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# 'Team Australia?': Understanding acculturation from multiple perspectives

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# Abstract

In this paper we explore mutual acculturation among Australians from Indigenous, majority, immigrant and refugee backgrounds. Our aims were: to develop Berry's acculturation scales for use in Australia and from multiple perspectives and to explore acculturation expectations and strategies from these multiple perspectives. We conducted in-depth interviews ($n$ = 38) in Perth, Western Australia. We investigated participants' views, guided by the two dimensions underlying Berry's model of acculturation: cultural maintenance and intercultural contact, and models of culture learning. We found that participants had different acculturation expectations for different groups, as well as different preferred strategies for themselves, although most indicated a preference for integration. In particular, the extent to which groups were seen as voluntary to intercultural contact was regarded as an important factor; participants had considerably different expectations of Indigenous Australians than for immigrants to Australia. This was consistent with the strategies of most immigrant participants who regarded the responsibility for integrating as resting with them by virtue of their decision to migrate. The findings highlight the importance of the multi-way approach to investigating acculturation in multiethnic and post-colonial societies such as Australia and have been used to develop acculturation scales for future quantitative studies.

*Keywords:* acculturation; mutual acculturation; Indigenous; immigrant; majority; Australia

# 'Team Australia?': Understanding Acculturation From Multiple Perspectives

*"Everyone has got to put this country, its interests, its values and its people first, and you don't migrate to this country unless you want to join our team"*
Tony Abbott, interviewed on 2GB radio 18, August, 2014

Former Australian Prime Minister Tony Abbot exhorted immigrants to Australia to 'join our team,' a popular theme in political discourse that emphasizes migrants fitting in and contributing to (white, Anglo-European) Australian society. Minus the political rhetoric, this focus on how migrants approach acculturation after settlement also has characterized much of previous acculturation research. That is, the emphasis has been typically on migrant-non-migrant relations, accenting the migrants' responsibility for cultural change and accommodation in order to fit in with the 'host' culture. Only recently has research begun to address how members of the host culture might approach the process of cultural change resulting from increasing ethnic diversity. Moreover, this 'mutual acculturation' takes place within a complex context of intergroup relations in societies like Australia, in which there is also a significant Indigenous minority whose views have rarely been canvassed in acculturation research. In our research program we aim to address these gaps, and in this paper we present findings from a preliminary step toward this goal: to adapt Berry's acculturation scales for use in Australia by using a multi-way approach to acculturation from the perspectives of Australians from Indigenous, majority, immigrant and refugee backgrounds.

## Conceptual Framework

This study was a pilot for an Australian national survey as part of the Mutual Intercultural Relations in Plural Societies (MIRIPS) international project. Researchers from countries including Canada, Finland, Germany and Russia utilize a common research framework (Berry's acculturation model, described below) and research instrument to examine intercultural relations, their predictors and outcomes. This enables the investigation of patterns of relationships across different policy, socio-economic and intergroup contexts.

In the MIRIPS project, measures are adapted to the local context. To do this we drew upon Berry's (2001) acculturation framework in which intercultural relations are viewed as mutual, and people's intercultural strategies are based on two underlying issues: (1) the degree to which there is a desire to maintain the group's culture and identity; and (2) the degree to which there is a desire to engage in daily interactions with other ethnocultural groups in the larger society, including the majority. We also explored the second dimension operationalised as 'culture adoption,' which is how it has been conceptualised in many studies (Berry & Sabatier, 2011). In addition, we drew upon the culture learning framework (see Masgoret & Ward, 2006) such that we explored participants' desire to acquire

intercultural knowledge and skills in order to navigate intercultural contact. Finally, we considered all of these acculturation dimensions (maintenance, adoption, learning/shedding and contact) in relation to both: intercultural *strategies*, which we conceptualised as the approaches an individual or group might adopt as their orientation with regard to their own culture; and intercultural *expectations*, preferences for how others might (or should) approach acculturation.

## The Australian Context

The Australian government introduced multicultural policy in 1978, but Australia was culturally diverse prior to British colonization: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples[1] comprised over 500 clan groups, with over 250 distinct language groups, at the time of White settlement (Dudgeon, Wright, Paradies, Garvey, & Walker, 2010). Clan groups had separate territories, laws and systems. Nonetheless, there are common features among the cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in terms of the importance of the land ('Country') and their relationship to it, spiritual beliefs ('Dreaming') and their social and kinship systems (Dudgeon et al., 2010). More recently, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders have shared political goals and identity, in a broad sense, because of their common history of oppression and in their pursuit of recognition by non-Indigenous Australians: a) as Australia's First Peoples, and b) of the negative impacts of colonization and post-colonial practices and policies.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders have lived in Australia for at least 50,000 years. Unlike immigrants, they were not voluntary participants in intercultural contact but were colonized by force by the British in 1788. The impact of British colonization (invasion) was profoundly negative, pervasive and enduring. Currently, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders are significantly disadvantaged in terms of health, education and employment outcomes relative to non-Indigenous Australians (Dudgeon et al., 2010; Mellor, Bretherton, & Firth, 2007).

Political activism among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders came to the fore in the 1970s, partly in response to the changes enacted as a result of the 1967 Commonwealth Referendum. This resulted in a self-determination movement which continues to the present, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders have some degree of choice regarding how much to engage with non-Indigenous Australia. Recently, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders have proposed constitutional reform and the implementation of a process toward agreement-making (treaty) with governments (Referendum Council: Indigenous Steering Committee, 2017).

To promote population and economic growth, Australia has a substantial immigration

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[1] In general, we use the term 'Indigenous' to refer to Indigenous peoples (original inhabitants) worldwide. To refer to Australian Indigenous groups we use 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders' or more specific Nation or language groups such as Noongar. Our sample did not include people who identified as Torres Strait Islander so we refer to our participants as 'Aboriginal.'

program. In the early days, the intent was to maintain a predominantly white, European population; however, since the 1970s the ethnic and linguistic diversity of new immigrants has increased (Jupp, 2002), and in 1978 the government adopted a policy of multiculturalism. The approach had previously been one of assimilation, but there was increasing pressure from minority ethnic communities to be supported to maintain their languages and cultures (Jupp, 2002). Statistics from the last census show that approximately 28% of Australians were born overseas, and a further 20% has at least one parent born overseas (Australian Bureau of Statistics [ABS], 2016). In addition, since 1901 at least 750,000 refugees have settled in Australia (Refugee Council of Australia [RCOA], 2012), with 13,750 places for Humanitarian Entrants each year[2] (Department of Immigration and Border Protection [DIBP], 2016). Finally, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islanders comprise 3% of the population (3.7% in Western Australia; ABS, 2013).

## Research on Mutual Acculturation

Acculturation has been the subject of much research in the past 40 years, but there are two notable gaps in the literature: 1) the views of non-immigrant, and specifically Indigenous, groups have been neglected (Stonefish & Kwantes, 2017); 2) studies in which majority members' perspectives have been canvassed have focused on their expectations of immigrants rather than how they themselves approach cultural change resulting from intercultural contact (Haugen & Kunst, 2017). Thus, the *mutuality* of acculturation remains understudied. What we do know from past research is that immigrants usually report a preference for integration (Bourhis, Moïse, Perreault, & Senécal, 1997; Jasinskaja-Lahti, Liebkind, Horenczyk, & Schmitz, 2003), whereas in some contexts, majority members are more likely to prefer immigrants to assimilate (Arends-Tóth & van de Vijver, 2003). Differences can result in discordant or conflictual acculturation orientations and contribute to intergroup tensions (Bourhis et al., 1997). Majority members' preferred acculturation strategies seem to be separation and integration (Haugen & Kunst, 2017), but the research on this is scarce.

The little research conducted with Indigenous peoples suggests a preference for integration (Stonefish & Kwantes, 2017) and, in some cases, separation (Tonkinson & Tonkinson, 2010). Indigenous community members consistently report a strong desire for cultural maintenance or, more precisely, the rediscovery and revitalisation of heritage cultural practices and beliefs, lost due to colonisation and forced assimilation (Stonefish & Kwantes, 2017). Some authors (e.g., Garrett & Pichette, 2000) refer to this as 'pan-traditionalism,' an active process of selecting elements of the heritage culture to maintain and strengthen.

Relatively little is known about mutual acculturation in the Australian context. Findings from past research suggest that most immigrants to Australia endorse integration (e.g., Abu-Rayya, & Sam, 2017; Sam, Vedder, Ward, & Horenczyk, 2006), although some groups demonstrate a preference for separation (Lu, Samaratunge, & Härtel, 2011). Research from

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[2] A commitment to accept an additional 12,000 refugees from Syria and Iraq was made in September 2015.

the international ethnocultural youth project (see Berry et al., 2006) revealed that the acculturation profiles for Australian minority youth were: integration, 51.1%; assimilation, 24.9%; separation, 8.5%; and marginalisation, 15.6%.

Acculturation research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders is rare, although early work by Berry (1970) identified moderate levels of marginalization among Aboriginal Australians in a community in New South Wales. More recently, Tonkinson and Tonkinson (2010) found an acculturation preference for separation among the Mardu[3] Desert people, with a strong emphasis on culture and language maintenance. Consistent with findings with Native Canadians (Stonefish & Kwantes, 2017), research on reconciliation has demonstrated that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders have a strong desire for cultural maintenance, as well as recognition[4] of their unique status as the first peoples of the nation and of their sovereignty of the land. The *Uluru Statement from the Heart* from the 2017 First Nations National Constitutional Convention suggests a preference for self-determination among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, alongside engagement with non-Indigenous Australia toward 'agreement-making' (treaty) and constitutional reform (Referendum Council's Indigenous Steering Committee, 2017).

Finally, relatively little is known about acculturation strategies or expectations among majority Australians. Past research has demonstrated strong support for cultural maintenance by immigrants (Dandy & Pe-Pua, 2010) and preferences for integration in general (e.g., Abu-Rayya & White, 2010). However, their views on how they might change in response to the increasing diversity of Australia (own acculturation) remain unexplored. Moreover, research with immigrants has tended to focus on their strategies in relation to the dominant or mainstream Australian culture: it is unclear how they perceive intercultural relations with or their acculturation expectations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.

## Summary and Research Aims

There is a need to investigate current attitudes toward acculturation – expectations of other groups and for one's own group – in the Australian context. This will contribute data from the Australian experience to the development of intercultural relations theory, as well as reveal more about contemporary intergroup relations in Australia. Our aims in this paper were twofold:

1. To develop Berry's acculturation scales for use in the Australian context and from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, majority, migrant and refugee perspectives.
2. To explore Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, majority, migrant and refugee perspectives on acculturation expectations and strategies, adopting a multi-way approach to acculturation.

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[3]  Also spelled as *Martu*.
[4]  For many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders recognition is more than symbolic acknowledgement but includes constitutional recognition and legal rights to land and sea.

To our knowledge, this is the first study to examine these multiple perspectives on acculturation simultaneously.

# Method

## Participants

We used purposeful sampling: deliberately sampling from people living in Perth who identified as Aboriginal or majority (British heritage) Australian, or Australian from an immigrant (Indian or Chinese) or refugee background. Additional aims were to achieve approximately equal numbers of men and women and to sample a good representation of ages.

There were 38 participants (16 male and 22 female) recruited through personal networks and by third parties. Aboriginal participants ($n$ = 10; 5 male, 5 female; $M$ age = 40.80, $SD$ = 16.50, range = 21 to 73 years) were self-identified. The majority identified as Noongar (from the southwest of Western Australia including Perth) but also from the neighbouring nations/clan groups of the Yamatji and Wongatha language groups.

Twelve participants were majority Australians, defined as Australian-born from a British cultural background or born in the UK (but long-term resident in Australia). There were six women and six men ($M$ age = 47.92, $SD$ = 18.71, range = 22 to 80 years). Four were born in the UK and had lived in Australia for 36 years, on average ($SD$ = 8.35). Ten participants had migrated to Australia under the Skilled and Family Reunion Programme ('migrants'; five each from Indian and Chinese backgrounds; 7 female and 3 male; $M$ age = 51.70; $SD$ = 16.53, range = 24 to 70 years), and six participants had settled in Australia as part of the Humanitarian Programme ('refugees'; two male; four female; $M$ age = 40.33, $SD$ = 17.50, range = 21 to 65 years). Participants who came as Humanitarian Entrants were from Afghanistan, Iran and Sudan. All migrant and refugee participants had been living in Australia for at least two years ($M$ = 11.06 years, $SD$ = 8.15).

## Measures

Participants completed a demographic questionnaire and participated in an individual, semi-structured interview. Interviews ranged in duration from 21 to 81 minutes (approximately 50 minutes on average)[5]. Based on the acculturation frameworks outlined earlier, the interview questions covered the topics: cultural background and identity; experiences settling in Australia (for migrants' and refugees); own acculturation including desire for cultural maintenance, intercultural contact, learning about other cultural groups and cultural adoption; and views on the acculturation of others (Aboriginal, migrant, refugee, majority; according to interviewee background). As discussed in more detail in the Results section, Aboriginal participants were not asked about adapting to Anglo-Australian society or culture because this was considered culturally insensitive.

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[5] One interview included more than one participant, i.e., a married couple was interviewed together, which was their preference.

**Procedure**

First, we consulted with Aboriginal Elders and researchers to develop the research proposal with their input and assistance. We then obtained approval from the university's Human Research Ethics Committee. Interviews were conducted in Perth and by the first author, with the exception of interviews with Aboriginal participants, which were conducted by the third author, a Noongar woman. This approach was to ensure cultural sensitivity, reduce power inequalities between researcher and participant and enhance cultural security for Aboriginal participants (Mellor et al., 2007). Moreover, it aligns with the university's standards for the ethical conduct of research with Aboriginal people. We included other methods to enhance methodological rigour, such as use of a common interview guide and audit trail and frequent discussion of themes and their interpretation among the three researchers (Smith, 2015).

To recruit majority, immigrant and refugee participants from a range of backgrounds and ages, organisations such as local government authorities and multicultural service organisations were approached to advertise the project. Additional participants were recruited through personal contacts of the researchers and through snowballing. Potential participants were provided with a copy of the Information letter and consent form via email or in person. Those interested in participating contacted the relevant researcher.

The interviews were conducted in participants' homes, workplaces or a university library and were audio-recorded for transcription. Prior to commencement of the interview, the researcher provided an additional copy of the Information letter, reiterated the main aims and procedure of the research and answered any questions the participant had. The participants then completed the consent form and demographic questionnaire and gave consent for the audio-recording of the interview. The interview commenced with general questions regarding the person's cultural background and/or immigration history before proceeding to the main topics of the interview. Participants were given a $20 store voucher to reimburse them for their travel and time.

With the exception of the Aboriginal participants' interviews, which were transcribed by the third author, the audio-recordings were transcribed verbatim by a professional transcription service, which included removal of potential identifying information. The transcripts were then imported into QSR NVivo 11 for analysis. Analysis began with coding according to the main topics of interest (e.g., own acculturation, further divided into maintenance, learning, adoption, mixing), then progressed to a second-pass analysis of key themes arising within and across topics and identification of new themes arising from the interviews (inductive analysis). Additional note was taken of similarities and differences in acculturation expectations of different groups. The analysis was conducted primarily by the first author, but the coding and interpretation of themes were cross-checked by the second and third authors to enhance interpretative rigour of the analysis.

# Results

In the section below we address: firstly, findings relevant to the development and refinement of acculturation items for use in the Australian context; and secondly, substantive findings of the exploration of Australians' acculturation expectations and strategies. The latter are preliminary findings, given that this is a small sample restricted to residents of Perth, Western Australia.

## Aim 1: Measuring Acculturation in the Australian Context

As described earlier, our approach was informed by the two dimensions underlying Berry's (2001) mutual acculturation model: desire for both maintenance of heritage culture and contact with other groups. In addition, we included questions regarding learning about and adopting aspects of other cultures, based on culture learning approaches and because various researchers have conceptualised Berry's second acculturation dimension as adoption of the new, host culture (Berry & Sabatier, 2011). Our questions were based on all of these acculturation dimensions in relation to both: intercultural *strategies*, which we conceptualised as the approaches an individual or group might adopt as their orientation with regard to their own culture; and intercultural *expectations*, preferences for how others might (or should) approach acculturation. These were addressed in turn for each of the other groups (Aboriginal, majority, migrant and refugee).

Thus we began with a lengthy, semi-structured interview schedule. This was then modified for Aboriginal participants, in consultation with senior Aboriginal researchers, an approach that is consistent with protocols for ethical research with Aboriginal and Islander communities (Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, 2012). Consequently, Aboriginal participants were not asked about adapting to majority Australian society or culture because this was considered culturally insensitive given the history and impact of British colonisation. Reconciliation with non-Indigenous Australians was seen as a more appropriate way to frame discussion and this topic came up in the interviews when discussing cultural maintenance, the need for others to learn about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and the history of Indigenous-non-Indigenous relations in Australia. In addition, we asked Aboriginal (and migrant and refugee) participants if they experienced any challenges in maintaining their heritage cultures.

Through the process of interviewing, it became evident that the wording of survey items would influence participants' responses. For example, there was varied interpretation of terms such as 'should,' 'accommodate' and 'adapt' in the context of mutual acculturation, and participants often queried what was meant by these terms. They also frequently resisted endorsement of any statement that entailed obligation, for themselves or others, particularly for questions relating to intercultural contact or cultural adoption ('should majority Australians make efforts to interact more with Aboriginal cultures?'). Most participants did not think intercultural mixing should be forced, believing this would make it unnatural and defeat the purpose. Wording such as 'is it important for …?' seemed to be preferable.

Interview topics were addressed in the same order, in most cases, and this raises the issue of potential order effects. That is, we began all our interviews with questions about the person's cultural background, identity and own acculturation, and the resultant transcripts typically contained more content on those topics and less about later topics, which might be due to participant fatigue. The exception to this was majority Australians, who said little about own acculturation (see subsequent section) but considerably more about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. This revealed another potential order effect introduced by our method of discussing each group in turn: when participants were discussing a subsequent group they tended to contrast their views with those they had expressed earlier. The first 'other' group they had discussed then became an anchor – in addition to their own acculturation strategy – for views on other groups (e.g., concluding that cultural maintenance is not as important for migrants as it is for Aboriginal Australians). Clearly, survey items need to be counter-balanced in subsequent administration of the multi-way measure.

## Aim 2: Aboriginal, Majority, Migrant and Refugee Perspectives on Acculturation Expectations and Strategies

These findings are structured such that the main themes of participants' preferred approach to their own acculturation and views on intercultural relations are addressed first, followed by the primary themes of acculturation expectations of other groups. In the latter section we highlight some intergroup perspectives because a full multi-way analysis is beyond the scope of this paper. Consistent with the qualitative approach we include some interpretation and links to literature here, which are followed up in the Discussion.

### Own acculturation

The majority of our **Aboriginal** (Noongar) participants stated a desire for cultural maintenance (and re-discovery, in some cases) alongside a desire to interact with others, indicating an integration acculturation orientation. Intercultural mixing was seen as a way to facilitate learning about each other's cultures, leading to understanding and mutual respect.

> *I think it's very important, and particularly that it's a two-way learning process… often they [majority Australians] come from a basis of ignorance and it's about sitting down and yarning[6] with them and explaining how we do things, why we celebrate things.*

However, one participant's response, when asked about mixing with migrants and refugees, reflected a separation approach ("*I got no problem with 'em, as long as they stay away from me and stay out of my way, I'll stay out of theirs").* This orientation is not surprising given the history of Indigenous/non-Indigenous relations in Australia, and, in particular, past policy and practices of forced assimilation which resulted in significant culture loss. Following from this,

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[6]    Yarning is a term in Aboriginal English which refers to informal conversation in which information is exchanged or people or events are discussed. It is open and responsive in the context of the situation or particular conversation.

cultural survival was a strong theme for these participants rather than maintenance, and participants spoke of their fears that their cultures would be lost in Australian multiculturalism:

> *… we are a multicultural society and our culture sometimes can be blended and sometimes distorted. So it's important we maintain our own self-identity and our own integrity, and continue to pass on our cultural beliefs and understanding.*

Elements of culture participants were particularly keen to maintain included language, and they emphasised the importance of maintaining connection to the land ('Country'), knowledge about the land and traditional spiritual beliefs. Consistent with findings with other Indigenous peoples (Kvernmo, 2006; Stonefish & Kwantes, 2017), some participants reported a drive to re-discover and re-invigorate their heritage culture in order to ensure that languages, culture and beliefs are passed on to future generations.

Participants also spoke of the challenges of maintaining traditional cultural practices, away from Country and in an urban environment:

> *I don't know how we'd go in the middle of Perth at any time, to do what we do, you know? Sometimes I go past and I think, wonder what they'd say if I suddenly sat down in the middle of the freeway there and started cooking in coals, and singing my language songs and whatever.*

Fears about culture loss are not uncommon for groups who are less dominant in intercultural contact, although they might be stronger among Indigenous peoples (Kvernmo, 2006).

In stark contrast to the views of Aboriginal Australian, participants in the **majority Australian** group had no strong desire for cultural maintenance. They indicated there was no real need, given their cultural, economic and political dominance within the Australian context. As one said *"That's [British history] what's taught in schools… it's sort of what the norm is."* This might also reflect a lack of consensus and dispute about what (Anglo-) Australian culture is (Fiske, Hodge, & Taylor, 2017) and ambivalence about our British heritage.

Participants from **Chinese and Indian backgrounds** (first generation) generally reported a preference for integration. For example, one participant said:

> *I think that goes back to our identity. It is important to integrate into the mainstream because it helps us but on the other hand I think we can live our lives with all the values and with what we have been born and brought up with... losing those will be like losing my own identity.*

However, some – particularly Chinese Australian women – tended more toward assimilation, and emphasised that it was their responsibility to 'fit in' (*"I think it's a balance… My policy is, do as the Romans do it, you are living there").* Nonetheless, participants reported a variety

of ways in which they maintained their culture and connection to their cultural identity, including through language, food/cooking, recreational and spiritual activities, significant cultural events (e.g., Chinese New Year).

Migrant participants also indicated it was important to make friends outside of their cultural group, and they saw this as critical feature of integrating and developing a sense of belonging to the local and/or national community, as well as to combat the social isolation many new immigrants experience. However, not all had success in this regard and some spoke of the difficulties in getting to know people from other cultural groups, particularly majority and Aboriginal Australians

*("It's [mixing] totally important, but it is actually important to the minor groups like Aboriginal, women, migrants… when you live in a dominant culture you don't feel you need to do that… They [the dominant culture] have no problem because they live in this dominant culture… they can mix with anybody.." and "I have some Japanese friend, and Chinese friends and locals… not so many. I mean local is Australian but not many, yeah").*

One of the barriers to mixing with majority Australians was the Australian drinking culture, which meant that social activities with one's work colleagues and others would take place at 'the pub' ('public house,' where alcohol is served) and involved drinking ("*because the Australian, they like to go drinking*"), which made some participants uncomfortable or prevented their attendance. Participants also recognised that the historical oppression of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and their ongoing social and economic disadvantage might make some reluctant or unable to engage with members of other cultural groups.

The acculturation orientations of participants from **refugee backgrounds** shared some similarities with those of Aboriginal Australians and immigrants; whilst there was a general pattern of an integration approach ("*we want to keep our culture but we want to learn the people's culture as well*"), they spoke of cultural survival like the Aboriginal participants. Some described their culture as "all they had," reflecting the circumstance of settling with very few material possessions and/or family support.  Others also indicated an orientation akin to assimilation ("*In my opinion, when we go to live in other countries, we have to respect their system, their law and their people*)" or were simply getting on with the challenges of daily life, including the settlement challenges of finding work.

### Learning about and adapting to other cultures

All participants saw value in learning about others' cultures but were less supportive of personally adapting to or making changes to accommodate others' cultures. Here there were two interesting patterns in responses: 1) immigrants and refugees regarded it as more their responsibility to adapt and change, rather than that of majority and Aboriginal people, as reported earlier; 2) participants from the majority and Aboriginal groups regarded learning about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures as particularly important. This was the subject of considerable discussion in interviews with majority Australians and their responses were qualitatively different than those for majority-migrant relations because they

referred to themes of relevance ("*Because this is where we live, it's the real story"*) and moral obligation (*"and we took their land and we continually take their land. And if we are doing that then we need to understand where they're coming from and why they may get upset when try to take sacred land … to put an oil rig on, or something"*).

The expression of guilt has been observed by other authors in examining white Australians' attitudes to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and Australia's colonial past (e.g., Williams, 2000). It is also possible that social desirability bias played a role in our participants' responses. Further investigation using an anonymous online survey would enable the validity of these findings to be tested.

In contrast, whilst many majority Australians regarded learning about non-Indigenous minority cultures as important because it would increase understanding and empathy, they did not see it as a priority or obligation. Rather it was something that one could do if one was interested, or "in an ideal world."

Aboriginal participants said that it was important for immigrants and refugees to learn about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in order to gain an alternative perspective to the dominant Australian culture:

> *It's important not to just subscribe to the dominant culture which has been the white culture in Australia and so you can build a respect and knowledge of other people's culture that's gonna have a positive benefit not just for yourself but for them.*

> *I think that the first point they [migrants and refugees] should learn about, not about the Australian flag or anything like that, it should be Aboriginal culture and Torres Strait Islander because there is, many things, negative things are said about those, the first people and that's what they hear firsthand.*

Consistent with this, many immigrant Australian participants reported that their knowledge of Aboriginal cultures was very limited and they had heard predominantly negative things ("*the only thing I have learnt about from all Aussies is negative, you know*?"). Participants from refugee backgrounds also reported they did not know enough about Aboriginal cultures *("I feel like we've learnt a lot about it, education wise, but we haven't learnt a lot about it in real life"*). However, although they recognised the value of learning about Aboriginal cultures our immigrant participants saw learning about the majority and adapting to the dominant culture ("fitting in") as more important.

## Acculturation Expectations

Consistent with the patterns observed for learning about and adapting to other cultures, our participants reported differing expectations of how other groups should approach acculturation. In general, there was a trend of preferring integration, particularly when viewed by majority Australians with regard to immigrants and refugees. Whilst cultural

maintenance was supported ("*it's very important to keep that connection to wherever you're from*"), this was tempered by comments regarding the need for migrants to also adopt aspects of Australian culture

> ("*but you've got to change a little bit, just to like, fit in, well, not fit in but to keep everyone happy*" and "*but I find it very important that they accommodate change and become part of society at large, and certainly, learn the language*").

The same cannot be said for majority Australians' views on how Indigenous communities might approach acculturation. They recognised that colonisation and subsequent assimilationist policies had forced Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders to adapt to British culture, and they thought that any reluctance to engage with majority Australians was understandable ("*who can expect that? Unless the white Australian community is available, and it isn't, and it never has been then yeah...There's gotta be another way*"). However, some majority Australians thought that Aboriginal people could (and should) make more effort to integrate, and this would provide them with more opportunities for employment and socio-economic advancement. This was a view shared by some Australians from immigrant backgrounds who indicated they supported cultural maintenance among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, but it should be balanced with participation in mainstream society ("*for everybody, it's good to maintain their culture but it's also good to step out to know other people's culture*").

Our Aboriginal, immigrant and refugee participants disagreed with regard to how much effort majority Australians should make to adapt to or accommodate the cultures of others living in our diverse society. Not surprisingly, Aboriginal participants stressed that majority Australians should learn more about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and recognise they were the original inhabitants. Learning was thought to bring understanding and empathy, and Aboriginal participants indicated they hoped that learning and interacting would dispel negative stereotypes, for example one participant said:

> *Yes, I think Anglo White Australian need to have a very strong understanding of our culture, our history because there is are a lot of myths out there about Aboriginal people they see us sitting in the parks - they don't know why we're there and they form views of us that are very negative and if they actually sat down and had a yarn with one of those people to find out who they are where there from and why they're there they might have a bit more empathy towards us. So they need to -- they need to need to learn at an individual level, family and community level and that will assist them in understanding our circumstances and wh-, why we are where we are.*

In contrast, whilst most immigrant participants regarded learning about others' cultures as an important feature of the mutuality of acculturation,

*("It's a two-way process isn't it? It is a two-way process because the migrant comes into the country and you're learning about it/ then the host country got to really learn about it and have a wider understanding, so these two can come together")*

they had mixed views on the extent to which majority Australians should change or adapt to migrants' and refugees' cultures

*("No I don't think they need to adapt. But if they're interested in knowing what you do just of out of curiosity or plain interest then sure, but they definitely don't have to adapt. This is Australia, we need to adapt to them").*

This was consistent with the view, described earlier, that it is primarily migrants' responsibility to 'fit in' and adjust. Similar views were expressed by participants from refugee backgrounds *("if they want to. I mean, you can't shove it down their throats")* and some emphasised the freedom (and plurality) of Australia *("I don't feel they should have to change their ways because of somebody else's culture. At the end of the day, Australia's a free country")*.

## Discussion

In this study we explored acculturation strategies and expectations from the perspectives of Australians from Aboriginal, majority, immigrant and refugee backgrounds and utilising multi-way perspective. An additional aim was to develop mutual acculturation survey items for use in the Australian context and with these multiple groups. Consulting with Aboriginal Elders and engaging Aboriginal researchers enhanced the cultural appropriateness of our interviews and analysis, which in turn informed the development of culturally sensitive mutual acculturation items. Our interviews also taught us the significance and varied interpretation of terms such as 'should,' 'accommodate' and 'adapt' in the context of mutual acculturation. Finally, our interview experience highlighted the potential for order effects when repeating intergroup comparisons in a multi-way approach. These were valuable observations that will inform our national study of mutual acculturation in Australia.

Exploring acculturations strategies and expectations we found general preferences for integration as an acculturation orientation, for participants themselves and for others. The majority of participants valued diversity and intercultural contact. However, some participants' responses implied a personal orientation toward separation (Aboriginal) or assimilation (immigrant Australian). Discordant acculturation orientations, in which there is a mismatch between a group's preferred strategy and what is expected by others, can create intergroup tensions (Bourhis et al., 1997). The potential for this is deserving of further research in the Australian context.

Variations in the acculturation expectations of others demonstrated the complexity of intergroup relations in post-colonial contexts such as Australia. Recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders as the country's original inhabitants and of their past oppression and forced assimilation weighed heavily in discussions of present day 'mutual acculturation.'

This was particularly the case for Aboriginal and majority Australian participants, and it affected their perspectives on who should learn and change, and how much, in the process of mutual acculturation. Similar 'privilege' was not afforded to migrant Australians, and it was a consensual view (shared also by migrants themselves) that they should carry the primary responsibility for adaptation and change because they had chosen to migrate. Taken together, these different perspectives highlight the value of the multi-way approach.

We do not claim that these findings are definitive nor are they representative of the Australian context more broadly. Our sample is small, English-speaking and largely one of convenience. It is also Perth-based, and it is known that local intergroup conditions and history can influence intercultural orientations. For example, the percentage of Western Australian people who identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander is higher than in many other Australian states, at 3.7% compared with 3% nationally (ABS, 2013). Nonetheless, we would argue that the findings provide a snapshot of mutual acculturation in Australia, deserving of further investigation.

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