

INTERMARRIAGE BY BIRTHPLACE AND ANCESTRY IN AUSTRALIA

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Sociologists have long regarded intermarriage as a key indicator of ethnic integration. The authors analyse marriage data from the 2006 Australian census. They find that many ethnic groups show low levels of intermarriage in the first generation but that, by the third generation, rates of intermarriage are high. However most groups of migrants from South and East Asia and from the Middle East and Africa have not been in Australia long enough for us to know whether the relationship between length of time in Australia and integration will hold for them as it has for the earlier cohorts of European migrants.

INTRODUCTION

Much interest in the subject of inter-ethnic marriage in Australia stems from the scale of Australia's migration program and concurrent concerns about the extent to which migrants are integrated into Australian society. Overseas studies of intermarriage between immigrants and native-born residents have considered it an important indicator of immigrant integration into the host society.¹ Australian scholars have taken a similar stance.² Price³ has written that 'intermarriage is still the best measure of ethnic intermixture because it breaks down ethnic exclusiveness and mixes the various ethnic populations more effectively than any other social process'. Intermarriage between persons of different ethnic background also affects the social and cultural identities of the next generation, who will be of mixed or multi-ethnic heritage.

The sociological literature suggests that intermarriage by migrants and their descendants will be relatively high where the members of a community achieve upward social mobility. As migrants and their descendants progress through the education system and enter the labour force, the possibility increases of meeting prospective partners outside the community. Participation in schools, universities and the workplace all potentially serve to open up new social relationships and different ways of living which serve to liberate young

people from the influence of parents and the ethnic community. The more this occurs, the more those making partnering choices are likely to be influenced by emotional ties developed with prospective partners rather than the preferences of their parents, who may be prescriptive about the ethnic background and economic prospects of the partners of their children.

On the other hand, some migrants belong to communities that place a high value on the maintenance of their values and cultural practices, contributing to strong social cohesion within the group. This may be accomplished by the creation of educational and cultural institutions that limit social encounters outside the community, or even by the proscription of out-marriage. Ethnic endogamy can be seen as an indicator of the strength of group cohesion and ethnic intermarriage as an indicator of its weakening. An additional factor that may contribute to this process in contemporary societies is the extent of electronic communication linkages to the homeland and the relative cheapness of international travel. These developments contribute to the maintenance of the ethnic community's cultural traditions as well as to the ease with which members of the community can return to their homeland to find a spouse.

Intermarriage across ethnic groups may also be related to the social distance between ethnic groups.⁴ Persons from ethnic

groups that are more similar with regard to social and demographic characteristics, such as educational attainment, residential location and language, for example, are more likely to intermarry because they encounter fewer barriers to social interaction. This hypothesis was supported by an early study of intermarriage among immigrants and the second generation of European ancestries in Australia which shows that persons from ancestry groups that are similar to one another on these social and demographic characteristics are more likely to intermarry.⁵

Using data from the 2006 Australian population census, this paper examines the extent of intermarriage by birthplace and ancestry in Australian society. It compares the intermarriage rate by gender and across successive generations by their ancestry to provide an indication of the extent of intermixing across ethnic groups among second and third generation Australians. It also compares the intermarriage rate by level of education to examine the question of whether education leads to a greater propensity to partner outside the ethnic group, as suggested by the sociological literature discussed above. The paper is part of a larger study of intermarriage in Australia based on the 2006 census data that also examines intermarriage by indigenous status and religion.⁶

DATA AND METHOD

The census asked each person to state his or her birthplace and ancestry. A census guide handed out with the census form suggests that people consider the origins of their parents and grandparents in answering the ancestry question. Individuals can provide a maximum of two main ancestries 'with which they most closely identify, if possible'.⁷ Seventy-two per cent of the population stated one ancestry and 28 per cent indicated two ancestries in the census.

In this paper, intermarriage is exam-

ined by comparing the country of birth or ancestry of the male and female partners in couple families. Couple families include those who are married as well as those who are in de facto relationships. The analysis is based on only those men and women who state a single ancestry, since the aim is to examine the extent of exogamy among people from each ethnic group. The analysis is also based on couples where both spouses are present in the household on census night, since birthplace and ancestry data are not collected for persons temporarily absent from the household.

For men and women of each specific country of birth or ancestry, the intermarriage rate is calculated as the percentage that is intermarried, which is equal to the number of partnered men (or women) born in country x (or of ancestry y) whose partner is not born in country x (or is not of ancestry y) divided by the total number of partnered men (or women) born in country birth x (or of ancestry y) multiplied by 100.

In this paper, the first generation refers to people who are born overseas and have migrated to Australia. The second generation refers to people who are born in Australia who have one or both parents who are born overseas. The third or more generation refers to people who are born in Australia and whose parents are also born in Australia. It is not possible to separate the third generation from higher order generations.

INTERMARRIAGE BY BIRTHPLACE

The intermarriage rates between Australia-born and overseas-born people are shown by the country of birth of the overseas-born partner in Table 1. The census did not collect information on the timing or place of marriage or the start of a de facto relationship. Therefore, it is not possible to determine if people who are part of a couple where one or both spouses are born

overseas have married overseas or in Australia after the arrival of the overseas-born partner(s). Birthplace groups with a low rate of intermarriage with Australia-born persons may be a reflection of the migration of family units (where both spouses would have been born overseas) or a low propensity for exogamy or both.

Men and women from North America have the highest rate of intermarriage with the Australia-born, followed by men and women born in the United Kingdom and

other Western European countries such as the Netherlands, France and Germany. There is generally no difference between men and women from these countries in their intermarriage rate with Australians. The high rate of intermarriage indicates that there is little social and cultural distance between Australian-born and people from Western European and North American countries.

Women from three Asian countries—Thailand, Japan and Philippines—have

Table 1: Per cent of overseas-born men and women in couple families with an Australia-born partner, by country of birth, 2006

Country of birth of overseas-born men/women	Male Per cent intermarried	Female Per cent intermarried	Country of birth of overseas-born men/women	Male Per cent intermarried	Female Per cent intermarried
Canada	60.6	60.1	Cyprus	24.6	14.5
United States of America	57.3	56.6	Egypt	23.3	14.4
Thailand	15.6	47.4	Portugal	19.0	14.1
Netherlands	50.3	42.3	Italy	29.6	13.5
United Kingdom	43.4	40.8	Ukraine	9.8	12.6
Japan	14.9	40.6	Lebanon	24.3	12.2
France	43.8	39.5	Hong Kong	8.5	12.0
Switzerland	40.7	39.2	Taiwan	2.2	11.8
Germany	45.2	38.6	Romania	12.4	11.3
New Zealand	42.9	38.3	Croatia	18.3	10.9
Austria	43.9	36.6	Korea, Republic of	1.6	9.9
Philippines	8.1	35.6	Turkey	16.8	9.9
Ireland	42.3	34.8	Greece	19.4	9.1
Singapore	23.5	28.2	Serbia	13.8	9.0
Spain	30.6	26.0	Sri Lanka	10.4	8.9
Indonesia	17.4	24.0	India	10.7	8.8
Argentina	25.5	24.0	Fr Yugo Rep of Macedonia	15.0	8.4
Malaysia	17.0	23.7	Samoa	10.8	8.3
Malta	32.7	23.4	China	2.4	7.3
Hungary	28.5	22.4	Pakistan	10.8	7.0
Mauritius	23.6	22.4	Iran	9.3	6.8
Zimbabwe	24.5	21.7	Viet Nam	2.0	5.2
Russian Federation	8.9	21.4	Cambodia	2.2	5.2
South Africa	22.5	20.7	Bosnia and Herzegovina	6.4	4.6
Chile	19.7	18.3	Bangladesh	3.4	2.2
Poland	18.7	18.0	Iraq	4.7	2.1
Fiji	14.2	16.8	Sudan	3.7	1.9
Burma (Myanmar)	16.2	16.4	Afghanistan	2.7	0.9

Source: 2006 census customised tables

much higher intermarriage rates than men from these countries with people born in Australia. This pattern of higher rates of intermarriage for women than men is seen for all the East and Southeast Asian birthplace groups (although the gender difference is not as large as for the three countries mentioned above) and also for migrants from Russia, but not for the South Asian groups, whose intermarriage rates with

Australia-born are higher for men than for women. Intermarriage with the Australia-born is also more likely for men than for women from Lebanon, Turkey and other Middle Eastern countries. These gender differences in intermarriage rates are likely to be related to differences in gender roles in Asian and Middle Eastern families.⁸

Birthplace groups with the lowest rates of intermarriage with the Australia-born

Table 2: Per cent of overseas-born partnered men and women with spouses from the same country of origin by age, 2006

Birthplace	Men		Women	
	Aged 15–39	Aged 40+	Aged 15–39	Aged 40+
Bosnia	65.1	76.9	73.0	80.5
Canada	10.8	13.8	9.9	12.7
China	87.4	81.0	73.7	74.8
Croatia	33.8	64.6	43.0	76.0
Egypt	43.0	53.0	73.1	62.1
Fiji	70.3	76.1	69.2	64.4
Fr Yugo Rep of Macedonia	38.6	84.2	59.2	90.2
Germany	16.5	27.5	15.3	31.1
Greece	13.0	73.1	22.2	84.5
Hong Kong	42.8	62.7	42.6	56.6
India	81.2	71.5	86.6	69.6
Indonesia	70.7	59.0	45.4	44.5
Iraq	80.3	81.7	88.4	86.1
Ireland	19.3	30.5	22.1	35.6
Italy	10.6	60.1	19.1	80.5
Japan	67.3	70.5	23.1	33.8
Lebanon	36.3	78.4	66.1	84.2
Malaysia	39.6	60.1	32.9	50.5
Malta	9.2	53.5	14.3	62.9
Netherlands	15.3	28.0	16.8	42.2
New Zealand	32.6	41.5	35.4	43.0
Philippines	75.2	92.0	41.1	38.5
Poland	45.5	62.2	41.0	66.8
Singapore	29.5	45.1	25.5	34.0
South Africa	43.9	65.1	47.3	61.8
Sri Lanka	71.6	81.5	81.2	80.8
Thailand	54.9	63.0	16.4	14.4
Turkey	51.9	79.0	71.6	84.9
United Kingdom	26.0	42.3	31.4	47.7
United States of America	12.6	18.0	11.8	19.5
Vietnam	82.7	91.1	79.3	86.6

Source: Calculated from 2006 census customised matrix tables

population are mostly from countries that have been the source of recent refugee and other humanitarian migration, such as Afghanistan, Sudan and Iraq. Their low intermarriage rate reflects the migration of families from these countries, most of whom arrived during the past ten years for resettlement under Australia's Humanitarian migration program.

Table 1 also shows the relatively low intermarriage rates of men and women born in Southern European countries such as Greece and Italy. These rates are related to the migration of family units from these countries in the 1950s and 1960s. With the decrease in migration from these countries after 1970, many of the intra-married couples are now in their older ages. As shown in Table 2, men and women from these countries who are aged 40 and over are much more likely to have a spouse from the same country of origin than are those under the age of 40. Many of the younger men and women are likely to have migrated as children with their parents and to have grown up and partnered in Australia.

A very high percentage of migrants from more recent source countries of migration, such as China, Vietnam, India and Sri Lanka, also have spouses who are born in the same country (Table 2). While most of the older migrants would have been married before their migration to Australia, it is possible that some of the younger migrants may have sponsored marriage partners from their country of origin under the family migration program for spouse and fiancé(e) migration. Data on spouse and fiancé(e) visa grants show that China has been the second largest country of origin (after the United Kingdom), and that Vietnam and India are among the top ten source countries of recipients of the partner visas since the late 1990s.⁹ A study of spouse migration shows that more than 85 per cent of migrants arriving on partner visas in 1993 to 1995 from China, Vietnam,

India, Sri Lanka, Philippines, Lebanon and Turkey are sponsored for migration by Australian residents who are born in the same country.¹⁰

INTERMARRIAGE BY ANCESTRY AND GENERATION

Intermarriage rates vary by ancestry and generation (Table 3). The majority of persons of the first generation of most Western European ancestries (except the English) have partners of a different ancestry. The relatively low rate for the English is a consequence of the high proportion of Australia-born persons who are of English ancestry. In contrast, only a minority of the first generation of Southern or Eastern European ancestries have partners of a different ancestry. The proportion is even lower for the first generation of Middle Eastern and Asian ancestries. The low proportions intermarried among men and women of these ancestries partly reflect the migration of family units from these respective regions.

As expected, the intermarriage rate increases for both men and women from the first to the second generation and from the second to the third or more generations. These patterns point to increasing social interaction between the second and third or more generations of these ethnicities and people outside their ethnic group. Similar patterns were observed in the analysis of 2001 census data.¹¹ The increase is quite large for some ancestry groups, for example, people of Greek, Lebanese and Chinese ancestries. By the third generation, two-thirds of men and women of these ancestries have partnered outside their ethnic group. Significant increases in intermarriage are also observed from the first to the second generation for other Asian, Middle Eastern and Southern European ancestry groups that do not yet have many people in the third generation who are of marriageable age at this time.

Table 3: Percentage of partnered men and women with a spouse of a different ancestry,^a by ancestry and generation, 2006

Ancestry	1st generation		2nd generation		3rd+ generation	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
English	41	36	49	48	20	21
Irish	62	59	86	83	71	67
Scottish	65	60	90	88	80	75
Welsh	71	66	96	96	96	94
Austrian	74	65	98	96	*	*
Danish	68	61	98	97	98	97
Dutch	62	55	89	88	95	95
Finnish	44	54	93	93	*	*
French	61	60	91	93	98	98
German	59	56	91	90	72	69
Swiss	67	57	94	98	*	*
Greek	12	9	37	31	67	61
Italian	22	12	51	42	77	74
Maltese	33	28	67	64	79	77
Portuguese	28	25	67	64	*	*
Spanish	36	37	87	85	96	98
Bosnian	15	14	44	42	*	*
Croatian	26	21	60	59	88	88
Macedonian	10	8	39	35	*	*
Serbian	26	17	67	62	96	91
Czech	52	47	96	96	*	*
Hungarian	47	36	89	88	*	*
Polish	34	34	84	80	95	94
Russian	28	43	74	76	97	94
Ukrainian	44	46	79	75	*	*
Arab	19	10	40	39	*	*
Armenian	21	15	48	47	*	*
Assyrian	9	6	*	*	*	*
Egyptian	24	14	66	58	*	*
Afghan	8	4	*	*	*	*
Iranian	19	12	*	*	*	*
Iraqi	14	8	*	*	*	*
Lebanese	11	8	31	21	68	58
Turkish	11	7	25	16	*	*
Filipino	8	52	47	76	*	*
Indonesian	24	53	58	64	*	*
Khmer	10	16	*	*	*	*
Thai	23	81	*	*	*	*
Vietnamese	7	13	48	48	*	*
Chinese	6	13	35	48	69	73
Japanese	18	63	*	*	*	*

Table 3 continued ...

Korean	6	15	*	*	*	*
Bengali	8	3	*	*	*	*
Indian	11	11	56	58	*	*
Sinhalese	14	13	95	86	*	*
Pakistani	19	8	*	*	*	*
Sudanese	8	6	*	*	*	*
South African	30	34	92	97	*	*
Maori	53	50	89	88	*	*
New Zealander	70	69	97	96	*	*
Samoan	26	22	*	*	*	*
Tongan	29	25	*	*	*	*
American	82	82	99	99	*	*
Chilean	30	34	79	73	*	*

Source: 2006 census customised table

Notes: ^a based on sole ancestry response

* less than 100 persons

The third or more generation of Western European ancestries have very high intermarriage rates of over 90 per cent. The low intermarriage rate of the third or more generation of English ancestry is a notable exception, reflecting the large number of third or more generation Australians who are of English ancestry.

These findings confirm that there appear to be few barriers to social integration in Australia, not just for immigrants from Western Europe but also for those from Eastern and Southern Europe. In the case of those with Eastern European ancestries—including those of Polish, Russian and Serbian backgrounds—there is almost complete out-marriage by the third generation. The Greek case is worth highlighting. Almost all post-World War Two migrants from Greece arrived as couples or families with young children. As has been noted in many studies, the second generation of Greek ancestry have exhibited a relatively low propensity to marry out.¹² The 2006 census results show a similar pattern with only 37 percent of second generation

males of Greek ancestry and 31 per cent of females married out. This outcome reflects a strong tendency for first generation Greek families to concentrate residentially and to develop ethnic specific social institutions, including the Greek Orthodox church. Yet despite this ethnic solidarity, by the third generation 67 per cent of men of Greek ancestry and 61 per cent of the women have married out.

The intermarriage rates by ancestry also show patterns by gender that are similar to those indicated in Table 1 by birthplace. Men and women of Western European ancestries have similar rates of intermarriage. There is also not much difference by gender among people of Pacific island ancestries and for men and women of Indian ancestry. However, men of Middle Eastern ancestries are more likely to intermarry than women of these ancestries, while the opposite pattern is observed for men and women of East and Southeast Asian ancestries.

A final indicator of the significance of intermarriage is the extent to which it involves partnering with persons of similar

or different ethnic and racial background. It is possible that marriage across ethnic lines may be confined to persons of similar ethnic origins, such as from other Southern or Eastern European countries in the case of persons of Greek or Italian backgrounds. Alternatively, if intermarriage is predomi-

nantly with persons who claim Australian or Anglo-Celtic ancestries it implies a higher degree of social integration into Australian society, which is composed predominantly of persons of English-speaking background. Table 4 provides the information necessary to explore this issue.

Table 4: Second-generation partnered men and women who have a spouse of a different ancestry,^a percentage distribution by spouse's ancestry, 2006

Ancestry of Individual		Ancestry of spouse per cent					Total	per cent intermarried
		Australian/ NZ/ Anglo-celtic	Other European	Asian	Middle Eastern	Other*		
2nd generation								
Greek	Men	45	37	5	4	8	100	37
	Women	40	42	3	5	10	100	31
Italian	Men	64	25	4	2	5	100	51
	Women	59	29	2	3	7	100	42
Maltese	Men	58	31	4	2	5	100	67
	Women	56	34	2	3	5	100	64
Croatian	Men	57	32	4	1	7	100	60
	Women	50	39	2	2	8	100	59
Serbian	Men	58	31	3	2	6	100	67
	Women	55	34	2	2	7	100	62
Hungarian	Men	67	21	5	1	7	100	89
	Women	66	27	1	1	6	100	88
Polish	Men	71	20	3	1	2	100	84
	Women	67	26	1	1	6	100	80
Russian	Men	66	24	3	0	7	100	74
	Women	61	28	0	2	8	100	76
Lebanese	Men	44	36	5	5	11	100	31
	Women	35	35	5	8	18	100	21
Turkish	Men	32	44	6	6	12	100	25
	Women	27	35	7	16	15	100	16
Vietnamese	Men	25	10	44	0	21	100	48
	Women	37	13	42	0	9	100	48
Chinese	Men	61	11	22	1	5	100	35
	Women	67	17	8	1	8	100	48
Indian	Men	66	19	7	3	6	100	56
	Women	61	18	11	1	9	100	58

Source: 2006 Census customised table

Notes: ^a based on sole ancestry response

* Other ancestries include American, African and Pacific islander ancestries, other small European, Asian and Middle Eastern groups not separately identified and 'not stated'.

Among the ancestry groups shown in Table 4, the second generation of Eastern European ancestries such as Polish and Hungarian shows the highest proportion (among those intermarried) with spouses who are of Australian or Anglo-Celtic ancestries. More than 60 per cent of the ancestries who have intermarried also have Australian or Anglo-Celtic partners. The proportion with Australian or Anglo-Celtic partners was lower among the second generation of Southern European ancestries who have intermarried, 50 to 60 per cent for those of Italian, Maltese, Serbian or Croatian ancestry, and less than 50 per cent for the second generation of Greek

ancestry. The proportion was 30 to 40 per cent for the Lebanese second generation who are intermarried, and lowest for the Turkish and Vietnamese second generation at 25 to 35 per cent.

Over 40 per cent of the Vietnamese second generation who had partnered a person of a different ancestry had partnered a person of another Asian ancestry, showing a high preference for pan-Asian partnering. Second generation Chinese men also show a relatively high propensity to partner with other Asians, much more so than second generation Chinese women. The reverse pattern is observed for the second generation of Turkish and Lebanese ancestry, with

Table 5: Third generation partnered men and women who have a spouse of a different ancestry,^a percentage distribution by spouse's ancestry, 2006

Ancestry of Individual		Ancestry of spouse		Total	per cent inter-married	Number of intermarried people			
		Australian/ NZ/ Anglo-celtic	Other European				Asian	Middle	Other* Eastern
3rd+ generation									
Greek	Men	69	22	3	2	5	100	67	844
	Women	62	29	1	3	5	100	61	825
Italian	Men	78	15	3	1	4	100	77	3497
	Women	75	17	1	1	5	100	74	3517
Maltese	Men	71	22	4	0	3	100	79	403
	Women	68	21	1	2	8	100	77	411
Croatian	Men	61	23	6	2	8	100	88	189
	Women	71	23	2	0	5	100	88	183
Polish	Men	67	25	2	1	6	100	95	593
	Women	69	21	2	1	7	100	94	588
Russian	Men	68	24	4	0	4	100	97	169
	Women	69	22	2	0	8	100	94	186
Lebanese	Men	71	20	1	0	8	100	68	270
	Women	69	26	3	0	3	100	58	227
Chinese	Men	77	15	2	1	6	100	69	520
	Women	76	17	1	0	6	100	73	501

Source: 2006 Census customised table

Notes: ^a based on sole ancestry response

* Other ancestries include American, African and Pacific islander ancestries, other small European, Asian and Middle Eastern groups not separately identified and 'not stated'.

the women more likely than the men to partner with persons of other Middle Eastern ancestry. As noted earlier, these gender differences are related to the attitudes to women and men and their roles in the family in these ethnic communities.¹³

The second generation of the three Asian ancestries shown is less likely to partner with people of Other European ancestries compared with the second generation of the two Middle Eastern

ancestries shown. There appears to be less intermixing between the second generation of these Asian ancestries with people of non-English-speaking European ethnicities than between the second generation of Lebanese or Turkish backgrounds with people of the European ethnicities. This may reflect the differences and similarities in the period of migration to Australia of the first generation of these migrant communities.

Table 6: Per cent intermarried by gender, education and ancestry, all partnered men and women, 2006

Ancestry	Males				Females			
	Degree	Other quals	Year11–12	Year 10	Degree	Other quals	Year11–12	Year 10
Australian	26	20	22	16	27	25	24	20
Aboriginal	62	21	9	4	55	25	14	6
Maori	71	64	51	53	60	54	49	55
New Zealander	69	74	71	74	69	73	70	74
English	41	31	32	26	37	32	29	26
Irish	69	69	71	70	68	67	67	66
Scottish	78	73	78	77	74	72	69	71
Welsh	85	74	82	82	84	78	68	74
Dutch	75	71	75	75	77	70	69	68
German	73	66	80	70	75	65	76	66
Greek	35	32	30	11	33	28	26	9
Italian	54	43	45	22	54	39	38	16
Maltese	79	58	57	35	75	65	56	35
Spanish	55	43	43	37	59	51	47	34
Croatian	55	36	44	24	54	39	43	18
Macedonian	34	21	20	9	34	23	19	7
Serbian	37	32	32	32	36	24	28	23
Hungarian	68	51	63	55	67	49	53	42
Polish	46	45	54	58	49	40	50	58
Russian	30	41	47	42	44	48	53	56
Lebanese	27	20	19	11	27	19	12	8
Turkish	19	18	15	7	21	16	10	4
South African	30	28	43	48	35	35	38	34
Chinese	8	9	7	6	19	15	12	9
Filipino	5	9	13	12	38	52	60	79
Vietnamese	11	10	7	5	24	18	12	8
Indian	10	12	18	16	9	16	17	19
Sinhalese	14	15	24	22	18	12	16	17

Source: 2006 census customised table

When the ancestry of the spouses of the intermarried third or more generation is examined for the non-Western European ancestry groups that have an adult third generation of sufficient numbers for analysis, there is remarkable similarity among the ancestry groups in the distribution of their spouses by ethnic origin (table 5). Three-quarters of intermarried third generation men and women of Chinese origin and about 70 per cent of men and women of Lebanese ancestry had partners of Australian or Anglo-Celtic ancestry. There was much less pan-ethnic partnering in the third generation of people of Chinese or of Lebanese ancestry than was observed in the second generation in Table 4. Very few third generation men and women claiming Chinese ancestry had partners of other Asian ancestries; the overwhelming majority of those who had intermarried had spouses of Australian or European ancestry. Similarly, very few of the third generation of Lebanese ancestry who had intermarried had spouses of other Middle Eastern ancestry; the overwhelming majority had partnered with Australians of Anglo-Celtic or other European ancestries.

It appears that by the third generation of the ethnic groups shown in Table 5, the partnering patterns of those who intermarry are more a reflection of the ethnic composition of Australian society than of any preferences based on cultural heritage. According to this measure, a high level of social integration is achieved by the third generation of these ethnic groups.

EDUCATION AND INTERMARRIAGE

Does education lead to a greater propensity to partner outside the ethnic group? Table 6 examines the intermarriage rate by ancestry and level of education. While more educated men and women of some ancestries have higher intermarriage rates, there is no difference by education among

men and women of other ancestry groups and in a few ancestry groups, men and women of lower education have higher intermarriage rates than do those who are better educated.

People stating Australian, English, Southern European and Middle Eastern ancestries show an increase in intermarriage rates with educational attainment. In contrast, no difference is observed in the intermarriage rate by education for men and women reporting German, Polish, Russian, South African, New Zealander or Sinhalese ancestries. Among men and women of Filipino or Indian ancestry, those who have no post-school qualifications are more likely to intermarry than are those who are better educated. In some groups, such as the Chinese, the effect of education seems to vary by gender, with men showing no difference in intermarriage by education—low rates of intermarriage at all levels of education—but women showing a positive correlation between level of education and inter-ethnic marriage. The effect of education on inter-ethnic marriage appears to be mixed.

Some of the effect of education is also related to age and generation. The younger age cohorts in Australia are better educated than the older age cohorts, due to higher school retention rates and increasing proportions of the younger cohorts going to universities and undertaking other tertiary education and training in recent years than in the past. Since the second generation is also of a younger age group than the first generation, they are also generally better educated than their parents' generation. A disaggregation by generation may be necessary when examining the relation between education and intermarriage for some ancestry groups.

Table 7 shows the intermarriage rate by education and generation for ancestry groups that have younger and better-educated second and third generations. This

takes account of the possible effect of the interaction between education and generation on the patterns shown in Table 6. These figures show that, while level of education may be correlated with intermarriage in the first generation, that correlation is no longer observed in the second or third generation for some groups such as Greeks,

Italians and Croatians. No relation between education and intermarriage is observed for men of the second generation of Lebanese, Turkish or Macedonian ancestry; but the more educated among the women of these ancestries do have higher rates of intermarriage than do the less educated. It would appear that education has a modest effect in

Table 7: Per cent intermarried by gender, education, generation and ancestry, all partnered men and women, 2006

Ancestry	Males				Females			
	Degree	Other quals	Year 11–12	Year 10	Degree	Other quals	Year 11–12	Year 10
English								
1st generation	49	39	40	41	42	38	32	38
2nd generation	55	50	51	46	54	51	51	44
3rd+ generation	29	21	21	16	27	23	22	18
Greek								
1st generation	33	22	19	7	32	19	16	5
2nd generation	34	37	39	43	32	31	30	31
3rd+ generation	57	75	67	69	59	61	57	76
Italian								
1st generation	51	31	35	13	51	25	25	7
2nd generation	53	50	49	53	52	42	40	36
3rd+ generation	80	79	74	79	81	72	73	76
Maltese								
1st generation	65	46	41	27	68	52	39	24
2nd generation	85	66	73	58	76	69	66	55
Croatian								
1st generation	45	28	34	18	45	28	29	13
2nd generation	62	56	62	74	59	55	61	62
Macedonian								
1st generation	24	14	12	6	23	14	10	5
2nd generation	47	38	37	41	43	36	33	31
Lebanese								
1st generation	21	14	13	8	20	13	8	6
2nd generation	33	30	34	31	31	23	18	18
Turkish								
1st generation	19	16	13	6	22	14	8	4
2nd generation	20	28	24	24	17	18	16	14
Chinese								
1st generation	7	7	6	5	17	14	11	8
2nd generation	34	37	42	28	50	52	50	38
3rd+ generation	52	76	60	83	71	75	72	77

Source: 2006 census customised table

broadening the choice of marriage partners across ethnic boundaries for women of these ancestries.

The effect of education on intermarriage is also mixed for men and women of different generations of Chinese ancestry. Education appears to increase intermarriage for women but not for men in the first two generations. It has no effect on intermarriage for women in the third generation; however better educated men in the third generation are more likely to marry within the ethnic group than are less educated men. In contrast to the above patterns, for two of the ancestry groups shown in Table 7, the English and Maltese, there is a clear pattern of increasing intermarriage with education within each of the three generations of men and women.

The relationship between level of education and intermarriage is different for different ethnic groups and for men and women of some ethnicities. The variations in patterns as described above suggest the complexity of the relationships between education, ethnicity and marriage/partnering that may be grounded in cultural and generational differences in male and female roles and status in the family.

CONCLUSION

If inter-ethnic partnering is a key indicator of social integration, as suggested by sociologists, then the increase in intermarriage from the first to the second generation, and from the second to the third generation, of Australians of various ethnic backgrounds

indicates that social integration is proceeding with each successive generation. It is particularly noteworthy that, by the third generation, the majority of Australians of non-English-speaking background have partnered with persons of different ethnic origins, and that of these, the majority had partnered with persons of Australian or Anglo-Celtic ancestry. These partnering patterns suggest that, while Australian multiculturalism may have encouraged the intergenerational maintenance of ethnic identity, it has not inhibited increased social interaction outside the ethnic group with each successive generation.

For ethnic communities of more recent migrant origin from South and East Asia, the Middle East and Africa, the second generation is still young and not yet of marriageable age and there is no third generation yet. These communities bring with them cultural traditions that are quite different from those people of Southern and Eastern European backgrounds who dominated migration during the 1950s and 1960s. Whether the social integration of the second and third generations of these groups as measured by intermarriage will be similar to those of the non-English-speaking European migrant communities will not be known for several years.

Acknowledgments

Census data discussed in this paper were provided by the Australian Bureau of Statistics through its 2006 Australian Census Analytic Program. We thank the ABS staff for their assistance with the customised datatables.

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