86</td>
<td>5.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social suitability</strong></td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>4.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education</strong></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><strong>Work history</strong></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
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*

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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