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Attitudes to Diversity: new perspectives on the ethnic geography of Brisbane, Australia

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ABSTRACT As a consequence of changing immigration policy over the past 50 years, contemporary Australia has a culturally diverse population. Focusing on Brisbane, one of Australia’s smaller immigrant-receiving cities but where some 19 per cent of the population is born overseas, this study examines attitudes to and perceptions of culturally different ethnic (non-Anglo) immigrant groups. Emphasis is placed on patterns of tolerance and intolerance for the city as a whole, both in areas of contact and in areas of minimal contact. Findings show that variations in attitudes vary somewhat from commonly accepted socio-economic and age-based correlations (the lower the status or the older people are the less tolerant), depending on the particular mix of ethnic birthplace groups present. They also show levels of intolerance in areas of minimal contact, which is implicitly attributed to mass media influences. In light of these findings, a concluding plea is made for anti-intolerance strategies to be developed for cities that pay regard to the geography of attitude-forming contexts.

KEY WORDS Ethnic diversity; tolerance; racism; Brisbane; Australia.

Introduction

Australia’s contemporary ethnic diversity is a product of its more recent immigration history. Historically, Australia’s people comprise three main elements: a pre-colonial Indigenous people; a mostly British colonial past from the time of European settlement to the later 1940s; and extensive immigration from many different parts of the world and cultures since then. The latter period, of increasing diversity, was marked by immigration from mainly European sources up to the ending of the White Australia policy in the early 1970s, and since then from any part of the world, subject only to immigration policy settings in terms of labour force and family reunion considerations, plus a relatively small refugee component and free entry from some specified countries, principally New Zealand (for a history of immigration to Australia and its impacts, see Burnley 2001).

During the period mid-2007 to mid-2008, for instance, some 174 000 immigrants arrived in Australia to take up permanent settlement. Of these, 62.6 per cent
were in the skilled migrant category (including 3.8 per cent in the business category); 28.8 per cent entered with family reunion visas; and 7.5 per cent under the humanitarian (refugee) program; the remainder entered under special category or exempt from visa provisions. Among those who arrived on business, skilled entry and family reunion visas (humanitarian visa entries were not included), the third Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Australia (LSIA3 2005) shows that the majority first settled in Sydney (38 per cent) and Melbourne (27 per cent), with smaller proportions settling in Perth (9 per cent), Brisbane (7 per cent) and Adelaide (5 per cent). The largest proportions came from Britain (18 per cent), China, including Taiwan and Hong Kong (12 per cent); North America (7); India (5) and the Philippines (5).

Many of the immigrants entering Australia over the past five or six decades thus came from cultural backgrounds which were different from most of the host (receiving) society. This increased ethnic diversity and raised issues regarding the acceptance of culturally different ethnic immigrant groups. A number of important research traditions presently occupy the attention of social scientists interested in this issue. Among these, one important strand focuses on ‘lived diversity’ in urban spaces (for a recent review, see Wessel 2009; see also Noble 2009; and Wise 2009 on ‘everyday multiculturalism’). A second strand, more deeply embedded in the Australian research literature, concentrates on what has come to be referred to as ‘new racism’ (Sniderman et al. 1991).

New racism, sometimes called cultural racism, focuses on an ‘insurmountability of cultural differences’ (Markus 2001; see also Dunn et al. 2004, pp. 410–12). Ethnic immigrant groups cease to be viewed as socio-biologically inferior, embodying overt notions of a racial hierarchy and racial separation (Wieviorka 1995). Rather, racism is expressed more covertly, as varying levels of threat to ‘social cohesion’ and ‘national unity’ as perceived according to the cultural values and hegemonic integrity of the dominant (receiving) society (Jayasuriya 2002, pp. 41–2). Most pertinent to this study are two main and interrelated aspects. One is the notion of the existence of out-groups; of intolerance towards specific cultural groups based on historic constructions of Australia’s national identity and who does or does not ‘belong’ (Rizvi 1996, pp. 176–7). The other involves notions of cultural diversity (cf. Ang et al. 2002, pp. 17–20) and the ideology of nation (e.g. Hage 1998, pp. 27–55).

Much of the existing research in the new racism strand, however, has been at the national (e.g. Jayasuriya 2002; Markus 2001) and sometimes State levels (e.g. VicHealth 2007; Paradies et al. 2009), with some consideration of the major immigrant-receiving cities, principally Sydney and Melbourne (e.g. Dunn et al. 2009; Forrest & Dunn 2010). Much less attention has been paid to other metropolitan areas, of secondary importance in terms of numbers received but nevertheless important as immigrant-receiving cities. Among these, Brisbane occupies a special place. The still relatively high proportion of immigrants arriving from English-speaking birthplaces (some 25 per cent—LSIA3) and first taking up settlement in Brisbane continues a trend established in the several decades after the Second World War, when Brisbane was subject to Queensland State government population policy which was anti-diversity and focused on settlers from English-speaking backgrounds (Burnley 2001, pp. 321–6). So while Brisbane now has as large a proportion of non-English-speaking-background (NESB) residents by place of birth (19 per cent) as Perth and Adelaide, many of these first established
themselves elsewhere in Australia before moving to Brisbane. This especially applied to people of Asian origins who moved into Brisbane’s middle-income districts.

While much of the emphasis in the Australian literature, and indeed elsewhere, has been on compositional aspects, such as the attitudes of particular socio-demographic groups (Dixson 1999), in several recent studies Forrest and Dunn (2006a, b, 2007) have brought out a significant spatial consideration. These compositional and spatial aspects together comprise a basis for what Pietsch and Marotta (2009, p. 198) have referred to as the multiple constructions of host society perceptions and attitudes. This has been characterised as an ‘everywhere different’ view of new racism attitudes (Dunn & McDonald 2001). Attitudes to immigrants from other cultural backgrounds are increasingly seen as social constructions within places (Forrest & Dunn 2006b), such that attitudes vary among specific socio-demographic groups and from place to place, even among people of a similar social background, depending on the mix of immigrant groups present and public reactions to particular groups in the mix.

There is, however, another aspect of any place-based perspective, identified by Forrest and Dunn (2006b, 2007; see also Dunn & McDonald 2001), which attempted to enlarge upon contact theory—the idea that contact leads to acceptance (e.g. Putnam 2007), though sometimes the opposite occurs and is embodied in conflict theory—to stress the need to look not only at areas of contact between the ‘host’ society and minority ethnic immigrant groups but also at areas where there is less, even minimal, cultural diversity. While many studies focus on areas of direct contact (e.g. Amin 2002; Putnam 2007), there has as yet been little research attention on areas of non-contact where attitudes, tolerance or intolerance, are nonetheless important (Forrest & Dunn 2010).

This study is therefore set within the second or ‘new racism’ research strand. It adopts a social constructivist approach (Jackson & Penrose 1993; see also Dunn et al. 2004, p. 410) aimed at identifying the elements of category (attitude) construction. It seeks to deconstruct attitudes to diversity in Brisbane across the range of socio-demographic and spatial contexts. Its aim is to further expand our understanding of the acceptance of ethnic diversity in Australia.

**Attitude and place**

The centrality of spatial context to attitude formation has become increasingly important in the thinking of social scientists and cultural geographers in recent years (Duncan et al. 2004, p. 2). In contemporary theoretical terms, the specific histories of ‘host’ society cultures are seen, as in Australia, to generate specifically national attitudes and policy approaches to the treatment of diversity (e.g. Lamont & Aksartova 2002; Waters 1997). At the local level, research into voter behaviour, for example, points to the influence of similar contextual effects, especially the neighbourhood effect whereby people are influenced by information circulating within their social networks, much of it spatially constrained to the local area (Johnston & Pattie 2005; see also Huckfeldt 1980). Thus recent work on racial attitudes in England (Bowyer 2009) points to the importance of the local ethnic mix, and more specifically to which particular combination of ethnic minority groups resides there.
Much of the research on attitudes to and tolerance of diversity at the sub-national level is bound up with contact theory (Allport 1954). Thus cross-cultural contact can inspire positive attitudes and perceptions under certain conditions: where the groups have equal status, common goals, intergroup cooperation and where there is official support (see Pedersen et al. 2005, pp. 23–4). To these Pettigrew (1998) added a fifth, namely opportunities to become friends. Additional considerations include factors such as a balanced ratio of in-group to out-group numbers, an expanding economy and low levels of anxiety (Dixon et al. 2005). In later work, however, Pettigrew and Tropp (2006) found an inverse relationship between contact and prejudice regardless of whether or not all five of the above conditions were met. Others have emphasised the co-importance of perceived racial threat (or conflict) theory, and, as Bowyer (2009) found, the importance of the nature of the local ethnic mix. The critical point in all of this discussion for the present study, however, is less the way in which contact or conflict theory works as the way in which it provides a framework which emphasises the formation of tolerance or otherwise at the local level. Hence the value, indeed the necessity, of conducting analysis and deconstruction of attitudes at that level.

Mass media and place impacts

In the above discussion an explanation of acceptance or conflict was sought in the presence or otherwise and nature of cross-cultural contact. But there are also macro or structural influences impacting upon such attitudes. Intolerance and conflict may occur in the near absence of diversity (Forrest & Dunn 2007). A synthesis of two distinct fields of research helps us speculate on the geography of this situation. The first includes research which has critically analysed the media portrayal of diversity and ethnic minorities. The second includes work by social psychologists and other social scientists on the morbid effects of adverse media portrayal. Mass media and other public discourse can be macro stressors upon community relations, depending on the way in which cultural diversity and ethnic minorities are portrayed.

The treatment of ethnic minority groups in the mass media has been found to be especially problematic (Hall 2000; Van Dijk 1993). As Hall (2000, p. 271) has noted, the media are both producers and transformers of ideologies, of ‘those images, concepts and premises which provide the frameworks through which we represent, interpret, understand and “make sense” of some aspects of social existence’. Or as Weingart (2009) put it: ‘[r]ace is a social construction, and one that is continuously constructed by today’s media’. The importance of the mass media in creating and perpetuating attitudes towards ethnic minorities has been well noted in media and cultural analysis. It has been found to be especially problematic in tabloid newspapers and on talk-back radio (Bell 1993; Dreher 2010; Goodall et al. 1994; Poole 2002; Poynting et al. 2004; Poynting & Noble 2004; Richardson 2004). These representations of diversity and of minorities have been found to have substantive impacts on the well-being and belonging of those who are portrayed adversely (Nairn et al. 2006; Paradies et al. 2008). Such media treatment can also have wider negative effects. Thus the NSW Police Force report into the Cronulla race riots pointed to the content and tenor of talk-back radio as a primary cause of the expressed intolerance and racist attacks (Hazzard Report 2006, pp. 7–8, 25–8).
There is an as yet under-examined geography to the influence of media on cross-cultural relations. Those living with generally unproblematic everyday experiences among ethnic groups may be less influenced by negative media messaging (Noble 2009). There is an emerging set of scholarship on the generally productive impacts of everyday cultural diversity in Australia. Researchers from human geography, anthropology and cultural studies, using more ethnographic methods, are finding that most cross-cultural contact in day-to-day city life has positive or neutral effects on perceptions of cultural diversity (Bloch & Dreher 2009, pp. 195–7; Delanty 2006; Gow 2005; Noble 2009; Wise 2009).

However, this is less likely to occur in areas where there is a minimal ethnic presence, in outer suburbs for instance (Forrest & Dunn 2007, 2010), where media influence may be inferred and written into the circumstances of place. Emerging work by social psychologists reveals a strong link between contact and the potency of perceptions of threat, and hence prejudice. Stephan and Stephan (1996) concluded that in the absence of cross-cultural contact people will not have sufficient knowledge to judge whether or not an out-group poses a realistic threat. The form of threat perceived (e.g. symbolic, realistic), the extent of intolerance or prejudice, could be dramatically dependent upon influences that confound (or confirm) those of the mass media. Although not addressed explicitly in this study, this would help explain the tensions that emerge around proposals for places of worship or private schools by ethnic minorities in areas where diversity is accelerating, perhaps from a circumstance of ‘nearly absent diversity’. In Sydney this might include areas like Annangrove or Camden where there have been tense debates over development proposals from Australian Muslims (Dunn et al. 2004). Social psychology research has long shown that intolerance, or lack of empathy, is associated positively with stronger in-group identification (Saucier et al. 2005).

A geographical variation of media effect may be especially pronounced between the inner city and outer suburban or rural areas of major immigrant-receiving countries like Australia, especially in cities like Sydney and perhaps Brisbane (Forrest & Dunn 2007). Although not part of this study, this could help explain city-wide variations in dispositions towards diversity which should be addressed in later research.

Discomfort about cultural difference

Australia has a long history of anxieties towards ‘otherness’ relating to notions of national belonging and its international geopolitical location (Markus 1979; Noble 2005, p. 108). Burke (2001) recorded Australia’s historical preoccupation with security born out of its status as an outpost of British colonialism in the Asia-Pacific region. This was reflected in its ongoing reactions to illegal immigration, racial purity and national integrity, whether relating to the threat of the ‘yellow peril’ from China during the mid- to later nineteenth century or to more recent streams of Asian and Middle Eastern (Muslim) immigration in the later twentieth century. Such discomfort in fact represents an ambivalent situation where 87 per cent of Australians from a national survey agree it is a good thing for a society to be made up of people from different cultures on the one hand, while on the other only 42 per cent disagree that Australia is weakened by people of different ethnic origins maintaining their ‘old ways’—cultural pluralism (Challenging Racism Project 2011). This is to suggest that older (pre-1970s)
policies favouring integration continue to challenge newer policies of multi-
culturalism in the national perception.

Until at least the early 1970s and the birth of multiculturalism, racism
was deeply embedded in the Australian national psyche, in association with an
official White Australia policy which was one of the first pieces of legis-
lation enacted by the new federation in 1901 (Kamp 2010). A socio-biological
attitude to ‘otherness’ prevailed in which some racial groups were deemed inferior.
As Jayasuriya (2002, p. 40) notes: ‘[i]n the era of European colonial expansion
of the 19th century ... race [was] employed to exclude ... racialised groups, [with an]
emphasis on inequality’. More recently, this socio-biological form of racism, or
‘old racism’, has been transmuted into ‘new racism’. There emerged ‘... a new
ideology of racism [based on] a racist argument ... expressed primarily, though not exclusively, on ... [a need for] “social cohesion” and “national unity”’ (Jayasuriya

During the 1990s, McAllister and Ravenhill (1998) identified hesitation and
anxiety associated with closer ties with Asia, leading to the emergence of the
conservative populist One Nation Party in the mid- to later 1990s and its policy
platform that a unified, stable and homogeneous nation was undermined by
multiculturalism (Leach 2000, p. 42). Multiculturalism was a policy formulation
whereby immigrants from NESBs were encouraged to maintain their existing
cultural affinities while adhering to the broader principles governing the national
polity. But since 2001 and 9/11, Pietsch and Marotta (2009, p. 193) argue that the
cultural ‘other’ has come to be associated with Muslims, Arabs—many Australians
do not distinguish between Muslims and Arabs (Manning 2003)—and southeast
Asians, reinforced with respect to ‘Muslims’ by heightened anxieties about
increased crime rates and security concerns1 (Poynting et al. 2004). However,
within the broad acceptance of diversity characteristic of most Australians, Pietsch
and Marotta (2009, p. 192) especially note a significant level of acceptance of better
educated and skilled (ethnic) immigrants in recent years.

Class-based differentiation

Any explanation of tolerance towards ethnic minority groups by the Australian
‘host’ (receiving) society is, however, far from simple. Chief among identified
sources of variation in attitudes to cultural diversity is socio-demographic back-
ground. Betts (1999, p. 3) referred to a contemporary social divide between
‘professionally educated internationalists (people attracted to the wider world of
“overseas”’) and ... lower class parochials who value the [pre-existing] character of
their national home’. Dixson (1999, p. 33) offered a similar categorisation
between a new, knowledge-economy-based managerial–professional class and lower
and middle-class parochials (to use Betts’ term). In between these two binaries,
however, Forrest and Dunn (2007) pointed to further variations among middle-
class groups which tended to set them apart from the categories suggested by
Dixson (1999). Jones’s (1997, pp. 296–8) findings further tended to support the
need for greater social class differentiation in any assessment of social divides.
Pietsch and Marotta (2009) saw implicitly that this suggested a need for greater
social class differentiation as linked to variations in concerns about job security
and housing affordability among low-middle (working)-class groups, and more
generally because of negative images increasingly being created about some ethnic immigrant groups.

*Age-based differentiation*

Age is the other commonly used basis for social differentiation relating to attitudes held. Dunn *et al.* (2004, p. 424) found a strong relationship between increasing age and assimilationist, anti-diversity views among a sample of respondents in New South Wales and Queensland. Subsequently, Forrest and Dunn (2007) developed a three-way categorisation of age data from the census: aged 65+ as acculturated during the pre-Second World War period of the dominantly British origin of immigrants and the operation of the White Australia policy; aged 35–64, acculturated during the post-Second World War period of the dominantly European origin of immigrants; and aged 18–34, acculturated since the end of the White Australia policy in the early 1970s. General support for such a categorisation again comes from Jones’s (1997, pp. 296–8) findings as to important differences among these three age groups, although he divided the middle group in two to emphasise differences between the 35–49s and 50–64s.

Class and age, then, have been the main variables associated with attitude differentiation in Australian research using compositional (census) variables (Dunn *et al.* 2004). There remains the contextual or spatial component, previously identified as an important independent factor in attitude formation, to which, in conjunction with compositional considerations, we now turn.

*Survey, data and analysis*

Based on a view that attitudes to diversity are indeed best considered as social constructions from within places (Dunn & McDonald 2001; Forrest & Dunn 2006b), this study proceeds on the basis that it is the particular ethnic mix (or lack of it) and socio-demographic profile of places which work to generate specific dispositions. Such a constructivist approach has made an important contribution to such a conceptualisation (Bonnett 1996, pp. 872–7); recent cultural geography has seen a proliferation of studies of ‘race’ embedded in the larger discourse on social construction (Kobayashi 2004, p. 239). Set within this discourse, the UNSW/MQU Racism Study survey provided multiple indicators of attitudes towards diversity and related considerations. A telephone survey of Queensland and New South Wales, among those aged 18 and above, was conducted in October and December 2001 (Dunn *et al.* 2004; see also Forrest & Dunn 2006b). Information on 831 respondents living in Brisbane was extracted for use here.

Five attitude questions focusing on acceptance of aspects of cultural diversity were used. The first three of these related to the new racism, to notions about nation and national identity, which Sniderman and Tetlock (1986, pp. 129–30) referred to as ‘symbolic racism’ that ‘yokes together prejudice and traditional values [which] both veil and legitimise ... racism’: a more covert prejudice, more subtle, expressed in symbols and replacing the overt racism of earlier times. Respondents were asked whether it was a good thing for a society to be made up of people from different cultures. Response options to this and the other attitude questions used a Likert scale: strongly agree, agree, neither, disagree and strongly
disagree. Measurements used in the analyses reported here were derived from the percentage responding positively (agree + strongly agree). Other questions around attitudes to diversity included the respondents’ sense of security in the presence of cultural difference, and whether they disagreed with a suggestion that Australia was ‘weakened by people of different ethnic origins sticking to their old ways’, used here as a surrogate for their position on multiculturalism. A fourth question, on attitudes to intermarriage, is a commonly used measure indicative of social distance between ‘host’ and non-host groups (Park 1924; Qian 2002). People were asked, using the same Likert scale as for the attitude questions, whether it was a good idea for people of different ‘races’ to marry one another. The final question, on out-groups, was predicated on whether or not the respondent had a perception of any ethnic groups as socially distant from their concept of a national polity, based on historic constructions of Australian national identity and who did or did not or cannot ‘belong’. Follow-up questions asked respondents to identify particular out-groups.

Analysis stage I: social area analysis

Because there were only nine internal Local Government Areas in the Brisbane metropolitan region, the sample respondents were drawn randomly from the 224 Statistical Local Areas (SLAs) within the built-up areas of Brisbane City, Logan City, Ipswich City, part of Gold Coast City, and the Shires of Redland, Beaudesert, Pine Rivers, Redcliffe and Caboolture at the time of the 2001 census (see Figure 1). The structuring of the sample, randomised across all SLAs, prevented obtaining results from respondents evenly across the metropolitan region. Instead, analysis proceeded in two stages. The first was a social area construction of Brisbane derived from selected 2001 census variables for each SLA. Groupings of SLAs were then linked in the second stage to analysis of attitudes to diversity and out-groups held by Brisbane people in each social area group. In this first stage, three sets of census variables were selected. The first set identified the population mix, the dominance or otherwise of the host society and major ethnic groups present. The first two variables provided an initial focus on those born in Australia or from non-English speaking background birthplaces—birthplace was used as there was no question on ancestry in the UNSW/MQU Racism Survey of Brisbane—followed by a further breakdown to include those from the UK and Eire, parts of Asia, with a Muslim background, and two main southern European origin groups to round out the major elements of Brisbane’s mix profile.

A second set comprised three age groups, selected as previously noted to represent the three main stages of immigration history from dominantly Anglo, European/Middle East and post-White Australia periods in post-federation Australian immigration history. Finally, three socio-economic status variables were included, based on education so as not to undervalue the position of females otherwise at risk when income or occupation is used to type people in areas.

The construction of social areas was undertaken using entropy analysis (Johnston & Semple 1983; see also Forrest & Johnston 1981). The major advantage of the entropy procedure over more commonly used regression-based approaches, such as principal components analysis, is its ability to take a whole-of-profile approach to the grouping of sub-areas—SLAs in this case. Groups brought together SLAs
with broadly similar profiles across the variables used. Output was then expressed in terms of group profiles, the significance of which can be assessed, as here, by standard deviations about variable means; in Table 1(A) those variables with standard deviations (SDs) of $\pm 0.5$ per cent from variable means are shown in bold to assist interpretation. It may further be noted that the entropy procedure is not constrained by normalcy of distribution and, unlike other grouping procedures, the amount of within-group variance for $(1 \ldots n)$ groups is tested separately for each higher level of grouping; it does not depend on building upon groups already formed, as in cluster analysis. The number of groups selected is determined subjectively when a decreasing amount of additional variation is accounted for by further increasing the number of groups. For Brisbane, nine groups accounted for 72 per cent of variation across the 224 SLAs and the 16 attribute or compositional variables.
In Table 1(A) the groups have been arranged between 1 and 9 in terms of greatest diversity (NESB presence) to most homogeneous (Australian born or born in the UK and Ireland) (cf. Australian Bureau of Statistics 2002). With reference to the variables shown in bold (±0.5 SD), groups 1–4 represented areas of greatest diversity with a strong NESB presence. Particular groups present were also brought out: nearly all the major immigrant groups by birthplace region in group 1; southeast Asians and Muslims in group 2; other parts of Asia and also Muslims in group 3; and predominantly Asians in group 4. All of these clusters were located in inner city and in middle or middle-inner southern Brisbane (Figure 2(A)–(D)). All were dominantly younger (18–34) populations and of mixed socio-economic status (SES) but with an emphasis on the middle to higher end of the SES scale.

Statistical Local Areas with greatest diversity were located in two higher SES districts of the inner city (the Brisbane City-Fortitude Valley and South Brisbane areas); and to the south (the Robertson-Runcorn-Karawatha region) (Figure 2(A)).
Elsewhere, NESB clustering was more specific. A lower status region (Sumner-Inala-Acacia Ridge-Larapinta—Figure 2(B)) emphasised NESB elements from southeast Asia, and Muslims. In group 3 areas (Figure 2(C)) the emphasis was on
ethnic groups from east, south and central Asia with a significant intermixing of Muslims and some Italians, in widely scattered parts of inner and middle suburbia: (Lutwyche-Kelvin Grove, East Brisbane-Annerley, Belmont Heights and Forest Lake). Group 4 areas (Figure 2(D)) showed a shift in focus to Asians (St Lucia-Indooroopilly-Milton) in part associated with the University of Queensland in St Lucia.

An increasingly above-average presence of those born in Australia, and of some diversity but at average to below-average levels, in areas of mixed age and varied socio-economic status, was highlighted in groups 5–7. In the case of group 5 (Figure 3(E)), Muslims and south Asians were present in slightly above-average proportions in two suburban areas (Bridgeman Downs-Kedron and the Seven Hills-Mt Gravatt-Salisbury districts) north and south of the Brisbane River. Both were areas of older populations but a wide SES range. Groups 6 (Figure 3(F)) and 7 (Figure 3(G)) were polar opposites in socio-economic status terms, of low, and middle to high SES, respectively, but both tending towards middle age (35–64). Group 6 comprised a scattering of outer suburbs: to the north (about Dakabin-Caboolture), to the east (Birkdale-Burwood Heights), to the southwest (Carole Park) and in the south (much of Logan City). Group 7 was made up of dispersed central and western suburbs: towards the western edge of the city (The Gap), south of the river (Kenmore Hills-Chapel Hill and Sherwood-Annerley), and a region in central-east Brisbane (extending south from Lutwyche across the river to include Sherwood-Annerley).

Two other groups were dominated by those born in Australia, but with an above-average presence of immigrants from the UK and Ireland. One was of middle age but did not highlight any particular social status category (group 8—not mapped). The other comprised a significantly older population of low SES (group 9). Both groups were in the outer suburbs. Group 8 comprised northern (Mango Hill-Griffin and Eatons Hill-Bunya), southern (Palara-Larapinta and coastal Logan City), western (Karana Downs-Karalee), and Wakerley to the east of the city. The other (Figure 3(H)) brought together older populations of lower socio-economic status in the outer southwestern suburbs (Ipswich), to the north (Redcliffe and Sandgate-Taigum); to the east (Wynnum and Burwood Heights-Redlands Bay); and smaller areas round Waterford and southeast towards the northern edge of Gold Coast City.

Analysis stage II: attitudes to diversity

Overall, the people of Brisbane were noticeably tolerant, though slightly less so than Queensland generally (Forrest & Dunn 2006b, p. 176). Most (85 per cent) were pro-diversity, secure with other cultures (77 per cent), and did not see other groups as socially distant (79 per cent were accepting of intermarriage). However, they were less certain about the presence of out-groups (only 56 per cent agreed there are none); while acceptance of diversity was accompanied by a contrary attitude where only a minority (40 per cent) accepted multicultural values (i.e. the majority held pro-assimilation views).

This analytical stage connected the social area characterisations (Table 1(A)) with attitudes held (Table 1(B)) and with perceptions of out-groups (Table 1(C)). To calculate values in the latter two categorisations, respondents from each group formed from the social area analysis were aggregated and results converted...
to percentage values above or below respective means in the right-hand column. Results for Brisbane highlighted the importance of recognising multiple constructions of attitudes towards immigrant groups from culturally different backgrounds.

Figure 3. Social areas in Brisbane, entropy groups 5–7 and 9.
At a national level, Pietsch and Marotta (2009) have shown that tolerance of immigrants among the population generally depends on the recent history of attitude formation towards different groups as well as the cultural backgrounds of the immigrants themselves. Thus (Pietsch & Marotta 2009, pp. 193–5) from the early 1990s many Australians have been unsupportive of any increased intake of immigrants from either the Middle East or Asia. Poynting et al. (2004; see also West & Walker 2002) have also referred to ‘moral panics’ increasingly associated with the ‘Arab other’ in media representations of Muslims in Australia. These findings were reflected in perceptions of out-groups in Table 1(C).

Two main findings emerged. First, Asians were seen much more as an out-group (by 15 per cent of respondents) than were Muslims (by 8 per cent), which may well reflect the much higher proportion of the former than the latter present in Brisbane (see Table 1(A)). Second, in general terms attitudes were found to vary with socio-economic status (the higher the status the greater the tolerance) and age (older people are less tolerant) (Dunn et al. 2004). But results also showed, for Brisbane, that while such generalisations, derived from the national mood, occurred where immigrant groups were largely absent, elsewhere they were very much subject to variation depending on the particular mix of immigrant cultures present at the local area level (cf. Bowyer 2009 for the UK), even among people of similar social backgrounds.

Evidence for local-area-based multiple constructions of tolerance and intolerance among middle to higher social status groups was apparent in four groups (groups 1, 3–4 and 7). The first three had a significant NESB presence and the last had below-average NESB numbers. Among the high-presence areas, two (groups 1 and 4), with an above-average presence of younger (18–34) persons, largely inner city but including some middle suburban areas (Figure 2(A) and (D)) were pro-diversity, pro-multiculturalism, and generally had an above-average rejection of any notion of out-groups. In group 4, however, higher overall tolerance was offset by their attitude to Muslims as a significant out-group in a cluster of SLAs with a significant Asian presence (but who were not seen as an out-group) yet no significant numbers of Muslims. However, the other culturally diverse group of areas (group 3; Figure 2(C)), with a significant Asian and Muslim presence, was comparatively less tolerant. While feeling secure with other cultures, people here were significantly above average in their anti-cultural diversity and intolerant of Asians, but not of Muslims, a reversal of what was found in group 4. Finally, among clusters of higher social status SLAs, a group of inner-middle SLAs (group 7, Figure 3(G)) represented low levels of NESB presence, apart from those from south Asia (largely India). Here, comparatively high levels of tolerance of ethnic diversity were matched by non-recognition of out-groups, especially Asians, yet an above-average rejection of ‘foreigners’ generally. This latter finding was consistent with attitudes among higher status groups (cf. Forrest & Dunn 2006b), though offset in this case by positive attitudes towards south Asians with whom they were in local contact.

At the opposite end of the social status scale were two groups (2 and 6) dominated by lower education levels (up to year 10 education), but at opposite ends of the diversity (NESB presence) spectrum. One of these (group 2, Figure 2(B)) had significantly above-average numbers of southeast Asians and Muslims (largely refugee groups) in a block of southern suburbs. Relatively high negative attitudes to all aspects of ethnic diversity, especially multiculturalism, were apparent, accompanied by a strong negative attitude towards Asians but less so to
Muslims. This was an obvious case of contact being associated with feelings of racial tension (cf. Forrest & Dunn 2010). The other low-status group of outer suburbs (group 6, Figure 3(F)), though with below-average contact with NESB immigrants locally, still had some above-average negative attitudes. In particular, they felt insecure with other cultures and had noticeably anti-multicultural values; Muslims, though minimally present, were identified as a significant out-group, suggesting a reflection of the national mood post-9/11 rather than any locally generated racial tensions.

The two clusters of SLAs highlighting those aged 65 and older brought out noticeable differences in their attitudes towards NESB people. One (group 5) spanned the social status range in middle suburbia north and south of the Brisbane River (Figure 3(E)), while the other (group 9) was a lower status cluster in older, coastal areas and in Ipswich in southwestern Brisbane (Figure 3(H)). Residents of group 5 areas were noticeably more tolerant—secure with other cultures, pro-intermarriage and especially tolerant of Muslims. However, in group 9 areas, in the relative absence of NESB people, there was a comparatively high negative attitude towards ethnic diversity, and identification of out-groups. This was a non-specific intolerance: the out-group most strongly identified being ‘foreigners undifferentiated’.

There was only one cluster of dominantly middle-aged SLAs, where the only born overseas group significantly present were those of Anglo background (from the UK and Ireland). These were largely in outer suburbia (group 9, Figure 3(H)). Compared with other groups, they showed mixed attitudes to cultural diversity but significant feelings of insecurity with other cultures and identification of out-groups, especially southern and eastern Europeans and Muslims; but in the absence of any noticeable local presence of either. Again this was a case of largely Anglo areas in outer suburbia (see also Forrest & Dunn 2007, 2010) where the general mood of Australians towards certain immigrant groups prevailed, largely, though implicitly in the absence of any significant local contact, engendered by representations in the mass media (Forrest & Dunn 2010, p. 85).

Conclusions

The literature shows strong correlations between compositional factors, in particular socio-economic status and to a lesser extent age, and combinations of these with attitudes to ethnic diversity. But some researchers have more recently also noticed situations where the impact of ethnic group immigrant presence operates differently from the socio-demographic contextual relationships than might be anticipated. Even less remarked upon previously has been the fact that attitudes to diversity are important not only in areas of high cross-cultural contact but also in areas of minimal contact. What has emerged here, therefore, has been the importance of focusing on a geography of attitudes to diversity and their socio-demographic contexts for the city as a whole, and not just for contact areas.

The anticipated relationship between cultural/ethnic diversity and social status or age was generally found in Brisbane, along lines suggested by Betts (1999) and Dixson (1999), but tempered by important variations associated with circumstances surrounding the local mix of ethnic groups present and perceptions of their out-group status or otherwise. These variations were less apparent among lower SES groups, however, which tended to be anti-cultural diversity and less tolerant regardless of the presence (opportunities for intergroup contact) or absence
of cultural diversity. As to anticipated age–attitude correlations, older people were less tolerant, but where there were instances of departures from the general rule an explanation could in part be found in the age–class mix. Thus while a significantly older population in one group of areas in a mixed-class situation were pro-diversity, as much so as in much younger areas, another group of areas, also more strongly elderly but of lower SES, were noticeably anti-diversity.

It was in below-average contact areas, those without any significant ethnic minority group presence, however, that in most cases the strongest anti-diversity attitudes were found. This was especially so in outer suburban areas, which largely replicated attitude patterns found in Sydney and Melbourne. Given the relative lack of contact opportunities, this may be attributed to the influence of the mass media, but to date there is no specific body of available evidence either to support or reject this view in so far as it may apply to Brisbane. This is an area where further research is needed: a geography of media influence. Contact can generate tolerant attitudes, as media-borne stereotypes are vanquished by positive everyday association that humanises the Other. Lack of such contact can arguably have the opposite effect when driven by adverse media reporting.

Emerging Australian and British research on everyday multiculturalism, cosmopolitanism and social cohesion suggests that macro processes of intolerance generation can be assuaged locally. This was generally, though not always, reflected in middle to higher social status Brisbane. There is, however, a need for more research into situations where the relative absence of contact allows the development of intolerant attitudes implicitly brought about by media treatment (cf. Manning 2003), and the inculcation of ‘false beliefs’ (cf. Pedersen et al. 2005). In places of lesser diversity there may be much stronger scope for ethnic insularity that is associated with more negative dispositions towards cultural diversity. In any discussion of tolerance or intolerance towards ethnic minority groups, all this is to re-emphasise a need to look at the whole city, at areas that are culturally diverse and those that are not, to refocus anti-intolerance strategies on the nature of particular spatial and compositional—hence attitude-forming—contexts right across our cities.

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NOTE

[1] The survey used here post-dates both 9/11 and the Tampa—illegal entry of (Muslim) immigrants—incident earlier in 2001. However, the relative perception of Muslims as the least accepted of immigrant groups indicated here is similar to their positioning in earlier studies (McAllister & Ravenhill 1998; McAllister & Moore 1991).
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