Belonging and identity in Australia's multicultural society

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Belonging and Identity in Australia’s Multicultural Society

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Consent and Declaration

I certify that the work presented in this thesis is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, original, except as acknowledged in the text, and that the material has not been submitted, either in whole or in part, for a degree at this or any other university.

I acknowledge that I have read and understood the University's rules, requirements, procedures, and policy relating to my higher degree research award and to my thesis. I certify that I have complied with the rules, requirements, procedures and policy of the University (as they may be from time to time).

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Publications

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Conference presentations

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Abstract

A sense of belonging is argued to underpin individual wellbeing, social cohesion, and the development of social capital. As a multicultural society economically sustained through long-term migration, it is important that all people in Australia feel that they belong, irrespective of their cultural background. “A national identity has been proposed as the common identity that underpins a sense of belonging for all members of a multicultural society” (Hodgins, Moloney, & Winskel, 2015, p. 1). Moreover, Anant (1969) suggests that acceptance of an identity is fundamental to a sense of belonging. However, for the 28.5% of Australia’s population who are born overseas, and an estimated 4 million dual citizens, the importance of accepting an Australian national identity and its relationship to their sense of belonging is unknown.

Therefore, the aim of this research was to investigate how migrants made sense of their ‘Australianess’; specifically, how important was acceptance of an Australian identity for migrants in Australia, and whether acceptance of an Australian identity contributed to their sense of belonging. Drawing primarily from belonging theory (Anant, 1966, 1969) but also from social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), and self-categorisation theory (Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987), four research studies were conducted. The first study systematically reviewed the concept of belonging to explore the psychological relationship between identity and belonging, and to understand the dimensional structure of the concept. The second study utilised focus groups to examine if Australian residents who identified as Anglo-Celtic, and those who identified as Chinese, had a common understanding of the concept of belonging, and whether an Australian identity was important to a sense of belonging. The third study firstly
investigated how Australian resident’s sense of belonging related to Australian identity; it then examined that relationship for Australian migrants, including those who identified as bicultural Australians, and those who identified with their origin homeland culture. Lastly, Study 4 examined acceptance of an Australian identity for Irish migrants who were resident in Australia, and whether an Australian identity contributed to their sense of belonging. Study 4 further explored the effect of bicultural identification on acceptance of Australian identity and a sense of belonging of Irish migrants.

The systematic review conducted in the first study found belonging to be a multidimensional construct with the psychological source emanating from the social identities that make up a person’s self-concept. The experience of acceptance in relation to social identity was found to be the primary attribute that underpinned a positive sense of belonging. Findings from the second study showed that both Anglo-Celtic and Chinese cultural groups commonly shared an understanding of the belonging concept and that a sense of belonging emanated from involvement in social identities, particularly familial and other social groups. Australian identity was not found to be of primary importance to belongingness in either cultural group. Both groups shared the view that acceptance associated with their social group identities underpinned a sense of belonging.

The results from Study 3 demonstrated how a sense of belonging was experienced in relation to Australian identity. Acceptance of Australian identity was found to be best explained by two factors Self-Acceptance and Acceptance from Others. Acceptance from Others was defined as the positive interpersonal feedback received from others; whereas Self-Acceptance was defined as a person’s positive intrapersonal relationship with their Australian identity. Study 3 also found that
while both factors were significant in explaining acceptance of Australian identity, only Self-Acceptance of Australian identity was significant when predicting Belongingness after accounting for the variance of Acceptance from Others of a diverse migrant group. Migrants who identified as bicultural Australians were found to have greater acceptance of Australian identity and correspondingly greater levels of belongingness than those who identified only with their own cultural group.

In Study 4, the two factors found in Study 3 similarly explained acceptance of Australian identity for a cognate group of Irish migrants. Both Self-Acceptance and Acceptance from Others correlated strongly with Belongingness however, only Self-Acceptance was significant when predicting Belongingness. Migrants who self-identified as bicultural Irish-Australian were found to experience significantly greater Self-Acceptance, Acceptance from Others, and Belongingness than migrants who identified only with their own Irish cultural group.

It is argued that acceptance of an Australian identity experienced by a migrant resident in Australia, particularly self-acceptance, is a positive indicator of their internalisation of a subjective sense of being an Australian. This subjective sense of a migrant sharing a host country national identity with others has been described by Sindic (2011) as psychological citizenship. Migrants in this study who self-identified as bicultural Australians are argued to have developed psychological citizenship of Australia. As a psychological citizen, greater acceptance of an Australian identity by migrants in this study corresponded to a greater sense of belonging. In turn, their sense of belonging related to acceptance of Australian identity is argued to strengthen personal wellbeing, enhance social cohesion, and influence the development of social capital in Australia’s multicultural society.
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I am grateful for the opportunity provided by Southern Cross University to have conducted this research; the process has helped me understand much about myself and about my own sense of belonging. I would like to acknowledge my principal supervisor Dr. Gail Moloney. Gail has guided me through the research strategy from a social psychological perspective, always responded quickly at critical points, and provided informative and valuable feedback at key reviews. Dr Alison Bowling, our resident statistician for everything psychological, deserves a thankyou for making simple what can seem complex in the final study! I acknowledge the participation and support of Dr. Heather Winskel as my co-supervisor. I would like to express a huge thankyou to my partner Carmel, who has experienced my PhD journey at its most difficult period of collating, writing and editing the research into a meaningful thesis. Without Carmel’s support, I would still be writing today! And to my family and friends, I am grateful for your encouragement, support, and continuing interest in my research topic of belonging.
Statement of Contribution to Publications

Statement of contribution to publications for Jeffrey Hodgins’ (JH) thesis by co-authors: Dr. Gail Moloney (GM) and Dr. Heather Winskel (HW).


JH led, and participated in all stages of the development of this paper and provided an overall contribution greater than any other co-author. JH designed the research method incorporating focus groups and meeting procedures with guidance from GM related to Australian identity. JH conducted the data collection, ran the analyses and wrote the first draft of the manuscript. The manuscript was revised with feedback from co-authors GM and HW prior to submission for publication.

I, Jeffrey Hodgins, agree that the above descriptions of the contributions of authors to this publication are accurate and correct.

Signed

March 21st, 2018
# Table of contents

Consent and Declaration .................................................................................................. iii

Publications ...................................................................................................................... v

Conference presentations .............................................................................................. v

Abstract .......................................................................................................................... vii

Acknowledgements ......................................................................................................... xi

Statement of Contribution to Publications ..................................................................... xii

Table of contents ............................................................................................................. xv

List of figures .................................................................................................................. xx

List of tables .................................................................................................................... xxiii

Preface .............................................................................................................................. xxv

Chapter 1 - Introduction ................................................................................................. 1

1.1 Research Question ................................................................................................. 6

1.2 Thesis overview ..................................................................................................... 6

Chapter 2 - Literature Review ...................................................................................... 9

2.1 Chapter overview ................................................................................................... 9

2.2 Definitions and descriptions of belonging ......................................................... 10

2.3 Historical development of theories of belonging .............................................. 13

2.3.1 1930 - 1943 ..................................................................................................... 13

2.3.2 1966 - 1970 .................................................................................................. 14

2.3.3 1992 - 2005 ................................................................................................. 18

2.3.4 2006 – present day ..................................................................................... 21

2.4 Identity ................................................................................................................... 27

2.4.1 Social identity ............................................................................................... 28

2.4.2 Self-categorisation ....................................................................................... 30

2.5 Social identity and belonging ............................................................................... 32
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.5.1 Social identity choice and belonging</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5.2 Social identity congruence and belonging</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5.3 National identity and belonging</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6 Belonging in Australia's multicultural social system</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6.1 Social cohesion and belonging</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6.2 Bicultural identity and belonging</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6.3 Migrants and belonging in Australia</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.7 Literature review summary</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 3 - Study 1</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Towards a psychology of belonging</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1 Chapter overview</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2 Aim</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3 Method</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3.1 Search Strategy</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3.2 Appraisal strategy</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3.3 Synthesis strategy</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3.4 Results</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4 Discussion</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4.1 The seven dimensions of the concept of belonging</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4.2 The relationship between identity and belonging</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5 Conclusion</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 4 - Study 2</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An investigation of belonging and identity of Anglo-Celtic and Chinese cultural groups in regional Australia</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1 Chapter Overview</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2 Introduction</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3 Aim</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4 Method</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4.1 Overview</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4.2 Participant recruitment</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4.3 Participants</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4.4 Materials</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4.5 Procedure</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Acceptance of Australian identity and belongingness

Chapter 5

5.1 Chapter overview

5.2 Introduction

5.3 Aim

5.4 Method

5.5 Data analysis

5.6 Results

5.6.1 Acceptance of Australian identity

5.6.2 Acceptance of Australian identity and Belongingness – total sample

5.6.3 Acceptance of Australian identity and Belongingness - migrant group

5.6.4 Indigenous Australians

5.6.5 Mediation effects

5.6.6 The meaning of Australian identity
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>Implications</td>
<td>173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>Future research</td>
<td>174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>Epilogue</td>
<td>175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References</td>
<td></td>
<td>179</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix A</td>
<td>Study 1 Supporting Documentation</td>
<td>201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix B</td>
<td>Study 2 Supporting Documentation</td>
<td>202</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix C</td>
<td>Study 3 Supporting Documentation</td>
<td>245</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix D</td>
<td>Study 4 Supporting Documentation</td>
<td>255</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix E</td>
<td>Journal Publication</td>
<td>261</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## List of figures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Figure 1</td>
<td>Belonging as part of a social group</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 2</td>
<td>A sense of belonging model</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 3</td>
<td>The seven dimensions of the construct of belonging</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 4</td>
<td>The psychological source of belonging</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 5</td>
<td>Theoretical model for the psychological construct of belonging</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 6</td>
<td>Summary of attributes of a belonging experience by frequency of response as reported by Anglo-Celtic and Chinese focus groups</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 7</td>
<td>Initial scree plot of 20 items</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 8</td>
<td>Scree plot of final 11 items selected</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 9</td>
<td>The factor plot of 11 items selected in rotated space</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 10</td>
<td>The mean scores higher than 4.00 for seven items comprising Self-Acceptance of Australian identity (N=367)</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 11</td>
<td>Mean scores higher than 4.00 for four items comprising Acceptance from Others</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 12</td>
<td>Mean scores higher than 2.00 of migrant Self-Acceptance, Acceptance from Others and Belongingness in three cultural self-identification categories</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 13</td>
<td>Path diagram with standardized direct and indirect estimates of Self-Acceptance upon contribution to belongingness of Australian identity for Australia-born participants (n=279) as predicted by Acceptance from Others (estimate of the mediated model in parentheses)</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 14</td>
<td>Two-factor model of acceptance of Australian identity</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 15</td>
<td>The mean scores higher than 2.50 for Self-Acceptance and Acceptance from Others, and Belongingness of Irish migrants by their cultural self-identification as Irish and bicultural Irish Australian</td>
<td>143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 16</td>
<td>The mean scores higher than 2.50 of the seven items of Self-Acceptance for Irish migrants by cultural self-identification as Irish and bicultural Irish Australian</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 17 The mean scores higher than 3.00 of the four items of Acceptance from Others for Irish migrants by cultural self-identification as Irish and bicultural Irish Australian.
List of tables

Table 1  Selected articles by author, category, and common themes of belonging.................................................................................................................. 52
Table 2  Definitions for the seven dimensions of the construct of belonging.................................................................................................................. 55
Table 3  Summary of psychometric scales, their dimensions, scale items and factors.............................................................................................. 56
Table 4  Ethnic-cultural identities and their frequencies of Anglo-Celtic and Chinese cultural groups as self-reported on demographic and strength of ethnicity data forms.......................................................... 78
Table 5  Chinese (n=9) and Anglo Celtic (n=10) groups ethnic-cultural identities and frequency of importance to belongingness levels 1, 2 and 3........................................................................................................ 79
Table 6  Means (M) and standard deviations (SD) of the number of social identities by type and gender for Anglo-Celtic (n=10), and Chinese(n=9) cultural groups................................................................. 79
Table 7  Composite summary of social identities and their frequency of primacy (Level 1) of importance to belongingness by type and gender in Anglo-Celtic and Chinese Australian groups................................. 80
Table 8  Means (M), standard deviations (SD), rotated factor loadings and communalities (h²) for Acceptance of Australian Identity for final 11 items (N=367)............................................................................. 115
Table 9  Mean (M) standard deviations (SD) and confidence interval (CI’s) for Acceptance from Others and Self-Acceptance, Belongingness and salience of Australian identity (N=367)................................................. 117
Table 10 Unstandardized (B) and standardized (β) regression coefficients, and squared semi partial correlations (sr²) for each predictor in a regression model predicting Belongingness for the total sample (N=367)........................................................................................................ 118
Table 11 Means (M), standard deviations (SD) and confidence interval (CI’s) for salience, Acceptance from Others and Self-Acceptance of Australian identity and Belongingness of the migrant group (n=79). 119
Table 12: Unstandardized (B) and standardized (β) regression coefficients, and squared semi partial correlations (sr²) for each predictor in a regression model predicting Belongingness for the migrant group (n=79) ................................................................. 120

Table 13: Mean salience, Acceptance from Others and Self-Acceptance of Australian identity and Belongingness of the group self-identifying as Aboriginal (n=13) .................................................................................. 121

Table 14: Most frequently occurring words elicited for Australian identity of Australian born (n=281) and non-Australian born groups (n=79) ....... 123

Table 15: Two-factor model of acceptance of Australian identity ............. 134

Table 16: Confirmatory factor analysis model and goodness-of-fit indicators for models 1 and 2 of acceptance of Australian identity (N=89)....... 138

Table 17: Standardized factor loadings for confirmatory models 1 and 2 for the two factors of Self-Acceptance and Acceptance from Others of Australian identity (N=89) ................................................................. 139

Table 18: Means (M), standard deviations (SD), confidence intervals (CI’s) of the 11 items of CFA Model 2 (N=89) ................................. 140

Table 19: Means (M), standard deviations (SD), and confidence intervals (CI’s) for salience, Self-Acceptance, Acceptance from Others of Australian identity and Belongingness for the Irish migrant group (N=89) .................................................................................. 141

Table 20: Means (M), standard deviations (SD), and confidence intervals (CI’s) for salience, Self-Acceptance, Acceptance from Others of Australian identity and Belongingness for the Irish migrant group (n=73) .................................................................................. 142

Table 21: Unstandardised (B) and Standardised (β) regression coefficients with confidence intervals (CI’s) and squared semi-partial correlations (sr²) for the Self-Acceptance and Acceptance from Others of Australian identity as predictors of Belongingness of Irish migrants (n=73) ........................................................................ 142
Preface

My focus for this topic stemmed from my personal experience as an Australian migrant resident in the United States of America. Acceptance of a US identity became a critical determinant of my own sense of belonging, or more accurately, a lack of belonging when living and working there for many years. During this time, I experienced what it was like to be caught in an in-between space that other migrants may also experience. On my return to Australia I felt compelled to explore the concept of belonging in relation to an Australian identity for migrants who were resident in Australia. The research reported here drew from social psychological theory to examine the concept of belonging and its relationship with Australian identity in Australia’s multicultural society.
Chapter 1 - Introduction

Almost every aspect of human psychology, welfare and experience, and much of everyday thinking, feelings, and behaviour correlates to a sense of belonging (Baumeister, 2012). Belonging has been argued to be an existential desire (Miller, 2006); a fundamental motivation and need (Baumeister & Leary, 1995); a connection with places (Hernández, Hidalgo, Salazar-Laplace, & Hess, 2007); objects and animals (Hagerty, Lynch-Sauer, Patusky, Bouwsema, & Collier, 1992a); and associated with events, nature, ideologies, and spiritual experiences (Hagerty & Patusky, 1995). Belonging was argued to be a primary feature of social group identification (Tajfel & Turner, 2010) and as a personal right (Bhambra, 2006). Belonging has been found to correlate strongly and positively with good mental and physical health (Anant, 1967; Ross, 2002); successful migrant resettlement (Fozdar & Hartley, 2012); improved learning performance (Levett-Jones, Lathlean, Higgins, & McMillan, 2009a); increased sports performance (Allen, 2006); and personal wellbeing (Kitchen, Williams, & Chowhan, 2012). Conversely, a lack of belonging was associated with poor mental health (Hagerty et al., 1992a) and vulnerability to suicide (Conner, Britton, Sworts, & Joiner, 2007).

At a community and societal level, belonging has been proposed as the interpersonal process that braids social fabric into human culture (Baumeister, 2012). Moreover, a positive sense of belonging has been argued to underpin individual wellbeing (Murray, Davidson, & Schweitzer, 2008), strengthen social cohesion (Wilkinson, 2007), and be instrumental in the development of social capital of a nation (Carpiano & Hystad, 2011).

The Federal Government of Australia proclaimed the nation’s social system as multicultural in the early 1970s (Ho & Jakubowicz, 2013). As a multicultural
nation, Australia has advanced socially, and is economically sustained through long-term migration. People from many different creeds, cultures and backgrounds have contributed to the development of Australia’s cultural, religious, and economic landscape. Accordingly, with 28.5% of the estimated resident population of almost 24 million born outside Australia (6.9 million persons from 180 countries), and net overseas migration of over 182,000 migrants annually (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2017), a sense of belonging for migrants in Australia is crucial. To better facilitate the integration of migrants into Australian society, the Federal Government recently established the People of Australia Multicultural Policy (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2017). The policy contains a key principle, “an enduring theme … that everyone belongs” (p.ix) recognising how important it is that all people in Australia feel that they belong, irrespective of their cultural background.

Fozdar and Hartley (2012) suggested that rejoining family already resident in Australia and having positive experiences with service providers during the early stages of resettlement and acculturation were reasons why migrants felt welcome in Australia. On the other hand, Higgins and Stoker (2011) found that language difficulties prevented some migrants from feeling welcome in Australia. Earlier research by Hopkins and Kahani-Hopkins (2006) has also suggested that one of the reasons why migrants have felt unwelcome in Australia was exposure to discrimination, either personally or publically. For clarity, it must be noted that this thesis did not focus on the reasons why migrants in Australia feel or do not feel a sense of belonging; rather, it was concerned with how migrants experienced belonging. Finally, this thesis did not examine migrant acculturation processes (Berry, 1997) but it did acknowledge a migrant’s use of bicultural identity to integrate with the mainstream cultural group.
It has been argued that migration, whether driven by economic, familial or humanitarian reasons can cause an individual to lose their connection to meaningful homeland identities and their associated sense of belonging (Waters, 2011). Migrants therefore face the critical task of re-establishing themselves socially, economically, and psychologically within the host country mainstream society, typically achieved through integration with the majority cultural group. Thus, a migrant must act purposefully to adopt new identities associated with their host country in order to integrate into the mainstream cultural group (Berry, 2011). The Australian Multicultural Council has proposed that an Australian national identity was the means by which migrants can integrate and share a common identity with the mainstream society of Australia (Reilly, 2017).

The Australian Multicultural Council has also suggested that Australian citizenship offers migrants a pathway to developing a renewed sense of belonging (AMAC, 2011). With an estimated four million dual citizens in Australia (Rubenstein, 2015), and a citizenship rate at 80% of migrants who have been Australian residents for ten years or more (Smith, Wykes, Jayarajah, & Fabijanic, 2011), there is both political and public interest surrounding Australian citizenship and the role it plays in the integration of migrants into the social and economic fabric of Australia.

Current debate centres on the Federal Government’s proposal to make the task of gaining Australian citizenship more difficult with the underlying intent to deepen migrant integration (Reilly, 2017). The proposal requires future migrants to achieve competent levels of written and spoken English and to demonstrate an understanding of English prior to gaining Australian citizenship. The proposal also calls for migrants in Australia to provide proof of their social and economic
integration through work involvement, community engagement and Australian schooling of their children.

This research drew from the belonging hypothesis proposed by Anant (1966), which defined a sense of belonging (or belongingness) as “a personal involvement in a social membership of a group within a social system to the extent that a person feels himself or herself to be an indispensable and integral part of the system” (p. 21). Membership of a social group effectuates an associated social identity, and Anant proposed that acceptance of a social identity was the primary characteristic that underpinned a positive and meaningful sense of belonging. However, he went on to argue that a person needed to both accept themselves as a social group member and also feel acceptance from others in order to experience belonging.

This current research also drew from both social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) and self-categorization theory (Turner et al., 1987). Together these two theories argued that a sense of belonging is a consequence of a person categorising themselves in a social group, personally involving, and publically claiming the social identity that represents their membership of that social group. In this current examination of belonging and identity, the social identity chosen to investigate was Australian identity and its relationship to a sense of belonging for migrants in Australia.

The social identity selected to investigate Anant’s hypothesis could have been any one of many social identities; however, for the purpose of this thesis, an Australian identity was chosen as it could be considered common to and shared, to some degree, by all Australian residents of any generation, including Australian born and non-Australian born migrants. The scope of my research was not to define ‘Australian identity’ or ‘national identity’, nor was it to have people relate
belonging experiences to a prescribed definition. Rather, the research allowed people to define their own perception of Australian identity and its personal meaning. The thesis aimed to examine characteristics of belonging drawn from empirical and theoretical research experienced by people when relating it to their own individual perception of their Australian identity. Specifically, my research was interested in the contribution that their feelings of ‘Australianess’ made to their overall belongingness.

In seeking to apply Anant’s hypotheses, and social identity and social categorization theories to migrants in Australia, an example may be found in the story of former Vietnamese refugee Hieu Van Le AO who was appointed Governor of South Australia in 2014. Governor Le arrived in Australia 40 years ago from a war-torn country with nothing but a “suitcase full of dreams”. He stated that his appointment as Governor said “much more about our society than me” (ABC News, 2014 June 26th). Significantly, his apparent personal acceptance of his Australian identity and the acceptance received from others in Australian society, together with his personal involvement through service to the public, has enabled him to feel an integral, important, and indispensable part of Australia’s multicultural social system. It is perhaps safe to assume that Governor Le’s acceptance of his bicultural Vietnamese and Australian identities contributed strongly to his overall sense of belonging as an Australian citizen.

The psychological mechanisms of how migrants in Australia experience belonging in relation to Australian identity is of particular interest in this research. Sharing a common Australian identity may indeed be the means by which migrants can integrate with the mainstream society of Australia (Reilly, 2017; Scott, 1991). However, until now, the relationship between Australian identity and belonging has not been explored and thus offers an opportunity for an investigation of social
understandings about the concept of belonging and Australian identity; both in the theoretically exposition of belonging and the practical implications that this may have in relation to Australian identity. Hence, this research investigated the role and importance of an Australian identity to migrants in Australia and whether acceptance of the identity influenced their sense of belonging.

1.1 Research Question

The overarching question that this thesis aimed to answer is “what is belonging, and what is the relationship, if any, between Australian identity and a sense of belonging for migrants who are resident in Australia?”.

1.2 Thesis overview

The research presented in the thesis aimed to investigate the concept of belonging and its relationship to Australian identity, and from a migrant’s perspective, if and to what degree, acceptance of the identity influenced their sense of belonging. In investigating such, a critical review of the literature encompassing theoretical and empirical research covering the concepts of belonging, social identity, national identity, Australian identity, multiculturalism, and a social system was undertaken. The literature review (Chapter 2) was both exploratory and formative in that the findings set the direction the research would follow. As such, four studies that sequentially extended each other constitute the research presented here.

The aim of the first empirical study (Study 1) in Chapter 3 was to operationally define the overall concept of belonging. Specifically, the study aimed to analyse and synthesise the multiple dimensions that comprised the overall concept, explain their relationship with each other, and to investigate the psychological source of the experience of a sense of belonging. The study used a
systematic review method to select, analyse and synthesise multidisciplinary empirical and theoretical research articles. The study clarified the multidimensional nature of the concept, defined a sense of belonging as a critical dimension, and described the psychological source of belonging in relation to social identity.

The second study, presented in Chapter 4, explored the Study 1 findings through interactive discourse in focus groups that comprised Anglo-Celtic Australian and Chinese Australian groups resident in regional Australia. The study explored how people from two different cultural groups understood the concept of belonging and how they defined and experienced a sense of belonging. Study 2 used focus groups to explore the psychological source of belonging found in Study 1. The source, suggested by Study 2 participants, emanated from the collective of social identities they had adopted. The social identities that contributed to a sense of belonging were elicited from the groups, and each identity was ranked according to its perceived importance to belonging at an individual level. One of the social identities elicited from the groups was ‘Australian identity’ and the findings of Study 2 were published in the National Identities journal in July 2015 (Hodgins et al., 2015).

The third study (Chapter 5) drew together the systematic review findings of Study 1 with the focus group findings from Study 2. The study was an empirical investigation of the role and importance of acceptance of Australian identity, and the relationship that acceptance of Australian identity has with belonging. This study focused on a diverse multicultural sample of Australian residents.

The fourth study, presented in Chapter 6, developed and extended the findings in Study 3 regarding acceptance of Australian identity and its contribution to belonging. This study focused on the need to confirm or refute these findings in a single cognate cultural group in Australia. This was achieved through an
investigation of acceptance of Australian identity of Irish migrant’s resident in Australia and its influence on their sense of belonging.

The General Discussion in Chapter 7 drew the four studies together to address the findings in relation to the aim of the thesis and the research question. This chapter also situated my own understanding of the concepts of belonging, identity, and acceptance and how migrants make sense of their ‘Australianess’. This chapter also discussed the limitations in the current research.

The final chapter (Chapter 8) discussed the implications and potential application of the findings. This chapter also offered suggestions for future research. A brief epilogue concluded the thesis.
Chapter 2 - Literature Review

2.1 Chapter overview

The research question is ‘what is belonging, and what is the relationship, if any, between Australian identity and a sense of belonging for migrants who are resident in Australia? This chapter presents a critical review of both theoretical and empirical literature relating to the concepts of belonging, social identity, national identity, Australian identity, multicultural social systems, and the relationships between these concepts. The majority of literature reviewed was derived from the discipline of psychology; however, due to significant trans disciplinary interest in the concept of belonging, research was also drawn from other disciplines such as sociology, nursing, psychiatry, international development, and anthropology. While respecting the interdisciplinary interest, the research was viewed through a social psychological lens.

This chapter begins with a review of how belonging was defined in both westernised and non-westernised literature. This is followed by an account of the historical development of the concept of belonging from 1930 through to the present day. The chapter continues with a summary of the review of the literature relating to the concept of identity with a focus on social identity. As such, aspects of social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) and social categorisation theory (Turner et al., 1987) were reviewed. Literature relating to national identity and, in particular, Australian national identity, along with research which examined the relationship between belonging and identity was then reviewed. Finally, the literature relating to migrant belonging in multicultural social systems was reviewed.
2.2 Definitions and descriptions of belonging

The term ‘belonging’ has been defined, described, and interpreted in different ways by authors from multiple disciplines and in many contexts. In order to establish the premise for the concept of belonging in the multicultural context of this research, both western and non-western definitions were reviewed. Firstly, a western dictionary definition of what it means ‘to belong’ was: “to have a proper, appropriate or suitable place; to be naturally associated with something; to fit into a group naturally” (Webster, 1979). This suggested that belonging was a connection to a place, event, culture, or another undefined feature, and implied that there was a connection and alignment between the person and these phenomena in some way. The use of the word ‘naturally’ in this definition was significant in that it implied a natural congruence existed between a person and the place or thing at some level, such that a feeling of harmony was experienced between one’s inner landscape and one’s outer life-world.

In psychological literature, a sense of belonging, and the term ‘belongingness’ were used interchangeably and had the same meaning. In the context of a social system, one definition of belongingness was portrayed as “a personal involvement in a social system, to the extent that the person feels himself to be an indispensable, and integral part of the system” (Anant, 1966, p. 21). Further definitions of a sense of belonging were discovered and, together with other facets of belonging, such as the need to belong, were discussed in another section of this review.

A shared understanding of the concept of belonging was indicated across different cultural groups and most definitions were found to incorporate aspects of self-identity, familial ancestry, and place of origin, in addition to interpersonal relationships and involvement in a social system. Non-western definitions for
belonging were found in studies of groups from Afghanistan, Japan, New Guinea, and Middle-Eastern/African countries and appeared to share the characteristics of belonging portrayed by western definitions.

Definitions acknowledged the relationship an individual has with his, or her home location and showed the depth of their sense of belonging through an autochthonous connection. For example, the Afghan term of *Watan* described the concept of belonging as being akin to “a geographical, and social area where one feels at home and upon which one’s identity is based, a place where one’s family and friends live and where security, social warmth and a strong connection to the soil are experienced” (Braakman & Schlenkhoff, 2007, p. 11).

The Japanese term *ibasho* was translated as “the sense of recognizing the place where I can stay, be as my true self, and I can feel as I am” (Kunikata, Sharaishi, Nakajima, Tanioka, & Tomotake, 2011, p. 2). The Melanesian term of *peles* was proposed to as pivotal in the construction of Papua New Guinean social identity and described a person’s indigenous origins related to a place (McGavin, 2016). However, this place may not be a person’s place of birth, rather McGavin (2016) suggested that *peles* was beyond a physical village and “encompasses elements of ancestry, belonging, community, descent, emotion, identity, and sentience, and unites the binary of culture and nature”… *peles* established a person’s “social connections and obligations, kinship and identity” (p. 57).

Finally, *level of comfort* described the sense of belonging that African or Middle Eastern refugees experienced during resettlement in Australia through feelings of connectedness, happiness, and confidence in mastering the navigation of their new home country environment (Australian Survey Research Group, 2011). *Watan, Ibasho, Peles* and *level of comfort* illustrated the importance of one’s identity that emanated from, and is situated in, one’s place of ancestral origin, and
the contribution this makes to a sense of self and to the security of one’s place in the world. Indeed, if “human culture depends upon belongingness” as Baumeister (2012, p. 12) has suggested, then each and all of the above definitions and descriptions provided a strong indicator to the powerful nature of this psychological phenomenon.

Belonging appeared to be a multifaceted psychological construct. One facet that appeared to be identified consistently in the literature as crucial in the overall concept of belonging was a sense of belonging; however, two other facets were described, the need to belong (Baumeister & Leary, 1995), and antecedents to adult belonging (Adler, 1930; Hagerty & Patusky, 1995). The need to belong was defined as “a fundamental human motivation for frequent, non-aversive interactions with ongoing relational bonds and strong desire to form, and maintain a minimum number of enduring interpersonal attachments” (Baumeister & Leary, 1995, p. 522). Baumeister further argued that the need to belong was a fundamental and powerful social motive that fashioned a person’s idiosyncratic thinking processes, emotions, and behaviours in different contexts, situations, and times (2012). Antecedents to adult belonging on the other hand have been described as those incidents in childhood and adolescence that transpire before a sense of belonging occurs in adulthood (Hagerty et al., 1992a).

Another facet of belonging related to the positive and negative consequences associated with belonging or not belonging respectively. A summary was created of what appeared to be the positive or negative mental, emotional, and physical outcomes associated with experiencing or not experiencing a sense of belonging. These outcomes were found to include increased or decreased levels of mental and/or physical wellbeing (Murray et al., 2008), academic performance (Faircloth &
Hamm, 2005b), sports performance (Allen, 2006) and contribution to others in a community (Young, Russell, & Powers, 2004).

2.3 Historical development of theories of belonging

2.3.1 1930 - 1943

Viennese psychiatrist Alfred Adler proposed one of the first psychological theories about belonging and, in his development of the concept of individual psychology (Orgler, 1976), broke new ground by suggesting that, for an experience of belonging, a person’s whole environment must be taken into account (Adler, 1930, 1931). Adler suggested that childhood antecedents were critical to experiencing belonging in adulthood. In his book titled *What Life Should Mean to You*, Adler proposed a social interest theory which suggested that parents have a critical responsibility to train a child in the development of ‘social feelings’ in order to prepare them for future adult sociability and belonging (p.115). Thus, adult sociability was achieved through the use of social interest skills learned in childhood. According to Adler, three ‘ties’ to belonging, *place*, *society*, and a commitment in a *man-woman marriage relationship* underpinned adult sociability. This third tie, regarding marriage, reflected the social influence of the time and projected Adler’s own religious beliefs. Adler also proposed that people without well-developed social interest skills lacked social feelings, and, as a consequence, were predisposed to mental health afflictions and maladaptive behaviours.

Thirteen years after Adler, American humanist and psychologist Abraham Maslow proposed that the need to belong was a mid-tier fundamental need equal to love in a structured hierarchy of human motivation (Maslow, 1943). In his book *The Theory of Human Motivation*, Maslow argued that once human physiological needs such as food, shelter and sex were fulfilled, psychological needs of belonging and love took primacy in a person’s motivation. Once belonging and love were satisfied,
Belonging and Identity in Australia’s Multicultural Society

Maslow suggested that the human need for self-actualization became primary, followed then by self-transcendence. After Maslow, there appeared to be little development in the advancement of belonging theories for a number of years.

### 2.3.2 1966 - 1970

A further contribution to belonging theory came 23 years after Maslow from Santokh Anant, an Asian Indian migrant resident in Canada who was an academic, researcher, and clinical psychologist. Historically, Anant was not as well-known as Adler or Maslow; however, his contribution formed ideas that future researchers would cultivate (Hagerty & Patusky, 1995). Anant (1966) suggested that a sense of belonging or as he called it, ‘belongingness’ was “the missing link” in people’s wellbeing (p.21) as it described the type and quality of interpersonal relationships most effective for healthy social, emotional, and mental growth. Firstly, Anant proposed that a person’s belongingness was embodied by their presence in and involvement with social groups in their social system and that personal involvement was the anchoring psychological platform through which positive feelings of a sense of belonging were experienced. Secondly, he proposed that belongingness was experienced when an individual felt acknowledged, indispensable, valued, and integral within those social groups (Anant, 1966). Anant argued that a person’s social group membership was the nexus of interaction between them and their social milieu, and that a sense of belonging or belongingness was a consequence of positive interaction with others.

Anant also proposed that belongingness and social identification were two different concepts but suggested that identification and belongingness had an “empathic relationship” (Anant, 1966, p. 23). He suggested that social identification was developed through external modelling; firstly, parental and family behaviour and then the influence of others outside the family. Anant’s proposal regarding the
relationship between social identity and belonging, and what he meant by an individual’s feelings of belongingness, was outlined in his original diagram and explanation (see Figure 1). The circle depicted a social group in a social system.

![Figure 1. Belonging as part of a social group](image)

There are five members of this group. A, B, C, D, & E have so much identified themselves with the group, are so personally involved, that they feel they belong to the group. D, however, though physically present and a participating member, has not involved himself to the extent that he feels a part of the system. Consequently, were he to find another group to which he felt he belonged, he would drop out of the present group much more easily than any other of the four members...belongingness is used in the subjective sense. It has to do with how a particular member feels about his membership. Reproduced from Anant, S S. (1966). The need to belong. Canada's Mental Health, 14, p. 22. Copyright 1966 by Mental Health Division, Dept. of National Health and Welfare.

A central tenet to Anant’s proposition was the suggestion that both self-acceptance of their own membership of a social group, and the associated feeling of being accepted by other members were critical, such that a “person felt an integral part of that system” (Anant, 1966, p. 22). One of his concluding hypotheses was “the more a person feels that his needs are being satisfied in a particular group or system, the more he will feel he belongs to it” (p. 26). Consequently, Anant argued that acceptance was an important characteristic of belongingness and that a person
needed to self-accept a social group identity and also be accepted by others in that social identity in order that a sense of belonging was experienced.

As an Asian Indian migrant resident in Canada, Anant’s writing appeared to suggest he was curious about identity in relation to belongingness experienced by Asian Indian migrants living in Canada compared with Indians living in India. As a result, he conducted one of the first cross-cultural and transnational investigations of belonging (Anant, 1969). Canada was a westernised multicultural society, whereas, India’s society was defined by a social hierarchy and social order established through a Vedic-based caste system (Smith, 1994). Therefore, in India, a person’s birth determined their caste and their subsequent social location in a fixed hierarchy of six castes. Each caste identity had prescribed vocational roles and behaviours deemed by society as irrevocable. Consequently, it could be argued that the immutability of the caste identity produced a degree of self-acceptance and acceptance from others in relation to an individual’s identity.

Using these two very different social environments as contexts for the same cultural group, Anant found that levels of belongingness for Asian Indians differed in each society (Anant, 1969). Asian Indians who were resident in Canada were found to experience higher levels of acceptance on an individual basis within Canada’s multicultural social system than Indian participants in the caste based social system in India. “Asian Indians living in Canada were found to have higher perceived levels of belongingness than Indians living in India, but lower levels than majority Canadians” (Hodgins et al., 2015, p. 6). Anant reasoned that Asian Indians resident in Canada were neither economically nor socially restrained from choosing any type of personal involvement in the Canadian social system through vocation, friendships, clubs, and communities. In contrast, Indians living in India were restrained by the social and economic limits of the caste system such that they were
confined economically, socially, and psychologically to family, vocational and community groups associated with their caste.

Belongingness of the Indian participants resident in India were also found to vary between Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas, and Sudras castes (Anant, 1969). Anant argued that a close relationship existed between belonging and role-prescribed behaviours. He suggested that gaining clarity of an identity role-prescription and behaviour had a significantly positive effect on an individual’s belongingness. When a person understood what appropriate role-behaviours were expected in their family situation and, more importantly, within their social system, they felt efficacious, confident, and secure. This perceived congruence between behaviour and role identity was argued to create a stronger sense of belongingness for the individual within the social system. For example, Anant suggested that, during the time of British rule in India, the Kshatriyas were well accepted by the British due to similarities between the two cultural groups in their roles and behaviours. Kshatriyas had historically been warriors, property owners, and leaders and thus self-accepted their caste identity because it aligned well with British social customs. As a result of this behavioural congruence and mutual acceptance, Kshatriyas were suggested to experience higher levels of belonging than other castes during this time.

Anant also proposed a theory of developmental belongingness (Anant, 1970) that supported Adler’s earlier social interest theory. Anant suggested that parents held a critical role in developing a child’s social readiness for adult belongingness. Anant’s views were also in accord with Adler and Maslow in that he proposed that a sense of belonging was a key predictor of the mental health of an individual and that it underpinned the health of a society at large.
After the studies carried out in the 1960s and 1970s there appeared to be a significant gap of more than 20 years in the literature contributing to belonging theory. Then, in the 1990’s, public awareness of mental health issues began to grow, and within the discipline of nursing, and particularly psychiatric nursing, further research into belonging emerged. Hagerty et al. (1992a) drew from Anant’s 1966 hypothesis and expanded the definition of belonging beyond a social system to include any social context within an individual’s environment. Hagerty et al. defined belonging as “the experience of personal involvement in a system or environment so that persons feel themselves to be an integral part of that system or environment” (p. 172).

Three characteristics were proposed as antecedents to a positive experience of adult belonging, “a person’s energy for involvement, their potential and desire for meaningful involvement, and their potential for shared or complementary characteristics for belonging” (Hagerty et al., 1992a, p. 174). This study formed the conceptual foundation on which Hagerty and others would base further empirical research as a sense of belonging became recognised as an “important health phenomenon” in the mental health arena (p.176).

The development of two psychometric instruments soon followed; the Sense of Belonging Instrument-Psychological (SOBI-P) scale where two factors of belongingness emerged, valued involvement and fit; and, the Sense of Belonging Instrument-Antecedent (SOBI-A) scale developed as measure of childhood antecedents to adult belonging (Hagerty & Patusky, 1995). Positivity of adult belonging was argued by Hagerty and Patusky (1995) as being more strongly related to the antecedent of family of origin relationships in childhood, than those of childhood peer relationships.
The resurgence of interest in belonging research through the discipline of psychology appeared in the early and mid-1990’s. Social psychologists Baumeister and Leary (1995) published a seminal paper empirically that demonstrated the need to belong as a central human motivation, as had been suggested by Maslow in 1943. Baumeister and Leary (1995) found that the need to belong met nine criteria they suggested as underpinning a fundamental human motivation. They proposed that the need to belong

- produced effects readily under all but adverse conditions;
- guided cognition;
- guided emotions;
- lead to pathological outcomes when lost or thwarted;
- elicited goal-directed behaviour seeking to satisfy it;
- was universal and beyond cultural boundaries;
- was non-derivative of other motives;
- influenced a diverse range of human behaviours; and
- had implications beyond instantaneous psychological functioning (p. 498)

The definition of the need to belong was proposed as “a strong desire to form, and maintain enduring interpersonal attachments” (Baumeister & Leary, 1995, p. 522). Interestingly, the interpersonal attachments referred to were later demonstrated to be gender specific in their form and processing. Baumeister and Sommer (1997) found that women were oriented towards close forms of dyadic relationships to fulfil a need for sociality and belonging whereas men pursued their attachments through a greater number of acquaintance level groups and relationships.

Baumeister and Leary’s research inspired further examinations of belonging, and the development of psychometric instruments with which to measure aspects of
belonging. Lee and Robbins (1995) developed the Social Assurance Scale (SAS) that aimed to measure the need to belong based on a person’s need for reassurance from at least one other person, along with the Social Connectedness Scale (SCS), whereby the perceived emotional distance between oneself and others was a measure of a sense of belonging.

In the mid-nineties, Hagerty, Williams, Coyne, and Early (1996) proposed the first ‘sense of belonging model’. The model showed that a linear connection existed between precursors or antecedents to belonging, a sense of belonging, and consequences of belonging or not belonging (see Figure 2).

![Figure 2. A sense of belonging model.](image)


Using this model as a framework, an individual’s social and psychological functioning were found to be positively and strongly related to a sense of belonging (Hagerty et al., 1992a; Hagerty & Patusky, 1995). Lower levels of a sense of belonging were found to relate to higher levels of loneliness, anxiety, prior psychiatric treatment, and suicidal ideation.
2.3.4 2006–present day

From 2006, there was a resurgence in belonging research due to increasing global migration, particularly of refugees from Africa and the Middle East into the UK and Western European countries. Increased migration brought a political focus to the interdisciplinary need to improve levels of analysis, explanation, and communication of belonging. This led to a ‘sociological’ interest in the concept of belonging, particularly in the politics of belonging. Sociologist Yuval-Davis (2006) argued that, overall, the social sciences lacked consensus on what constituted the construct of belonging and that a comprehensive analytical framework was needed to examine and explain the phenomenon. Yuval-Davis proposed that belonging was not static or a fixed state of being; rather, belonging was dynamic and subject to different temporal and spatial contexts. She suggested that belonging varied according to three aspects; “the first level concerns social locations; an individual’s identifications and emotional attachments to various collectives and groupings, and the third relates to ethical and political value systems which people judge their own and others’ belonging/s” (p.199).

During the mid-2000’s European countries were struggling with high levels of migration and ‘who deserved to belong’ appeared to become a significant political question posed by majority cultural groups in some European countries (Geschiere & Jackson, 2006). Increased migration from Africa was suggested as causing citizens of the majority cultural group to feel threatened and fear potential dilution of their mainstream culture (Bhambra, 2006; Geschiere & Jackson, 2006). Geschiere and Jackson (2006) described how the notion of autochthony, meaning ‘born from the soil’, was cropping up in Dutch and Flemish discourse as a heavily emotive term suggesting a localist form of belonging incorporating radical exclusions as a means of dealing with migration. In the Netherlands for instance,
discussions suggested that autochthons should be granted higher levels of citizenship and entitlements than migrants who should be given a lower and less favourable form of residency and citizenship, and therefore a lower form of belonging.

In 2006 an Australian study further contributed to the theoretical understanding of belonging by explaining the phenomenon at an intrapsychic level (Miller, 2006). In discussing the subject of belonging in Australia, Miller drew on Indigenous history and culture and suggested that there was a need for congruence between three aspects of belonging-identity relations: social connections in community; historical-ancestral connections; and a connection to a locality or place. Miller suggested that belonging was an ontological phenomenon that was tantamount to being in a state of belonging qua correct relation (p.9) meaning belonging by virtue of congruent relations between individuals and these three key areas. Miller argued that when in this intrapsychic harmonious state, there was reciprocation by others and the environment, resulting in a sense of balance, a feeling of a natural relationship between oneself, one’s interpersonal relationships, and one’s environment. Miller’s philosophical proposal appears to embody aspects of the previously suggested concepts of belonging from Japan (Ibashho), Afghanistan (Watan) and New Guinea (Peles).

Between 2007 and 2009, a series of Australian studies drew upon the theory and empirical research of Anant and Hagerty and examined the characteristics of a sense of belonging of student nurses in teaching hospitals (Levett-Jones & Lathlean, 2009; Levett-Jones et al., 2009a; Levett-Jones, Lathlean, Higgins, & McMillan, 2009b; Levett-Jones, Lathlean, Maguire, & McMillan, 2007; Levett-Jones, Lathlean, McMillan, & Higgins, 2007). Levett-Jones found the characteristics of a positive sense of belonging included acceptance, valued involvement, fit, self-
efficacy, connectedness, and reciprocation. As predicted by Anant (1966), self-acceptance combined with acceptance from others was found to feature strongly in positive interaction between nursing students, the teaching professionals, and other resident nurses (Levett-Jones et al., 2009b). This positive interaction was characterised by feelings of mutual acceptance and produced an evolving positive engagement between the stakeholders. Critically, it was found that the mutuality of acceptance needed to be in balance, and when in balance, reciprocity of self-acceptance and acceptance from others strengthened during the learning process and resulted in an improved sense of belonging of nursing students. New characteristics of belonging were also suggested, including an experience of legitimacy (in the participant’s social context), and congruence between personal and professional values. As a result of their findings, a definition of belongingness was proposed as:

a deeply personal and contextually-mediated experience that evolves in response to the degree to which the individual feels:
(a) secure, accepted, included, valued and respected by a defined group, (b) connected with or integral to the group, and (c) that their professional and/or personal values are in harmony with those of the group. The experience of belongingness may evolve passively in response to the actions of the group to which one aspires to belong and/or actively through the actions initiated by the individual (Levett-Jones et al., 2009b, p. 319)

Also at this time in Australia, the importance of developing belonging skills in early childhood was recognised within the Australian education system. An early childhood development program known as Belonging, Being, and Becoming: Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) was developed and incorporated into the school curriculum. The program had learning goals that included helping develop a child’s
connection with their social world and assisting their development of a strong sense of their identity (Australian Government, 2009). A central tenet of this program involved both educators and parents working together.

Meanwhile, Leary and Cox (2008) were continuing to expand their contribution to theoretical knowledge regarding the need to belong and suggested that the belonging motivation was inextricably linked to much of a person’s social behaviour, so much so that the motivation constitutes “a mainspring of social action” (p. 27).

In 2011 a further research study examined the idea of a person’s motivation to gain acceptance and thus avoid rejection. DeWall, Deckman, Pond, and Bonser (2011) argued that belongingness was a core personality trait. A year later, in an further attempt to link personality traits and belongingness, Malone, Pillow, and Osman (2012) developed the General Belongingness Scale (GBS) which suggested that two factors, acceptance/inclusion and rejection/exclusion, measured ‘achieved belongingness’ (2012). In this same study, two of the ‘big five’ personality traits (Costa & McCrae, 1992), neuroticism and extraversion, were found to strongly correlate negatively and positively respectively, with achieved belongingness.

Walton, Cohen, Cwir, and Spencer (2012) introduced the concept of ‘mere belonging’ as a “minimal social connection to another person or group in a performance domain” (p. 513). Walton et al argued that social connectedness, even through sharing the same birthday with another person in a group, indicated an increased motivation to share in the activities of that group. This introduced the idea that a variation in levels of belongingness may be experienced in different social contexts, and in relation to the salience of different social identities.

In 2013, Mahar, Cobigo, and Stuart (2013) examined the concept of ‘social belonging’ with the intention of developing indicators for facets of social inclusion
for people were intellectually disabled. They found “five intersecting themes, subjectivity, groundedness to an external referent, reciprocity, dynamism, and self-determination” (p.1026). As a result, Mahar, Cobigo, and Stuart (2013) suggested a new definition of a sense of belonging as:

a subjective feeling of value and respect derived from a reciprocal relationship to an external referent that is built on a foundation of shared experiences, beliefs or personal characteristics. These feelings of external connectedness are grounded to the context or referent group, to whom one chooses, wants and feels permission to belong. This dynamic phenomenon may be either hindered or promoted by complex interactions between environmental and personal factors (p.1026).

In 2013, the New South Wales (NSW) Government in Australia recognised the importance of developing the belonging capability of young people in the adolescent stage of education. The NSW Higher School Certificate (HSC) offered a unit of study called ‘Belonging’ in the years 7-12 English curriculum. Student learning was focused on exploring the meaning of belonging and consequences of not belonging using a variety of reference texts. Perceptions and ideas of belonging were shaped within personal, cultural, historical, and social frameworks. Students had to consider belonging in terms of experiences, identity, relationships, acceptance and understanding (New South Wales Government, 2013).

In another distinctly Australian study, Neville, Oyama, Odunewu, and Huggins (2014) explored, what they termed as, the sense of Racial-Ethnic-Cultural (REC) belonging among Indigenous Australians. Neville et al. proposed “five interrelated dimensions of REC belonging; history/memory, place and peoplehood,
sense of community, acceptance and pride, shared language and culture, and interconnections” (p.414). “History/memory reflects identification with and connection to the memory of one’s people and homeland” (p. 420). Sense of community was related to the Aboriginal community, family, extended family, and a commitment to give to the community. Acceptance and pride “reflects an affirmation of the self who is Aboriginal … incorporates comfort with and acknowledging one’s Aboriginality” (p. 420). Interconnection was suggested as feeling a level of spiritual connection to all indigenous peoples of the world.

Hugh Mackay, a well-known Australian social psychologist and researcher published a book titled *The Art of Belonging: It’s not where you live, it’s how you live* (McKay, 2014). Mackay focused on the concept of community belonging in Australia and argued that life was not lived in isolation but as part of a community, where trust and mutual respect were the principle characteristics that afforded a good life. In recent years, the state government in New South Wales introduced into the education system *The Wellbeing Framework for Schools* as a means of expanding the potential for community belonging (New South Wales Government, 2015). Part of the rationale behind this initiative was the recognition that building positive relationships for young people fosters connectedness and feelings of belonging. “Children and young people in public education in NSW will experience a sense of connection, inclusion, respect for individuality and difference, resilience, empowerment, capacity to contribute to their school and wider community, and confidence to positively shape their own futures” (p. 9). In both the early childhood and adolescent stages of education, the importance of developing the capability for belongingness in adulthood would seem to have become institutionalised within the Australian education system.
2.4 Identity

The second concept reviewed was identity, including types of identity, and characteristics of the relationship of identity with belonging. Howard (2000) argued that identity was a significant area of social psychological theory and empirical research. However, after briefly describing the concepts of personal and social identity, this current review focused on social identity and associated aspects such as salience, multiple identities and complexity, choice, and congruence. Social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) and self-categorization theory (Turner et al., 1987) together represented what has been termed a ‘social identity approach’. It is this social identity approach that shaped the line of argumentation regarding the investigation of a social identity to address the aim of this research. The primary aim was to investigate the relationship between belonging and social identity, and, in particular Australian identity and its relationship to a sense of belonging of Australian residents.

Identity has been defined as “the traits and characteristics, social relations, roles and social group memberships that define who one is” (Oyserman, Elmore, & Smith, 2012, p. 72). Oyserman and Markus (1998) posited that our identities collectively make-up our self-concept, and subsequently drive how we act within our social world. Self-concepts “are cognitive structures that can include content, attitudes, or evaluative judgments and are used to make sense of the world, focus attention on one's goals, and protect one's sense of basic worth” (Oyserman et al., 2012, p. 72). Oyserman et al. (2012) also suggested that identity comprised three areas; traits associated with who we are personally, who or what we are to others in our social world, and who we are relative to our environment or place. For other perspectives regarding identity see Brewer (2007), Howard (2000), and Vignoles, Chryssochoou, and Breakwell (2002).
Identities adopted in relation to our roles within our social world and our environment or places we live have been described as social identities; whereas, traits by which we are known personally have been described as our personal identity (Hornsey, 2008). Hornsey (2008) differentiated between social and personal identity, defining personal identity as “the idiosyncratic characteristics of an individual comprising their attitudes, memories, behaviours and emotions that distinguish them from other individuals” (p. 206). In other words, a social identity is created as an individual interacts with others and identifies similarities between himself and a group or society; whereas, “personal identity typically refers to characteristics of the self that one believes, in isolation or combination, to be unique to the self” (Ashmore, Deaux, & McLaughlin-Volpe, 2004, p. 82).

2.4.1 Social identity

A social identity has been defined as “that part of an individual’s self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership of a social group (or groups), together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership” (Tajfel, 1981, p. 255). Social identity has also been referred as collective identity, “one that is shared with a group of others who have (or are believed to have) some characteristics in common” (Ashmore et al., 2004, p. 81).

Deaux (2001) argued that social identity served three functions. Firstly, social identity made people feel better about themselves and strengthens self-esteem. Secondly, social identity was a vehicle that allowed a person to interact relationally with others through shared beliefs, values, and activities associated with the identity. Thirdly, social self-identification enabled a person to position themselves in a distinctive place in a community. The three functions can be interpreted as belonging to self at an intrapersonal level, belonging socially among
others at an interpersonal level, and belonging by holding a legitimate social place in society.

### 2.4.1.1 Social identity salience

As previously discussed, the perceived importance or salience of a social identity to an individual was suggested as being related to a specific context-situation (Deaux, 2001). The salience of a social identity represented a “state of personal activation characterised by heightened sensitivity to identity-relevant stimuli” (Forehand, Deshpande, & Reed, 2002, p. 1086). They further argued that salience of a social identity was prompted by a context-situation and thus influenced a person’s “perceptions, behaviours, and performance” (Forehand et al., 2002, p. 1086). Similarly, from a self-categorisation perspective, Turner et al. (1987) also argued that identity salience arose from a social situation. While salience “has been shown to prompt recall of beliefs, emotions and behaviours associated with an identity, underlying , beliefs, emotions, and behaviours were found to remain consistent even when identity primacy changed” (Hodgins et al., 2015, p. 6).

### 2.4.1.2 Multiple social identities and complexity

Over a normal day, a person may experience multiple social identities as a result of engaging in different circumstances during the day (Jaspal & Cinnirella, 2011). For example, Deaux, Reid, Mizrahi, and Ethier (1995) found an average of 13 social identities made up the self-concept of university students. Roccas and Brewer (2002) argued that membership of many different social groups simultaneously (multiple social identities) resulted in social identity complexity (SIC). SIC was defined as “an individual’s subjective representation of the combination of his or her multiple ingroup memberships” (p. 88). Levels of complexity were shown to be influenced by the level of overlap of identities, greater overlap resulted in more simplified identity structures. Interestingly, Brewer,
Gonsalkorale, and van Dommelen (2013) found that overlap of the range of social identities in a salient ethnic minority group (Asian-Australians) was perceived as greater than that of the Australian ethnic majority group. For example, an Asian-Australian female was found to self-identity as an ‘Asian-lawyer’, meaning the identities of ‘Asian’ and ‘lawyer’ have converged to form a single identity. An Australian, on the other hand, self-identified as ‘Australian’ and as a ‘lawyer’ meaning the two identities were not perceived as overlapping and the result was greater identity complexity.

The findings suggested that greater identity complexity for the Australian majority group meant that adopting new, or moving in and out of, multiple group memberships was suggested to be effortless in comparison to ethnic minority groups. The ethnic identity of the minority group was perceived as being a primary identity, and it was suggested that greater overlap of ethnic identity with other identities occurred in this group across many social contexts. The degree to which the minority ethnic group perceived they could adopt new identities was suggested to be restricted by the degree of overlap with their ethnic identity (Brewer et al., 2013).

2.4.2 Self-categorisation

Turner et al. (1987) developed a self-categorisation theory (SCT) to explain the processes individuals used to form cognitive representations of themselves among others when related to social groups, conceptually extending Tajfel’s social identity theory. While SIT focused more on an intergroup perspective, SCT emphasised the intrapersonal processes an individual used within a group. Turner refers to two central creeds of SCT; firstly, that a person self-categorises in terms of belonging to a social group (‘we’) rather than as an individual (‘I’) in a process called depersonalisation; and secondly, that an individual’s perceptions of fit within
their social world was important. Further, SCT aimed to explain that perceived readiness was an important mechanism, whereby a person’s cognitive capacity to self-categorise was dependent on their prior experience, needs, expectations and current goals. Turner argued that self-categorisation was a means to help individuals know and feel more secure in their social world, but was also useful to reduce the cognitive load of others in order to recognise the social location of an individual.

Deaux (1991) proposed that the self-categorisation process involved “three interrelated processes, self-definition in terms of group membership, the acquisition of relevant information about group characteristics, and public proclamation of belonging to the group” (p.90). Deaux further suggested that “only by understanding what the basis for differentiation is can we begin to think about what the consequences of different identity categories might be” (Deaux et al., 1995, p. 280). Deaux (2001) further proposed five types of social identity categories as

- ethnicity/religion e.g., Asian-American, Jewish, Muslim;
- political affiliation e.g., feminist, republican, environmentalist;
- relationships e.g., mother, parent, teenager, woman;
- personal/stigmatized e.g., person with AIDS, homeless person, fat person, alcoholic; and
- vocation/avocation e.g., psychologist, artist, athlete, military veteran (p. 2).

Hornsey (2008) suggested that people self-categorize by positioning themselves at different levels of inclusiveness along a spectrum of identities that made-up their self-concept. ‘Social identity’ was positioned at an intermediate level on the spectrum between the superordinate identity ‘human’ and the subordinate identity ‘personal’. For example: Canadian Indigenous First Nations people were found to self-categorize their identities into a three layered spectrum (Coates, 1999). Coates found that a First Nations person self-categorized at the superordinate level
of ‘human’ first, which was synonymous with the land, country, place, and also with totemic connections. The second and mid-level self-categorization was both social and local and encompassed elements of their birth, clan or community, local culture, and language. Finally, the third layer comprised of their self-categorization not only as a part of Canada’s First Nations people, but also as a part of all Indigenous people who shared the same experience in other countries.

2.5 Social identity and belonging

Turner et al. (1987) proposed that a sense of belonging was a consequence of a person’s adoption of a social identity associated with a social group or category. Studies of belonging in association with social identity were found in various contexts and situations including students in university sporting teams (Allen, 2006); refugees in host countries (Correa-Velez, Gifford, & Barnett, 2010; Kumsa, 2006); gays and lesbians in family events (Oswald, 2002); drug users in rehabilitation (Moshier et al., 2012); nurses in training college (Levett-Jones et al., 2009a); the elderly in aged care facilities (Nolan, 2011); and students in high school (Osterman, 2000).

However, the relationship between identity and belonging has been proposed as a “dynamic process, not a reified fixity” (Yuval-Davis, 2006, p. 99). In line with this idea, Yuval-Davis argued that some social identities were more fixed than others. Thus, identities derived from birthplace or ethnicity were suggested as being fixed; whereas, identities associated with values, vocation or personal interest may be flexible. Whilst the need to belong might be fundamental and a constant, as suggested by Baumeister and Leary (1995), Yuval Davis suggested that the experience of belonging was fluid, reflecting movement and interaction over time within the place and context of an individual.
The positional aspect (Doise, 1986) of a social identity may also affect how the individual experiences belonging. The positional aspect refers to the circumstances created when an individual experiences a new situation such as moving to a new home. In these circumstances, it could be argued that pre-existing social identities were retained and transferred with them. However, in order for a pre-existing social identity to be retained in a new place or situation, it may require the individual to re-evaluate its value and application in the new situation. An identity brought to the new situation may need to be adapted, accommodated, or even removed in the process of establishing a continuing sense of belonging.

Social identities that contribute to the make-up of an individual’s self-concept have been found to vary in terms of contribution to a sense of belonging. For example, a large UK study by Marsh, Bradley, Love, Alexander, and Norham (2007), found that the top six social identities, when ranked in level of importance to a sense of belonging were (in descending order) family, friendships, lifestyle choices (explained as being a brand/product affiliated identity), nationality, professional identity, team spirit, and shared interests (club/hobby identities). While no cultural distinctions were made in this study, perhaps due to the predominantly ‘white’ mono-cultural sample, gender mediated the ranking of social identities. Men ranked sports team identities more highly than religious, ethnic, or political affiliation identities, while women did not.

2.5.1 Social identity choice and belonging

The magnitude to which a person chooses a social identity has been suggested as influencing levels of belonging and social identification (Obst & White, 2007). Obst and White (2007) demonstrated that increased levels of belonging were experienced when an individual chose membership of a self-nominated interest group (high level of choice) over a university student group
identity (medium level of choice) and a local neighbourhood group identity (low level of choice). Similarly, humanitarian migrants into Australia, who self-accepted the social identity of ‘refugee’ were found to have stronger feelings of belonging in Australia than those who didn't (Fozdar & Hartley, 2012). Fozdar and Hartley (2012) argued that self-acceptance of the refugee identity enabled a migrant to build close relationships with service providers and to also share positive experiences and similarities with other refugees.

2.5.2 Social identity congruence and belonging

Belonging has also been argued to be positively influenced by identity congruence (Hughes, 2010), suggested as occurring when an individual’s proclaimed identity as a social group member was consistent with the social behaviours of the group represented. Hughes examined the concept of identity congruence in a social learning environment and proposed three levels of identity congruence: social identity congruence - personal identification with peers at a social level; operational identity congruence - with the processes, practices and technologies surrounding the learning; and knowledge related identity congruence - self-identification with ideas, concepts, and knowledge. Interestingly, Hughes found that social and operational identity congruence thought to strengthen belonging and participation was less critical to belonging than knowledge-related identity congruence. Hughes further suggested that those who were unable to make critical shifts in identity to accommodate engagement with knowledge-building communities withdrew from participation due to a lack of belongingness.

A lack of identity congruence was also suggested by Moorhead (1999) as leading to internal conflict between social identity and belonging among lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer (LGBTQ) communities. Moorhead demonstrated
that people who identified as LGBTQ experienced internal conflict between their personal identity and their desire to experience a sense of belonging.

This same conflict has also been found in migrant acculturation studies. Howarth, Wagner, Magnusson, and Sammut (2013) found that migrants felt conflicted between their desire to belong in a new host country and their desire to retain their own uniqueness, cultural difference, and personal agency. “We want to fit in; we cannot fit in. We desire difference; we fear it” (p. 11).

2.5.3 National identity and belonging

Bond (2006) argued that national identity was socially constructed. Scott (1991) characterised national identity as being “based on a perceived congruence between self-concept and nation-concept” (p.2), and similarly, as being based on “mutually recognized membership” (Barnes, Auburn, & Lea, 2004, p. 187). Social identity theory argued that the likelihood of people exhibiting behaviours that align with values and beliefs of a social group would increase with their identification with that group (Tajfel, 1982). It could be argued that migrants who perceived the values, beliefs and behaviours associated with a national identity that were consistent with their own, were more likely to align with a host country’s national identity and thus develop a renewed sense of belonging. In turn, belonging has been proposed as playing a key role in the development of a cohesive national identity (Buonfino, 2007; Muir & Rogers, 2007; Shields, 2008).

Waldzus, Mummendey, Wenzel, and Boettcher (2004) suggested that collective majorities portray characteristics of a national identity that reflected their own experiences, values, and ancestry. Thus, if in the first instance, cultural boundaries define the criteria of a national identity, as has been argued by Bhambra (2006), adopting the majority national identity may be problematic for a minority cultural group attempting to renew a sense of belonging in a new host country.
Wright (2011) also suggested that the national identity of the majority group was, in part, formed in answer the perception that increased migration has caused a threat to mainstream society. Therefore, Wright argued that minority groups may be unable to relate to a host country national identity because they anticipate the majority group will discriminate against them.

Nesdale and Mak (2000) found that the strength of host country identification of migrants in Australia was influenced by their positive or negative acculturation attitude towards Australia’s standards and values, the level of acceptance they experienced from the majority cultural group, and the extent to which the minority group remained within their own ethnic environment rather than integrate into the wider society. In the Netherlands, discrimination experienced by migrants was found to lead to a negative attitude that strongly predicted negative host country identification (Verkuyten, 2016). Verkuyten argued that this discrimination precipitated dis-identification and effectively removed any psychological relationship that the minority groups may have had with the host national identity thereby lowering their sense of belonging in the host society.

Brettell (2006) explored the ways migrant groups reconciled their host country national identity with their cultural identity and found that migrant belongingness comprised both political and cultural belonging. Political belonging, which incorporated a country’s inherent responsibilities, civic rights, and entitlements, was found to emanate from adoption of a host country’s national identity through citizenship. Cultural belonging, on the other hand, focused on aspects of the migrant’s ethnic identity such as birthplace, customs, and traditions. Cultural belonging was suggested as having greater emotional meaning for a migrant compared with political belonging which was suggested as having greater intellectual meaning. Brettell argued that balancing these two ideas about
belonging influenced migrant attitudes towards identification with their host country and the way in which they constructed their national identities.

Benet-Martinez, Leu, Lee, and Morris (2002) also argued that migrants resolve host national and ethnic identities by integrating or merging both identities. Benet went on to describe this as bicultural identity integration (BII), and referred to “the degree to which a bicultural individual perceives his/her two cultural identities to be compatible or conflictual” (Benet-Martinez & Hariatos, 2005, p. 1015). Reconciliation of a bicultural identity could be argued as requiring a migrant to “discern, accept and make compatible characteristics allied with both identities.

Elsayed (2009) explored how long-term Muslim migrants made sense of and understood their Canadianess. Using two dimensions of citizenship, objective (rights-based) and subjective (a sense of belonging), Elsayed found that migrants made clear distinctions between belonging to Canada and their perceived Canadian identity. Muslim migrants referred to belonging as “one’s emotional attachment to the country” and “a private and internal tie that is not open to questioning by others as their Canadianess would be” (p. 100). Participants further suggested that they were “free to negotiate this emotional attachment to Canada as home”, and were “not negotiating fixed concepts about how Canadian they were, rather about an intrinsic feeling that grows or fades over time” (p. 100). One participant stated metaphorically that “feeling Canadian is like being your son, you cannot be your son, but you can love him and have this attachment with him” (p. 100). Although Canadianess might have been considered unattainable because it was intertwined with criteria that they felt they could not meet as a Muslim, they still felt a sense of belonging was within their reach.

In Australia, Rooney, Nesdale, Kane, Hattie, and Goonewardene (2012) found two factors measured the degree of identification with Australia among
culturally and linguistically diverse residents. In addition to the expected factor of ethnic identity, which included items such as pride and tradition, a second factor of “Sense of Belonging to this Country” (p. 246) emerged. However, on examination, item statements appeared to assess people’s perceptions of belonging ‘to’ or ‘in’ Australia, rather than evaluate their identification with an Australian identity or what ‘Australianess’ meant to them, as was the case with Elsayed’s (2009) Canadian study.

As I have previously discussed, the relationship between national identity and belongingness has been shown to vary between countries. In a UK study, majority Anglo-Celtic participants claimed an unquestionable sense of national belonging and felt an ‘ontological’ level of security in their national identity (Skey, 2010). Interestingly, two UK studies have shown that age was the best predictor of a strong sense of belonging associated with a British national identity (Beddington, 2013). As people aged their sense of belonging increased while younger people were less likely to feel that they belonged (Ali & Heath, 2013). Ali and Heath also found overseas birth particularly in a non-Commonwealth country, length of stay/residence, and socio-economic marginality were associated with drivers of a weak sense of belonging (Hodgins et al., 2015).

Conversely, as I have previously discussed, Bell (2009) found that in New Zealand, the majority Caucasian ‘Pakeha’ struggled with claiming their personal belongingness compared to the Indigenous Maori people. Younger NZ descendants of original European settlers experienced a sense of belonging to New Zealand to a lesser extent than the Indigenous Maori cultural group. This was despite their birth, residence in, and commitment to New Zealand, and feeling politically and culturally secure within a bicultural national identity. When both Maori and Pakeha were proclaimed in the 1980s as the “founding peoples of the nation” (p. 148), the
“nationalist rhetoric of biculturalism” (p.148) was further advanced (Hodgins et al., 2015).

In 2017, another New Zealand study examined the link between in-group favouritism and belonging (Hunter et al., 2017). Hunter et al. (2017) defined belonging as “one’s subjective sense of acceptance by in-group members” (p.137). The in-group comprised those participants randomly assigned to the New Zealand group and given favouritism conditions, the remaining participants were assigned to two out-groups (non-favouritism and baseline conditions). Three experiments were conducted that focused on in-group favouritism and belonging and their relationship to acceptance and rejection. Belonging was measured using a three-item scale that assessed participants’ feelings of acceptance, connection, or of being an ‘outsider’ in relation to their non-membership of the New Zealander group. In-group favouritism, as demonstrated through allocation of resources, was found to lead to higher levels of subjective belonging. Additionally, findings showed that the “relation between in-group favouritism and increased belonging was independent of personal self-esteem, group esteem and group identity” (p.144).

While the need to belong may be fundamental to all people irrespective of their culture, a sense of belonging appeared highly nuanced in how it was sought, experienced, and maintained across different cultural groups. A Canadian study demonstrated that Israeli and Japanese migrants held different perceptions about ‘home’ and belonging (Magat, 1999). Japanese migrants perceived their sense of belonging as being centered around their small home and daily activities, while Israeli migrants equated belonging and home with personal and national identity. In an Australian example, an Afghani migrant expressed how cultural differences created a barrier to his social integration and belonging process “in our culture we
just go and visit people anytime and find reason to talk when we want to, but I have found it very difficult to do this with Australians” (Fozdar & Hartley, 2012, p. 89).

2.6 Belonging in Australia’s multicultural social system

A social system has been defined as “any interdependent set of cultural and structural elements that can be thought of as a unit. The parts that make up a social system can be of almost any size or complexity” (Social System, 2000). Australia’s social system has evolved from a political ideology of multiculturalism developed and implemented after 1973 when earlier policies that effectively barred any person of non-European descent from migrating to Australia were finally abolished (Berry & Sam, 2014). Up to that point Australia’s approach to migration favoured migrants from Britain, Ireland, Europe, and New Zealand whose values were considered congruent with those of Australians, many of whom were descendants of the original settlers. This approach to migration became known as the ‘White Australia policy’. In 1975 Australia was declared a ‘multicultural nation’, followed in 1978 by the implementation of the first multicultural policies. Since then multicultural policies have evolved through several phases reflecting varying political directions and contexts. During the 1980s the focus was social justice and, as economic policy changed, so too did multicultural policies moving towards productive diversity in the 1990s. Since the 2000s, particularly with more recent global anxieties about terrorism, the emphasis has shifted to ensuring social cohesion within a multicultural society (Ho, 2013).

2.6.1 Social cohesion and belonging

As the contemporary tenet of Australia’s multicultural policy, social cohesion was described as the “willingness of members to cooperate with each other in order to survive and prosper” (Scanlon Foundation, 2017) and as such, Australia has been argued to be “a stable and highly cohesive society” (Markus,
Chapter 2 - Literature Review

Belonging and Identity in Australia’s Multicultural Society

2015, p. 1). An annual mapping social cohesion survey has been conducted by the Scanlon Foundation since 2007 and comprises five domains suggested to measure “belonging, worth, social justice, participation, and acceptance/rejection” (p. 13). The 2015 results for the domain of belonging indicated that 93% of respondents said they experienced a sense of belonging to “some extent” or “a great extent” (Markus, 2015, p. 1). However, the number of respondents indicating ‘to a great extent’ had declined since 2011. On the other hand, the domain of acceptance/rejection has increased. Markus interpreted this as respondents experiencing less acts of discrimination and an increase in acceptance of migrants in Australia overall.

The Australian Multicultural Council (AMC) is the current independent and bipartisan body responsible for the national multicultural strategy. The AMC is responsible for developing and publishing The People of Australia – Australia’s Multicultural Policy, which was first published in 2011 and through adaptation remains the contemporary policy publication today. The policy “aims to strengthen social cohesion through promoting belonging, respecting diversity and fostering engagement with Australian values, identity and citizenship, within the framework of Australian law” (Department of Social Services, 2014). The policy facilitates intergovernmental relationships incorporating departments and programs that address diversity, race discrimination, social cohesion, immigration, human rights, sports, language, and legal aspects.

The concept of belonging is a key principle in Australia’s Multicultural Policy, and recognises the importance of a sense of belonging to social cohesion and economic growth. Understanding how a migrant re-establishes a sense of belonging in their new host country environment after their cultural dislocation and physical separation from their homeland is of critical importance in fostering
solidarity and social cohesion. Australian citizenship has been proposed by the 
AMC as being “the full articulation of this social cohesion” (Ozdowski, 2015, p. 1) 
and was suggested as having great symbolic value for the population at large in that 
it formally establishes membership of the national community (Smith et al., 2011).

2.6.2 Bicultural identity and belonging

The Australian Survey Research Group (2011) reported that Australian 
citizenship is greatly valued by migrants for the civil liberties, security, services, 
and human rights it offers. There are an estimated four million dual nationals 
(Rubenstein, 2015), and an 80% citizenship rate for migrants who have been 
resident in Australia for more than 10 years (Smith et al., 2011). Despite these 
figures, how a migrant makes sense of their Australian identity as part of their 
bicultural or dual national identification, and the influence of this on their belonging 
was unknown. Berry (2011) suggested that a migrant’s successful embrace of a 
bicultural identity brought personal enrichment and psychological wellbeing. 

In order to become a healthy, valued and contributing member of a social 
system, LaFromboise, Coleman, and Gerton (1993) suggested that an individual 
needed to develop a high level of bicultural competence in the host country identity. 
Six components were suggested as being necessary for developing bicultural 
competency

- knowledge of cultural beliefs and values of both cultures’
- positive attitudes towards both the majority and minority cultural groups;
- bicultural efficacy (confidence that one can live effectively in both cultures);
- communication ability (in both languages);
- role repertoire (knowledge of culturally appropriate behaviours); and
- a sense of being grounded (having a well-developed social support system) (p. 
402).
A dual identity has been suggested as encouraging “a sense of national commitment and belonging without distancing oneself from one’s ethnic group” (Verkuyten & Martinovic, 2012). It could be argued that building cultural competence in the process of constructing a host national identity may contribute to a level of *psychological citizenship*, defined as “a subjective sense of being a citizen” (Sindic, 2011, p. 203). Sindic (2011) argued that “psychological citizenship was rooted in a sense of identity” and that “for the great majority of people … that lies primarily with the national community” (p. 210).

### 2.6.3 Migrants and belonging in Australia

The historical source of migrants in Australia has changed significantly over time. Until 1976, because of the exclusive approach to migration known as the ‘White Australia policy’, the principal birthplace of migrants had been Europe and included countries such as the UK, Ireland, Italy, Greece, Yugoslavia, Poland, and Malta. By 1994, the top ten birthplaces of migrants into Australia comprised six European countries (including Russia) and four Asian countries. The UK and Ireland were still the largest migrant groups in 1994; however, they had been decreasing as a share of the total from 41.1% in 1976, to 34.7% in 1986, down to 29.9% in 1994 (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2017). This trend continued and in 2015-2016, the UK proportion of migrants was down to 10%. Seven of the ten top source countries of migrants into Australia were Asian, led by Southern Asia (31%) and Chinese Asia (17%). People from New Zealand (23,365) continued to migrate to Australia under the Trans-Tasman Travel Arrangement (Markus, 2017).

Research relating to a sense of belonging of migrants in Australia was found to be limited. However, Cummins et al. (2003) found that when comparing a sense of belonging for Asian and UK born migrants, and those born in Australia, migrants from the UK reported higher levels of belonging than Asian migrants. The levels of
belonging for migrants from the UK were found to be equivalent to people born in Australia. It could be argued that the long established British and European norms that have historically underpinned much of Australia’s economic and social development were the reason that a sense of belonging may have been stronger for UK migrants.

In the future, China and India are expected to remain two of the dominant migrant sources for Australia (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2017). The changing source of future migrants in Australia may see a shift in attitude in relation to Australian identity. Moreover, as migration patterns change and become increasingly influenced by Asian migrants with different cultural behaviours, language, and values, understanding the impact of a shared Australian identity on belongingness may become imperative.

2.7 Literature review summary

The literature concerning belonging, identity and Australia’s multicultural social system highlighted the importance of belonging on human psychology; however, the theoretical history of the concept of belonging appeared diverse and fragmented in its epistemological development. Psychological theories initially appeared to focus on the individual, and antecedents to belonging such as family childhood relationships and personal friendships. Psychological theories then expanded to include personal involvement in social groups and social systems, and eventually evolved more broadly towards the politics of belonging in society when migration became a major social issue. A common thread that appeared to cross various theories was the feeling of being accepted, valued and integral to a social system.

However, the diversity and fragmented nature of studies illustrated the multi-dimensional nature of the phenomenon that is belonging. The aspects of
belonging appeared complex with a range of attributes. Contemporary theorists have started to recognize that the concept of belonging may need to be explained more cohesively on a number of levels. New studies appeared to acknowledge the entanglement of belonging with mediating, moderating, and influencing factors such as social location, identity, emotional attachments, politics, values, physiology, and the environment. Studies have shown that the characteristics of belonging are dynamic and likely to be felt to varying degrees within a range of social group identities in their respective contexts, situations, or times.

Literature pointed to social identity as being a central tenet of belonging and serving as the psychological anchoring point for a sense of belonging. Studies have suggested that adopting citizenship, language skills and embodying values of a host country national identity underpin a migrant’s commitment to social cohesion and economic contribution. Australia’s national identity was suggested as representing an important social structure in which a migrant might share a common sense of belonging with all Australians. It was not known if sharing an Australian identity affected how a migrant saw himself or herself, or how they felt accepted by others within Australia’s social system.

In aiming to answer the research question “What is belonging, and what is the relationship, if any, between Australian identity and a sense of belonging for migrants who were resident in Australia?” two significant points can be drawn from the literature review. Firstly, theoretical knowledge regarding the overall structure and understanding of the concept of belonging was fragmented. Secondly, research has yet to examine how migrants in Australia’s multicultural society relate to an Australian national identity, and how this may influence their sense of belonging. To address these points the following more specific questions were formulated to guide the research process presented in this thesis.
a) What are the dimensions of the concept of belonging and how are they related and measured?

b) Is there a relationship between belonging and social identity?

c) Is the meaning of belonging understood by migrants in a host community?

d) Is acceptance of an Australian identity important in influencing a sense of belonging of migrants in Australia?
Chapter 3 - Study 1

Towards a psychology of belonging

3.1 Chapter overview

The literature review highlighted the importance of belonging on human psychology. The review also pointed to a need for a coherent explanation of belonging to further the epistemological development of the construct of belonging and strengthen its multidisciplinary social application.

The review found a plethora of historical research around belonging; however, the theoretical and empirical development of the concept of belonging appeared fragmented and lacked cohesion and clarity. Literature about belonging was found within multiple disciplines including psychology, sociology, nursing, and within the context of international development.

However, the representation of belonging in the literature appeared as islands of unrelated knowledge. Leary and Kelly (2009) suggested that over time a construct may need to be reassessed in a “more nuanced fashion” (p. 407) to reflect its multidimensional nature.

The literature review drew attention to Anant’s (1966) belongingness theory and Tajfel’s (1982) social identity theory which both contained key aspects that suggested how a person may experience belonging in a multicultural country and that belonging was a critical characteristic of a person’s social identity. However, the multi-dimensionality of the concept was not explained by these two theories and no empirical research that explored the psychological source of how people experienced belonging was found.

In order to address this, a systematic review was conducted that evaluated the most influential literature on the subject and attempted to synthesize existing findings and develop a deeper knowledge of the concept of belonging.
3.2 **Aim**

The aim of this first study was to systematically review the literature to examine the dimensions of the concept of belonging, its key characteristics and measurement, and the relationship between belonging and identity.

3.3 **Method**

Various types of reviews were evaluated to address the research aim; these included a scoping review, a mapping review, a systematic review and a qualitative systematic review (Booth, Papaioannou, & Sutton, 2012). A mapping review was proposed as a method designed to strengthen an argument for the need for novel research; in this case the argument had already been made for this research via the general literature review. A scoping review method was also evaluated and consequently discounted from consideration. The general literature review had already scoped much of the volume of research available on the topic of belonging and narrowed the research question into specifics. As a result of evaluating available methodologies, a qualitative systematic review was considered as being best suited to address the research question. A qualitative systematic review methodology enabled the “interpretation of a phenomenon –to broaden understanding” through investigating “what themes and constructs are present between and within individual studies” (p.103)

The systematic review was based on the Search, Appraisal, Synthesise, and Analyse (SALSA) method suggested by Booth et al. (2012). SALSA appeared well suited to the multi-methodological, multi-contextual and inter-disciplinary nature expected of published literature concerning the concept of belonging.

3.3.1 **Search Strategy**

The search strategy encompasses the measures used to identify the literature relevant to the research question.
3.3.1.1 Information sources, tools and eligibility

Search tools used were Google and Google scholar, University library online catalogues and online databases of PsychInfo, PsychArticles, and Web of Science, and manual searches. English language peer reviewed literature published between 1930 and 2016 was eligible for this review. The reference information for all articles was entered into an Endnote X6 database.

3.3.1.2 Search terms

The terms used to investigate belonging were...belong*, to belong, need to belong, belonging, belongingness, and a sense of belonging. When searching the PsychInfo thesaurus for belonging or belongingness, the ‘suggest subject terms’ facility highlighted the term ‘social identity’. In line with this suggestion, specific Boolean searches of belonging and social identity and self-concept were also included. The search of the literature was based on the Baumeister and Leary (1995) statement that belonging was a universal psychological concept pertaining to all humans from all cultures. Consequently cross-cultural, transnational, migrant, and Indigenous studies that reflected multicultural and non-western cultural contexts were also sought using Boolean searches of joint terms including belonging and...cross-cultural, refugee, asylum seeker, immigrants, Aboriginal, and Indigenous.

3.3.1.3 Relevance assessment

The literature review highlighted the multidimensionality of the construct of belonging. For the purposes of the systematic review a ‘dimension’ was defined as a discrete yet relatable element or aspect of the concept of belonging that

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1 The concept of belonging had been previously defined in an array of terms such as ‘attributes’, ‘aspects’, ‘facets’, ‘elements’, ‘characteristics’ or ‘features’. In order to assess prior findings of concepts or constructs related to belonging with consistency, the author chose and defined the term ‘dimension’ for this research.
comprised of a grouping of thoughts, feelings, and/or behaviours. The search and selection sought to uncover dimensions that existed in the published literature. Bettany-Saltikov (2010) proposed an initial assessment be conducted whereby titles and abstracts were compared against criteria for inclusion or exclusion. The initial search yielded 375 items suitable for evaluation. Specific criteria were established for an article to be considered for the final analysis.

3.3.1.4 Inclusion criteria

The criteria established for inclusion required that an article must

- have hypothesised a dimension (or dimensions) of belonging;
- explored a dimension (or dimensions) of belonging with a referent group; and
- analysed factors and proposed associated measures of dimensions of belonging.

3.3.1.5 Exclusion criteria

Articles were excluded when

- belonging was not the main subject or focus. For example, theoretical studies incorporating belonging as a subcomponent or part of another higher-level concept were excluded such as a study of ‘thwarted belongingness’ proposed as a component of an interpersonal theory of suicide (Joiner, 2005); and
- correlational studies that did not initially investigate any dimension of belonging prior to computing the correlation between belonging and another variable.

3.3.2 Appraisal strategy

After the inclusion/exclusion screening process, thirty-seven articles were selected for analysis. Summary data including author(s), discipline, research topic, methodology, sample type and size, definitions, and the key findings were extracted. Four categories were established in order to appraise articles and a new
field representing those categories was added to the EndNote database. The three known dimensions of belonging found in the literature review: *a sense of belonging* (or *belongingness*) (Malone et al., 2012); *antecedents to adult belonging* (Hagerty, Williams, & Oe, 2002); and *the need to belong* (Baumeister & Leary, 1995) were categorised 1, 2, and 3 respectively. Studies that described additional aspects of belonging were assigned to Category 4 which was named ‘other dimensions’.

### 3.3.3 Synthesis strategy

Key findings from the 37 chosen articles were schematically depicted in a mind map using IMindmap V6 software. A thematic analysis (Booth et al., 2012) was used to synthesis the summary data. Importantly, the thematic analysis examined articles assigned to Category 4 for the potential to add new thematic dimensions. For example, a Category 4 article concerning a topic about practices that Palestinian migrants in Canada used to maintain their belonging to their homeland (Zaidan, 2011) had a similar theme to an article concerning the career-building practices of transnational knowledge workers whose sense of belonging was grounded in their profession (Colic-Peisker, 2010). These articles were coded under the common theme *practices to maintain belonging*. Other examples of articles assigned to Category 4 included topics regarding *identity formation processes* used by individuals to satisfy their need to belong (Vignoles, Regalia, Manzi, Gollledge, & Scabini, 2006) and the social *factors influencing belonging* of migrants during resettlement in a host society (Fozdar & Hartley, 2012). Table 1 summarizes the categorisation and themes identified from the 37 articles that explored belonging.
Table 1

Selected articles by author, category, and common themes of belonging

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Cat.</th>
<th>Need</th>
<th>Sense</th>
<th>Factors that influence</th>
<th>Ante.</th>
<th>Conseq.</th>
<th>Identity forming process</th>
<th>Practices to maintain</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anant (1966)</td>
<td>1,4</td>
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<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>1,2,4</td>
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<td></td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Miller (2006)</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>✔</td>
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<td>Yuval-Davis (2006)</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Adler (1930)</td>
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<td>Baumeister &amp; Leary (1995)</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Easterbrook and</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vignoles (2013)</td>
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<tr>
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<td>✔</td>
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<td>Leary and Cox (2008)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leary and Kelly (2009)</td>
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<td>Leary and Allen (2011)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hogg (2001)</td>
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<td>Leach (2002a)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fortier (1999)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hoffman, Richmond, Morrow, and Salomone (2003)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>✔</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lee and Robbins (1995)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Levett-Jones et al. (2009a)</td>
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<td>Malone et al. (2012)</td>
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<td>Hagerty and Patusky (1995)</td>
<td>1,2</td>
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<td>Hagerty et al. (2002)</td>
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<td>Allen (2006)</td>
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<td>Conner et al. (2007)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lavigne, Vallerand, and Crevier-Braud (2011)</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>De Bree, Davids, and De Haas (2010)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ali and Heath (2013)</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Markus (2013)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Australian Survey Research Group (2011)</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>✔</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fozdar and Hartley (2012)</td>
<td>4</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.3.4 Results

3.3.4.1 Preliminary findings

No psychology-based construct model for belonging was available; however, two partial models (Hagerty et al., 2002; Yuval-Davis, 2006) and a conceptualization study of a sense of belonging (Mahar et al., 2013) were found. Hagerty et al.’s model suggested a linear relationship existed between three dimensions antecedents of adult belonging, the need to belong, and the consequences of belonging. (see Chapter 2). Yuval-Davis’ model suggested a relationship between identity and belonging concerned one’s social location along a power axis in the political structure of a social system. Mahar et al.,’s conceptualization study suggested five elements of the dimension a sense of belonging in a rehabilitation context (see Chapter 2).

Overall, the most relevant articles were found in psychology related journals; however, nursing and sociology journals also contributed to both theoretical knowledge and the psychometric scales of belonging. Correlational studies were prevalent in health, education, migrant, and minority group research. A small number of qualitative and mixed method cross-cultural and minority group studies showed the positive value of these methods in investigating the many nuances of a complex psychological construct such as belonging.

3.3.4.2 Thematic analysis

The data from the thematic synthesis were analysed in relation to questions arising from the literature review.

What are the dimensions of the concept of belonging?

Three dimensions had previously been found in the literature, a sense of belonging, antecedents to belonging, and the need to belong. As a result of the thematic synthesis, four new dimensions emerged, consequences of belonging/not
belonging, practices to maintain belonging, factors influencing belonging, and identity formation processes to belong. In instances where a new dimension emerged, and the original author did not describe or define it, a definition was created from the analysis. The seven dimensions are depicted in Figure 3 and defined in Table 2.

Figure 3. The seven dimensions of the construct of belonging.
Table 2
Definitions for the seven dimensions of the construct of belonging

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Antecedents to belonging</td>
<td>Antecedents are precursors that contribute to an adult sense of belonging. Antecedents may include childhood family and peer relationships, traumatic events, childhood developmental issues, disabilities, and other biological issues such as neurological foundations. (Adler, 1931; Curlette, Kern, &amp; Wheeler, 1996; Hagerty et al., 1992a; Hagerty et al., 2002)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need to belong</td>
<td>A fundamental human motivation for frequent non-aversive interactions with ongoing, high quality relational bonds with other people in social and familial groups (Baumeister &amp; Leary, 1995; Leary &amp; Kelly, 2009; Maslow, 1943)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factors influencing belonging</td>
<td>A physical or social circumstance, action or event that occurs within a person’s environment that alters their motivation or capacity to continue to experience a positive sense of belonging. Factors may include [but are not limited to] changes to the quality of a person’s relationships, age, their physical environment, the status of their mental and physical health, acts of discrimination or violence, and war (Easterbrook &amp; Vignoles, 2013; Hoffman et al., 2003; Leary &amp; Cox, 2008; Levett-Jones et al., 2009a; Yuval-Davis, 2006)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identity formation processes to belong</td>
<td>A person uses identity categorisation or formation processes when they are motivated to gain an identity in order to belong. They may either choose an identity or be ascribed one by others that relate to themselves, social groups, communities, cultures, objects, events, ideologies, or places. Identities chosen or ascribed are dynamic and a person may equally decide to release an identity and its associated sense of belonging (Australian Survey Research Group, 2011; De Bree et al., 2010; Hogg, 2001; Marsh et al., 2007; Turner et al., 1987; Vignoles et al., 2006)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense of belonging/Belonging-ness</td>
<td>Belongingness is a subjective and dynamic psychological experience sourced from one or more of one’s personal, social and space identities held. The quality and positivity of relationships and their interactions together with acceptance by others and self-acceptance of an identity affects levels of belonging (Anant, 1966; Baumeister &amp; Leary, 1995; Hagerty, Lynch-Sauer, Patusky, Bouwsema, &amp; Collier, 1992b; Mahar et al., 2013)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practices to maintain belonging</td>
<td>Practices to maintain belonging involve a person’s cognitive and affective commitment that involves their time, skills, and/or resources used in conjunction with specific behaviours intended to preserve an ongoing sense of belonging with family, social groups such as religious, political or sports groups, local or national communities, and activities related to their environment. Practices include the use of language, style of food and cooking, cultural and religious ritual activities, emotional support, financial remittances, regular communications, and home location visits (Colic-Peisker, 2010; Leary &amp; Allen, 2011; Zaidan, 2011)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consequences of belonging/not belonging</td>
<td>The positive or negative mental, emotional and physical outcomes associated with experiencing and not experiencing a sense of belonging. Outcomes may include: higher or lower levels of mental and/or physical wellbeing; academic, sporting and educational performance; and, higher or lower levels of contribution to others in a community</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How are the dimensions of belonging measured?

The search strategy revealed twelve studies incorporating psychometric scales that measured the dimensions of belonging. These were extracted and summarised by scale, name and author, construct dimension, factors, and variables. Seven scales measured sense of belonging, two scales measured antecedents to belonging, and three measured the need to belong. In each of the twelve studies data...
were primarily drawn from over 4000 US-based Caucasian university student participants. A summary of psychometric scales is set out in Table 3.

Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Psychometric scale</th>
<th>Dimension, scale items, and factors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perceived Belonging in Sport Scale (PBS) (Allen, 2006)</td>
<td>Dimension: A Sense of Belonging 11-item scale. Factors of a sense of connection and security of that connection with a social group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense of Belonging Questionnaire (Anant, 1967)</td>
<td>Dimension: A Sense of Belonging 3-item scale measuring a sense of belonging. No factors proposed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense of Belonging Instrument – Psychological State (SOBI-P)</td>
<td>Dimension: A Sense of Belonging 18-item scale measuring factors of valued involvement and fit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense of Belonging Instrument – Antecedents (SOBI-A) (Hagerty &amp; Patusky, 1995)</td>
<td>Dimension: Antecedents to belonging 9-item scale measuring factor of antecedents to a sense of belonging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense of Belonging Scale (Hoffman et al., 2003)</td>
<td>Dimension: A Sense of Belonging 26-item scale measuring single factor of valued involvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belonging/Social Interest Scale (Curlette &amp; Kern, 2010)²</td>
<td>Dimension: Antecedents to belonging 8-item scale measuring single factor of childhood relationship experiences in adulthood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belongingness Orientation Mode (BOM) Scale (Lavigne et al., 2011)</td>
<td>Dimension: Need to belong 10 item scale measuring strength of need applied toward either factor 1) growth, or, factor b) deficit orientation modes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need to Belong Scale (Leary, Kelley, Cottrell, &amp; Schreindorfer, 2008)¹</td>
<td>Dimension: Need to belong 10-item scale measuring individual differences in belonging motivation. Factors of 1) the motivation to be accepted by others and 2) to avoid being shunned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Connectedness Scale (SCS)³</td>
<td>Dimension: A Sense of Belonging Scale 1 of 2 (see SAS below) measuring factors of connectedness, affiliation and companionship. Portrays the emotional distance between self and others experienced among friends or close peers,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Assurance Scale (SAS)⁴ (Lee &amp; Robbins, 1995)</td>
<td>Dimension: Need to belong Scale 2 of 2 measuring factors of connectedness, affiliation and companionship. Measures a general need for reassurance from at least one or more persons for a sense of belonging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belongingness Scale – Clinical Placement Experience (BES-CPE) (Levett-Jones et al., 2009a)</td>
<td>Dimension: A Sense of Belonging 34-item scale measuring the extent to which nurses experience belongingness [in clinical placements]. Three factors proposed: self-esteem, connectedness and self-efficacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Belongingness Scale (GBS) (Malone et al., 2012)</td>
<td>Dimension: A Sense of Belonging 12-item scale measuring ‘achieved belongingness’. 2 factors proposed: 1) rejection/exclusion and 2) acceptance/inclusion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: The Belonging/Social Interest (BSI) scale (Curlette & Kern, 2010) is acknowledged as a subset of the larger BASIS-A Inventory Scale (Wheeler, Kern, & Curlette, 1993)

¹SAS and SCS scales are drawn from a single study.
Is there a relationship between belonging and identity?

Analysis of identity-belonging articles suggested that the psychological structure in which an individual experienced a sense of belonging related to three realms of identity; social, space, and personal. The term ‘realm’ was chosen as it reflects the sovereignty that an individual has over the multiple identities they may hold in their self-concept. Baumeister and Leary (1995) argued that adopting of identities afford a person a way to satisfy their human need to belong. Each of the three identity realms suggested are discussed here.

Social identities represented membership of social groups associated with external referents such as shared belief groups, cultures, objects, behaviours and/or geographical locations (Hogg, 2001). These identities were suggested as being constructed using a process of self-categorization (Turner et al., 1987). Social identities became accessible as part of a social system, and held varying priorities in respect to levels of belonging. For example, Marsh et al. (2007), in a British study concerning the perceived importance of social identities to belonging, ranked family identities (e.g., mother, father etc.) as the most important, followed by friendships, lifestyle identities and then national identity.

A space identity was suggested as the meaningful place where one’s physical, psychological, and cultural environments intersect (Leach, 2002b). In that meaningful place, it has been argued, that a sense of belonging was developed through interactions and performing repetitive activities within that place (Fortier, 1999). A positive and meaningful sense of congruence developed where social, historical and environmental aspects of one’s place in a social system created an experience of belonging through feeling they were an integral part of that system (Leach, 2002b).
**Personal** identity has been defined as “the idiosyncratic characteristics of an individual comprising their attitudes, memories, behaviours and emotions that distinguish them from other individuals” (Hornsey, 2008, p. 206). Accordingly, it could be described as the identity that a person may see reflected in a mirror. Miller (2006) suggested that personal or ‘self’ identities needed to be in “correct relation” or in a state of congruence so that one feels one belongs to, or is at ease with, oneself (p. 231).

As a result of this analysis, the psychological source of belonging was proposed as stemming from the three identity realms of personal, social and space, along with mutual acceptance in those identities (Anant, 1966); the quality of interaction in the relationships formed with others (Baumeister & Leary, 1995); and with the physical and cultural surroundings (Leach, 2003). Figure 4 conceptualizes the psychological source of belonging based on the interrelationship between the three identity realms and the characteristics considered central to belonging.

**Figure 4.** The psychological source of belonging.
3.4 Discussion

The aim of this study was to systematically review the published literature to better understand the concept of belonging. The review specifically explored: firstly, the dimensions of belonging; secondly, how the dimensions were related and measured; and thirdly, the relationship between identity and belonging.

Overall, belonging was found to contain seven dimensions: antecedents to adult belonging; the need to belong; identity processes to belong; a sense of belonging (belongingness); factors influencing belonging; practices to maintain belonging; and consequences of belonging/not belonging. A common understanding of the concept of belonging was found in both Western and non-Western cultures, supporting the view that belonging is a fundamental phenomenon of human nature and independent of cultural beliefs and practices.

It could be argued that the conceptualisation of the seven dimensions of belonging in this study validates and then expands the belonging model as originally proposed by Hagerty et al (1996). Hagerty et al’s belonging model comprised three proposed dimensions; antecedents, consequences, and a sense of belonging. A fourth known dimension, the need to belong, had earlier been proposed by Maslow (1943). However, three new dimensions of belonging emerged from this current study, and together, support an explanation of the overall concept. As a result, the proposed social psychological model developed for the overall concept of belonging (Figure 5) explains the multidimensional nature of the high-level concept.

3.4.1 The seven dimensions of the concept of belonging

Antecedents to [adult] belonging: Adler’s (1930) social interest theory proposed that a child’s parents and peer relationships were antecedents to a positive sense of belonging in their future adulthood. Adler proposed that parents were...
primarily responsible for building a child’s social interest and engagement skills so that these skills underpin their social capability to relate to others. This in turn develops into positive belonging in adulthood. In a later empirical examination of Adler’s theory, positive adult belonging was demonstrated to be more related to the antecedent of family of origin relationships than those of childhood peer relationships (Curlette & Kern, 2010).

In a similar vein, Hagerty et al. (1992a) proposed that both positive and negative childhood antecedents had an effect on future adult belonging, and went on to demonstrate that effect in a later study (Hagerty et al., 2002). Positive antecedents were found to include a child being cared for by both a mother and father, an involvement in school athletics, and divorce of incompatible parents. On the other hand, overprotection by a father, incest, school pregnancy, financial issues, and homosexuality were argued as being negative antecedents to adult belonging. (Hagerty et al., 1992a) proposed antecedents to belonging as: “(1) energy for involvement, (2) potential and desire for meaningful involvement, and (3) potential for shared or complementary characteristics” (p.174).

At a physiological level, neurological foundations were suggested as potential antecedents to belonging as they related to an individual’s propensity to develop and maintain social bonds (Leary & Cox, 2008). Among several neurochemicals, oxytocin, vasopressin, and dopamine were the subject of increased levels of human research into their effect upon human social connections and belongingness (pp.36-38).

*The need to belong*: Maslow’s theory of human motivation, proposed that the need to belong was a fundamental mid-tier need alongside ‘love’ in the hierarchy of human needs (Maslow, 1943). Maslow suggested that the need to belong emerged as an active and primary motivation when safety and physiological
needs were fulfilled. Fifty years later Maslow’s need to belong hypothesis was
empirically demonstrated to meet nine criteria that represented a fundamental
human motivation (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). The authors suggested that the need
to belong was a “fundamental interpersonal motivation” … that underpinned “a
great deal of human behaviour, thought and emotion” (p. 497). In a similar vein, the
motivation to belong has been labelled as “the mainspring of social action” (Leary
& Cox, 2008, p. 28), indicating that it was the underlying “psychic energy source”
for the majority of observed social behaviours. A further hypothesis of the need to
belong was proposed in the Belonging Orientation Model in which the need to
belong was proposed as a means to either, achieve personal growth, or to reduce
personal deficits through its fulfilment (Lavigne et al., 2011).

Identity formation processes to belong: Belonging and identity were
conceptually connected within social identity theory whereby belonging was
suggested to be an essential characteristic of a social identity (Tajfel, 1981).
However, an individual firstly needed to form an identity in which to gain the
experience. Identity formation processes were suggested in both identity process
theory (Breakwell, 1986; Vignoles et al., 2006) and social categorisation theory
(Turner et al., 1987). Vignoles et al. (2002) proposed that individuals use an
evaluation process to form an identity within a social group. Similarly, self-
categorization theory suggested that in order to belong to a social group an
individual used either a self-categorisation process to embrace a social identity, or
alternatively they were ascribed and accepted a social identity in a categorisation
process initiated by others (Turner et al., 1987).

An identity-forming process relating to performativity was also suggested as
cultivating a sense of belonging (Bell, 1999; Fortier, 1999). Performativity was
described as the capacity of speech and communication to not simply communicate,
but to act or consummate an action, or to construct and enact an identity. It was posited that social identities developed in a situation or context by engagement and interaction in that framework. Speech and communication were the scaffolding that supported the act of performing in a social identity.

An analytical model that related belonging to several layers of identity in a political context was proposed by Yuval-Davis (2006). Three identity groups in the proposed model were: a) social location - race, gender, class, or nation; b) identifications and emotional attachments - narratives and meaning of perceptions of collective or individual identities; and, c) attachments and political values - social identities in which an individual may perceive him or herself as sharing a belief or value and are also judged and valued by the social system. Yuval-Davis’ interest lay in the politics of belonging and this analytical model recognised the importance, relationship and contribution that each identity may have to a person’s sense of belonging in the context of their power and status in a social system.

In an interesting example of how social identity related to belonging, professional transnational knowledge workers such as academics and engineers were found to source their belonging from their vocational identity without regard to their origin or host countries (Colic-Peisker, 2010). As cosmopolitan transnationals, they moved freely from country to country; however, they secured a sense of belonging by focusing on the primacy of their professional identity over their cultural, ethnic, or national identity.

Factors influencing belonging: Physical, social and/or environmental factors were suggested as either enhancing or diminishing a sense of belonging (Mahar et al., 2013). The effect of the influence may be temporary such as an illness (Hale, Hannum, & Espelage, 2005), a divorce (Hancock, 1980), or longer term factors such as displacement from one’s homeland due to war (Stefansson, 2006).
Different factors were found to influence the strength of a sense of belonging in relation to a national identity and of a migrant’s host country identification. For example, socio-historical factors such as colonisation, or the social factor of being an Indigenous Australian in a predominantly non-Indigenous school were found to significantly and negatively effect the sense of belonging of Indigenous Australians (Neville et al., 2014). In Great Britain, factors found to influence belonging included a person’s age, the period of residence, their socio-economic status, and being born outside Britain in a non-Commonwealth country (Ali & Heath, 2013). The sense of belonging of migrants in Australia during resettlement was found to be significantly influenced by factors such as the positivity of interaction with host government services, quality and availability of accommodation, levels of income, availability of employment, English language proficiency, the regional settlement location, and quality of social connections developed (Australian Survey Research Group, 2011; Fozdar & Hartley, 2012).

Gender was also found to be an influencing factor relating to belonging. It was suggested that females place greater importance on close relationship identities such as family and personal friendships whereas male belonging-related identities were found to be more widely dispersed and acquaintance based (Baumeister & Sommer, 1997).

*Sense of belonging/belongingness:* Anant was the first academic to propose that belonging in a multicultural social system was experienced when a person both self-accepted, and received acceptance from others in a social identity offered by their social system such that they felt an integral part of the system (Anant, 1966). Anant suggested that migrants from India living in Canada were likely to experience high levels of belonging when they self-accepted a Canadian identity and also felt accepted by others in the Canadian social system (Anant, 1967).
Outside the multicultural context, this concept of reciprocation of acceptance was also supported by an Australian philosophical study (Miller, 2006) and a Japanese psychiatric study (Kunikata et al., 2011). Miller (2006) described a sense of belonging as an ontological state of “qua correct relation” (p. 241). In other words, belonging was experienced when we are in correct relation with, or have a sense of ease or harmony with who we are in ourselves [intrapersonal], as well as who we are in the world [interpersonal]. Miller proposed that internal cohesion of identities in one’s self-concept, together with external congruence of self-concept to one’s social world, engendered a positive sense of belonging. Similarly, Kunikata et al (2011) found that congruence between an individual’s self-acceptance of their identity and acceptance by others in that identity [as a psychiatric patient] allowed them to experience a feeling of Ibasho, which is the Japanese term for a sense of belonging.

To recognise the reality of the concept of belonging, Hagerty et al. (1992a) pointed to “empirical referents being those observed phenomena that show the presence of the concept” (p. 175). According to Hagerty, empirical referents meant that a person felt needed and important and shared identity characteristics with others who were similar. Therefore, they felt valued and fit in well (Hagerty & Patusky, 1995). Furthermore, a recent conceptualisation of belonging by Mahar et al. (2013) identified themes of reciprocity and groundedness with an external referent as being primary characteristics of belonging. These themes aligned to the idea of duality of acceptance as the referent identity was jointly chosen/accepted by the individual and permitted/accepted by others.

Levels of belonging were found to vary between the multiple social identities held in a person’s self-construct (Marsh et al., 2007). Marsh found that the top six ranked social identity groupings related to levels of belonging in Britain
were: family, friendships, lifestyle, nationality, professional and team (sports) identities.

*Practices to maintain belonging:* These practices involved a person’s cognitive and affective commitment of time, skills, and/or resources which, in conjunction with specific behaviours, were intended to preserve an ongoing sense of belonging with family, place, social groups (religious, political or sports), and local or national communities. Examples of behavioural practices were found among the diaspora of migrant groups living in host countries. For example, in a Palestinian-Canadian study, practices included living and working in districts in Canada where the Palestinian community live, the active use of the Arabic language, cooking and eating homeland foods, and adherence to cultural and religious rituals (Zaidan, 2011). Similarly, close ties were kept with the homeland through practices of financial remittances to relatives and friends, regular communications, and regular home visits (Zaidan, 2011).

Migrants who hold longer term plans to return to their home country were found to demonstrate practices to maintain their belonging to home. One transnational study of Moroccan migrants who eventually returned to their home found that they demonstrated practices to maintain their belonging that included: *social* - contact with family and locals in Morocco by personal visits and email; *economic* - engagement with government and local services, and the maintaining of a house in Morocco; *political* - reading home country newspapers and voting; and, *cultural* - speaking their native language (De Bree et al., 2010). Similarly, an Australian study found that practices to maintain belonging were demonstrated in seven out of ten migrants who arrived in Australia between 2000-2010 through their everyday contact with family and friends in their homelands and close to 45% visiting their homeland at least once per year (Markus, 2013).
Consequences of belonging/not belonging: The consequences of a positive sense of belonging or not belonging were found to be physical, psychological, mental, social, and/or spiritual (Hagerty et al., 1992a). Belonging was found to correlate strongly and positively with good mental and physical health (Anant, 1967; Ross, 2002), aided successful migrant resettlement (Fozdar & Hartley, 2012), improved learning performance (Levett-Jones et al., 2009a), increased sports performance (Allen, 2006), and personal wellbeing (Kitchen et al., 2012). However, a lack of belonging was proposed as having a negative effect on mental health. For example, the thwarting of belonging was suggested as the most common core issue in cases of maladjustment and severe pathology (Maslow, 1943). A lack of belonging was found to be linked with poorer mental health (Hagerty et al., 1992a) and vulnerability to suicide (Conner et al., 2007).

3.4.2 The relationship between identity and belonging

The psychological source of belonging was found to arise from three identity realms, personal, social and space. Two important characteristics associated with these identities were found to underpin an experience of belonging; firstly, the mutual acceptance of an identity; and secondly, the quality and level of positive relationships formed through a person’s involvement in identities and their interactions with others. Mutual acceptance was suggested to mean that a person both self-accepted an identity and received acceptance from others in that identity.

3.5 Limitations and future research

The search terms, relevance assessment, inclusion criteria and exclusion criteria developed, and the final articles selected for analysis lacked inter-rater reliability. This was a limitation of this study and future research needs to include inter-rater reliability procedures.
3.6 Conclusion

This current study concluded that belonging was a complex, multidimensional psychological construct. The construct of belonging was found to be comprised of seven dimensions. The experience of belonging was psychologically sourced and experienced, when one or more of the three identity realms of personal, social, space that made up an individual’s self-concept were salient. Belongingness meant a person experienced two key characteristics, acceptance in salient identities and positivity of relationships and interactions experienced when active in that identity. Drawing these findings together, an overall theoretical model for the psychological construct of belonging was proposed (see Figure 5), and a new definition suggested.
Figure 5. Theoretical model for the psychological construct of belonging.

At the centre of the theoretical model are three identity realms: personal, social, and space. Surrounding these are two characteristics associated with these identities; firstly, the mutual acceptance in an identity, and secondly, the quality of interpersonal relationship interactions. The outer circle in the model represents the seven interrelated dimensions of belonging. When taken together these aspects of dimensions, identities, and characteristics are argued to constitute the overall construct of belonging.

Proposed definition of belonging

Belonging is a subjective and dynamic phenomenon experienced when one’s need to belong is satisfied by personal involvement in identities that relate to social groups and spaces, and is characterised by mutual acceptance and a high quality of relationship interaction. Belongingness is maintained by applying personal resources to one’s membership and engaging behaviours associated with an identity; however, belonging can be influenced by social, historical, and environmental factors. Childhood and adolescent development and biology are antecedents that may affect adult belonging. A positive sense of belonging enhances personal wellbeing and individual and group performance, and underpins social
cohesion of communities. A deficiency of belonging can result in social maladjustment, pathology, or community conflict.
Chapter 4 - Study 2

An investigation of belonging and identity of Anglo-Celtic and Chinese cultural groups in regional Australia

4.1 Chapter Overview

Study 1 systematically reviewed the concept of belonging in historical literature. A common understanding of belonging was found between Western and non-Western literature, suggesting that the concept of belonging was a universal aspect of human nature. The study concluded that belonging contained seven dimensions and was psychologically sourced and experienced through the social, space, and personal identities that make-up a person’s self-concept. ‘How’ an individual experienced belonging was found to emanate primarily from acceptance of these identities.

Drawing on literature review findings and the theoretical model proposed in Study 1, this second study aimed to explore the understanding of belonging and the relationship between social identity and belonging using focus groups. Guest, Namey, Taylor, Eley, and McKenna (2017) proposed that sensitive and personal disclosures were more likely in a focus group setting than through individual interviews. Focus groups were chosen over individual interviews, as group interaction between participants through moderator prompted discourse supported potentially greater levels of participant disclosure and group consensus development when relating to a personal and sensitive topic such as belonging. Australians with an Anglo-Celtic heritage and Australian residents with Chinese heritage were selected as the former represented the majority cultural group in Australia, and the latter represented an Asian-based minority migrant group with a long history in Australia.
This research outlined and discussed in this chapter was published as a journal article with co-authors Dr. Gail Moloney and Dr. Heather Winskel, in the *National Identities Journal* (2015), under the title ‘The importance of Australian identity to a sense of belonging of Anglo-Celtic and Chinese cultural groups in regional Australia.’ Direct excerpts, including tables and figures, have been drawn from the journal article, edited, and adapted for this thesis. The conclusions drawn in this study are not definitive and are further developed in Chapters 5 and 6.

### 4.2 Introduction

Research to date has primarily focused on belonging in relation to cultural-ethnic identity of migrant minorities in host country societies (Chaitin, Linstroth, & Hiller, 2009; De Bree et al., 2010; Grün, 2009; Phinney & Ong, 2007). For example, acculturation studies in the UK have found ethnic minority levels of assimilation with the majority identity increased across successive generations (Platt, 2014). Australian research has examined ethnic identification in relation to attitudes towards host country culture (Rooney et al., 2012), antecedents for successful settlement of refugees in Australian communities (Fozdar & Hartley, 2012), and dimensions of indigenous belonging (Neville et al., 2014). A general sense of belonging of ethnic minorities in Australia has also been found to be high (Markus, 2014); however it was not specifically related to Australian national identity. Research to date in Australia has yet to examine the importance of national identity to belongingness in relation to cultural and other social identities associated with both majority and minority cultural groups.

Mutual acceptance has been shown to predict positive identification with Australia (Nesdale & Mak, 2000). When Australian migrants felt accepted by the

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2 Some reformatting has been made to complement the style of the thesis.
majority and also had a positive acculturation attitude, a greater sense of belonging in Australia ensued. However, when mutual acceptance was not apparent and migrants demonstrated higher degrees of ethnic involvement, a rejection of host country identification resulted.

Primacy of vocational-identity belonging over national or cultural identity has been demonstrated in transnational knowledge workers in Australia and Indonesia (Colic-Peisker, 2010). Highly credentialed professionals originating from many different countries demonstrated the importance of identity to belongingness when it was aligned to a globally recognized profession/vocation. Territorial place, community, original home culture, or other aspects suggested as constituting ‘normal’ identity-belonging foundations were not important to this group. Rather, they described themselves as cosmopolitan and “citizens of the world” (p. 484), and experienced mutual acceptance, valuation, and recognition through their personal involvement and commitment to and with professional peers.

The Australian Federal Government’s migration policy aims to grow regional economies through humanitarian migrant resettlement; however, very little research has been conducted regarding relationship to Australian identity for migrant groups resident in regional areas. Migrants from China are the third largest migrant and citizenship adoption group in Australia following those from the UK and New Zealand (DIAC, 2011). Importantly for this study Chinese migrants are the second longest continuous ethnic migrant group after the UK and therefore Chinese cultural groups could be considered to have experienced greater opportunity for assimilation with Australian national identity compared to other more recently arrived Asian migrant groups.

An aim of this study was to explore the importance of national identity in underpinning belongingness in a multicultural society as suggested by Buonfino
(2007), Guerra (1992), Hothi and Cordes (2008), and Waldzus et al. (2004). Drawing on Anant (1966) and Skey (2010), Australian national identity was expected to hold primacy of importance to Anglo-Celtic participant’s belongingness; however, Chinese cultural identity was expected to be more important to belongingness than Australian identity for the Chinese group. It was also expected that the complexity of social identities relating to belongingness would be lower in Chinese participants than in Anglo-Celtic participants, as suggested by Brewer et al. (2013). Mutuality of acceptance of social identities was expected to be a primary attribute of belongingness for both groups as hypothesized by Anant (1966).

4.3 Aim

The aim of Study 2 was to explore Study 1 findings regarding the concept of belonging. Specifically, the aim was to investigate the source of belonging, how belonging was experienced, and the understanding of belonging for Anglo-Celtic and Chinese cultural groups in regional Australia; secondly, to explore social identities and their relationship to belongingness for both cultural groups; thirdly, to investigate Anant’s hypothesis of mutual acceptance of a social identity was a in relation with belongingness; and fourthly, to explore the perceived importance of an Australian identity in contribution to overall belongingness.

4.4 Method

4.4.1 Overview

Following ethics approval, Anglo-Celtic and Chinese cultural groups within the Northern Rivers and North Central Coast regional towns of Lismore and Coffs Harbour were invited to take part in this study. In the 2013 census, 80% of people in Lismore and 75.5% of people in Coffs Harbour were born in Australia with the majority claiming Anglo-Celtic-Saxon ancestry. Of the people born overseas 2%
claimed Asian ancestry, second only to the 4-6% from Northern Europe. Both Lismore and Coffs Harbour have small, long-term resident Chinese cultural groups. In Lismore’s urban areas, Chinese (Mandarin) was indicated a being one the three most common languages spoken at home, and in Coffs Harbour, it was one of four (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2013).

In the current study, an Anglo-Celtic cultural identity was defined as an Australian citizen or permanent resident who was of British, Irish, or western European descent, who was born in Australia, Europe, Ireland, or the UK, and self-identified as Australian, Anglo-Australian, Irish-Australian, or similar dependent on their descendent lineages. A Chinese cultural identity was defined as Australian or non-Australian born citizen or permanent resident, who self-identified as Chinese, and/or bi-culturally as Chinese-Australian. Due to the nature of the study, a mixed method approach incorporating focus group discourse was used which enabled participants to respond to the topic in a manner that was relevant and meaningful to them in their cultural context (Gill, Stewart, Treasure, & Chadwick, 2008). The focus group discussions were followed by an interview process in order to elicit individual data. This approach was derived from earlier research where both exploratory group and individual approaches were utilized to elicit social identities (Deaux et al., 1995; Deaux, 1991), and examined relationships between social identities and belonging (Marsh et al., 2007).

4.4.2 Participant recruitment

A convenience sampling approach (Castillo, 2009) was used in which participants were recruited by email primarily through Southern Cross University campuses at Lismore and Coffs Harbour. Through the use of snowballing techniques (Babbie, 2001) some Chinese Australian participants were recruited from local Chinese community groups in Lismore and Coffs Harbour.
4.4.3 Participants

In total, 22 people took part in four focus groups. Thirteen Anglo-Celtic participants ($n=4$ males, $n=9$ females), and nine Chinese participants ($n=2$ males, $n=7$ females) contributed to the study. The mean age of Anglo-Celtic participants was 48.23 years ($SD=11.33$), and comprised people born in Australia ($n=10$), and people born overseas ($n=3$), two in Britain and one in Hong Kong to British parents. The mean age of Chinese participants was 45.81 years ($SD=8.34$) and all Chinese participants were non-Australian born migrants with an average length residency in Australia of 16.45 years. The majority of participants were educated at tertiary level and all participants were fluent in English. Academic staff at each location were typically known to each other in both Anglo-Celtic and Chinese groups.

4.4.4 Materials

An information sheet prompting participants to explore thoughts, feelings and behaviours about their belongingness was emailed prior to the meeting in order to stimulate their interest. It has been argued that when participant interest levels are stimulated in a topic, contributions are more tangible and meaningful (Bender & Ewbank, 1994). A 5-item strength of ethnicity scale adapted from the National Identity Scale (Doosje, Branscombe, Spears, & Manstead, 1998) was used to compare strength of ethnicity between the two cultural groups. For example, Chinese participants were asked to respond on a Likert Scale to a statement such as ‘Chinese is an important group to me’. Bipolar anchors of ‘strongly disagree’ (1) through to ‘strongly agree’ (5) were used. A demographic data sheet elicited details of age, cultural group, gender, country of birth, years resident in Australia, ethnicity/nationality, generational level (if Australian), religious/spiritual affiliation and highest education achievement. Documentation pertaining to the study is included in Appendix B.
4.4.5 Procedure

There were two phases to the data collection. Phase 1 used prompted focus group discussions. Phase 2 elicited individual responses to structured verbal questions and participants created personal social identity lists.

There were four focus groups that comprised two groups with Anglo-Celtic heritage, and two groups with Chinese heritage. Priming has been shown to influence self-identification (Kuo & Margalit, 2012), influence cognitive and emotional responses (Forehand et al., 2002), and engender an alignment of salience and importance effect (Brenner, Serpe, & Stryker, 2014). Therefore, national and cultural identity were not communicated as a focus of the meeting in either the preceding information sent to participants or during the meeting.

The focus groups were held in conference rooms on university campuses in Lismore and Coffs Harbour, facilitated by the author, and video recorded. On arrival, focus group members completed a voluntary self-report questionnaire with background information, an informed consent form, and the strength of ethnic identity form. Participants were then invited to introduce themselves. Each focus group meeting lasted two hours and was broken into two phases, each lasting approximately one hour.

Responses from the focus group discussion were combined with individual level data collected within the group setting.

Phase 1

The aim of the meeting was outlined to group participants as discussing the cultural relevance, importance, and experience of a sense of belonging. The first phase opened with the question:
Would you share with the group your thoughts about a sense of belonging and what it means to you? What thoughts or feelings come to mind?

Both the Anglo-Celtic and Chinese groups were asked if a sense of belonging was a relevant cultural and personal concept, and each group was asked to describe their collective understanding. Prompts from the information sheet sent prior to the meeting were then used. Examples of prompts included

- how important is feeling a sense of belonging to you?
- please think about the times, contexts, or situations when you feel like you experience a sense of belonging.

When group discussion reached a point of natural saturation with no further expression of what a belonging experience meant, a question was posed to the group as to how a sense of belonging was experienced. This question acted as a bridge to Phase 2.

**Phase 2**

Phase 2 aimed to elicit both group and individual responses about participant’s social identities. Phase 2 began by reading a hypothetical case study of a migrant family living in another regional town (see Appendix B). The case study acted as a prompt designed to stimulate exploratory discussions about social identities, but not to limit the discussion (Greenbaum, 2000). After the case study reading, participants were asked as a group to discuss, nominate, and write on blank postcards the social identities adopted in their everyday lives as they experienced them personally, and observed in others.

The postcards were placed on the table in front of participants. Each person was then invited to select the social identities that related to their personal experience of belongingness and create a personal social identity list. They were
invited to include any other social identities that came to mind. When individual lists were completed, participants were then asked to assign their perceived level of importance of each social identity to their sense of belonging. Level 1 was assigned to identities they perceived as most important to their sense of belonging, less important to level 2 and least important to level 3. Multiple identities could be placed at the same level of importance, and identities could be unassigned if perceived as not important to belonging.

4.5 Analysis

The initial analysis compared the data from the strength of ethnicities scale to investigate any differences between the cultural groups. Next, the recorded focus group discussions were transcribed and imported into Nvivo Version 10 software to analyse coded key-words and phrases in order to investigate the perceived attributes of belongingness. The analysis aimed to investigate commonalities and relevance of belonging between the two cultural groups. Key words were used to examine Anant’s hypothesis that mutual acceptance was an important attribute of the belongingness experience. The analysis included coding words and terms describing experiences of not belonging.

The individual social identity lists from Phase 2 were then analyzed to compare the quantity and composition by identity type and gender in order to investigate the range and complexity of multiple identities. Analysis then extracted the Level 1, Level 2, and Level 3 social identities to determine their importance to belongingness by gender, type, and cultural group.

By collating and merging both group and individual data including ethnic-national-cultural identity data as self-reported on the demographic form, the strength of ethnicities scale, and the personal social identity lists, the analysis aimed
to examine whether Australian national identity was at Level 1 importance in relation to belongingness across both cultural groups.

### 4.6 Quantitative Results

#### 4.6.1 Ethnicity self-identification and belongingness

The mean strength of ethnicity of the Chinese cultural group was $M = 4.13 (SD = 0.71)$ and the Anglo-Celtic group was $M = 3.72 (SD = 0.82)$. Reports of ethnic-cultural identities and their frequency by Anglo-Celtic and Chinese participants in Table 4. Table 5 shows Chinese and Anglo Celtic group ethnic-cultural identities and their importance to belongingness (Levels 1, 2 and 3).

**Table 4**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethn-cultural identities and their frequencies of Anglo-Celtic and Chinese cultural groups as self-reported on demographic and strength of ethnicity data forms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Anglo-Celtic cultural group</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Demographic</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anglo-Celtic</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anglo- Australian</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anglo</td>
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<tr>
<td>Australian female</td>
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<tr>
<td>Australian</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Ethnicity</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anglo-Celtic Australian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>British</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English-Eurasian</td>
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<tr>
<td>Australian-Dutch</td>
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<tr>
<td>Australian</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Table 5
*Chinese (n=9) and Anglo-Celtic (n=10) groups ethnic-cultural identities and frequency of importance to belongingness levels 1, 2 and 3*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Belongingness Level 1</th>
<th>Belongingness Level 2</th>
<th>Belongingness Level 3</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Freq.</td>
<td>Freq.</td>
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<td>Chinese</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Cultural Promoter</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural</td>
<td></td>
<td>Cultural Promoter</td>
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<td>Chinese</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anglo-Celtic</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Australian</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note:* "Cultural Promoter" acknowledged as Chinese ethnic cultural identity

4.6.2 Social identities – Anglo-Celtic and Chinese groups

The number of social identities collectively described by cultural group participants was 88 for the Anglo-Celtic participants and 62 for the Chinese participants. Table 6 shows the mean and standard deviation of the number of social identities by type and gender as reported by Anglo-Celtic and Chinese participants. Overall, individual social identities ranged from a minimum of 6 to a maximum of 25.

Table 6
*Mean (M) and standard deviation (SD) of the number of social identities by type and gender for Anglo-Celtic (n=10), and Chinese (n=9) cultural groups.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Identity (SI) Type</th>
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<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>M + F</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>M + F</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
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<td>Relationships</td>
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<td>5.1</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>6.2</td>
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<td>6.7</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>7.1</td>
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<td>2.4</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>0.6</td>
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<td>1.7</td>
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<td>0.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mean number of SI’s</td>
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<td>16.1</td>
<td>15.6</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>16.2</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note:* Data are statistical representations. It is acknowledged that one cannot hold a decimal level of an identity.

M = Male. F = Female.
Table 7 shows the composite summary of all self-identified social identities and their frequency of Level 1 importance to a sense of belonging by type and gender as reported by both Anglo-Celtic and Chinese participants.

**Table 7**

Composite summary of social identities and their frequency of primacy (Level 1) of importance to belongingness by type and gender for Anglo-Celtic and Chinese groups.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of SI</th>
<th>Anglo-Celtic (n=10)</th>
<th>Chinese (n=9)</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
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<tr>
<td>Relational</td>
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<td>Mother (4)</td>
<td>Father (3)</td>
<td>Mother (5)</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Friend (1)</td>
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<td>Auntie (2)</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Mentor (1)</td>
<td>Teacher (2)</td>
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<td>Mentor (1)</td>
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<td>Non-theist (1)</td>
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<td>Baptist (1)</td>
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<td>Australian (1)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Church of England (1)</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Frequency of social identity occurrence in brackets ()*

4.7  **Focus group discourse**

4.7.1  **Cultural group understanding of belongingness**

Both the Chinese and Anglo-Celtic groups shared a common understanding of the concept of belonging. A Chinese language equivalent to the western term of a ‘sense of belonging’ was offered by the Chinese participants. “Guīshǔ gǎn” was
translated as … ‘the feeling in one’s heart about sharing similar values, language, and social experiences, and feeling accepted and valued by others’.

Chinese participants acknowledged the importance of family as one of their primary sources of belongingness.

People always ask us where do you belong, Malaysia hasn't been home but more in the family sense - my family are there, my upbringing I grew up there. My friends are there, I belong to the people who love me, who care for me, who accepts me, yes…

(Male, Chinese Group, Coffs Harbour).

Because my family now is in Australia so I see my husband and my child. So, I believe that in the longer term I will see Australia will be my home yes. (Female, Chinese Group, Coffs Harbour).

4.7.2 Multiple identities and complexity

The social identities that made up the self-concept for both Anglo-Celtic and Chinese participants were comparable in quantity and type (see Table 7). One exception, male vocational identities, emerged in the discussions. Several participants in the Chinese group described strong feelings of belongingness through their academic/vocational peer relationships. They spoke of the depth of meaning of their professional identity in relation to belongingness.

I have been working here for more than 20 years as an academic and I think in the academic field …people respect your knowledge, what you have done in your teaching research and they want to learn from you or want to exchange with you. So, if you are an academic in the university… the group will work
together without considering your ethnic background (*Male 1, Chinese Group, Lismore*).

So, their experience of the last 35 years of computing was also there, and so I completely got it- it was our shared experiences. I had such a strong sense of that being my tribe (*Female, Anglo-Celtic Group, Coffs Harbour*).

Chinese participants who described higher overlap in their social identities, whereby identities affiliated with different groups converge to form a single identity, e.g., Chinese teacher and Chinese cultural promoter, may be perceived as having a simplified identity structure with low complexity. Conversely, Anglo-Celtic participants did not offer the same clarity as the Chinese group regarding overlap between ethnic and other identities. Rather, there were memories and stories of ancestry and heritage that brought emotional attachment; however, there was little evidence of active involvement in or commitment to their heritage culture.

I identify myself as Australian, family having been here since the early 1800s, but I've more recently learnt about my ancestry, which is very Scottish. So, I'm kind of - it's really interesting, because all of the records are there, so it's fascinating stuff. So, I guess I identify with that a little bit, but generally definitely Australian (*Female, Anglo-Celtic Group, Coffs Harbour*).

Female participants in both cultural groups listed a greater number of relationship type identities than male participants (see Table 7).

### 4.7.3 National identity and belongingness

During focus group discourse both cultural groups appeared to be able to distinguish the salience of Chinese and Australian identities activated in response to
respective contexts and situations. However, a common expression of Australian national identity did not emerge during conversation and many Anglo-Celtic participants spoke of their diverse ancestries. However, a variety of ethnic and demographic identity expressions associated with belongingness was elicited (see Table 7).

I sort of reluctantly identify as Australian. I think about it and go, yeah well, I don't really belong anywhere else so I guess I have to say I'm Australian. Yeah, I really don't identify with the stereotypical Australian sort of personality (Female, Anglo-Celtic Group, Lismore).

I primarily identify myself as an Australian. I have English, Irish, Scottish and Indigenous heritage, which makes life a little bit interesting (Male, Anglo-Celtic, Lismore).

Participants with European heritage shared a similar lack of clarity when expressing their national identity and some disassociation with Australian national identity resulted.

I don't really have a strong sense of being Australian, but I don't have a strong sense of not being either. I mean my family background is strangely enough European, in that my forbearers came out from Italy in the 1830s - 1840s, we built the overland telegraph. But the bulk of my ancestors are in fact Irish and Scottish (Male, Anglo-Celtic Group, Coffs Harbour).

I guess I identify as Australian, but I'm half Dutch as well. I grew up in [place name] area, so that's very multicultural. So, I don't exactly know what being an Australian is supposed to mean (Female, Anglo-Celtic Group, Lismore).
Some Anglo-Celtic participants also spoke of having a cultural ‘fantasy’, and being envious of non-Anglo-Australians who appeared to them to be enriched through the level of clarity expressed regarding their ethnic-cultural identities, and a knowing of its associated belonging.

It’s like a fantasy…I just think it would have been so simple [to be a part of a unique culture] (Female, Anglo-Celtic Group, Lismore).

Not feeling like you belong to a particular culture like I don't, this is a sense of…where do I belong then? I often looked at people who have a really strong cultural identity and I’m sometimes envious of that because I don't have that (Female, Anglo-Celtic Group, Lismore).

Chinese participants spoke with clarity about bicultural and national identification and aligning each with their respective context and situation.

… genetically I belong to the Chinese ethnic group…but then technically when you show a passport at customs that says you are Australian. So that is another kind of belonging. Technically you belong to the Australian nation right, nationality, and then socially it's the same. We think we are accepted by a social group where you belong to that group. So, it depends on the situation and therefore I do not feel Australian right and as equally as I belong to China, but I socially try to be Australian (Male, Chinese Group, Lismore).

So, in some situations I feel I'm very Australian, some situations I'm very Chinese, sometimes 50/50. Sometimes depending on the situation … Because I really like some parts of Australian culture I
really like and some Chinese culture I like, *Female, Chinese group, Lismore*).

Differentiation between Chinese and Australian national identity was also shown in ethnically mixed families.

Yeah, because my husband is Chinese in Australia [laughs] yeah. My daughter was born in Lismore, so we have two Australian - my family is one Chinese, one Australian and one Chinese in Australia [laughs]. I think I'm Chinese but when I talk to my daughter I always tell my daughter I'm Chinese but you're Australian. We're different. We come from the same family but we're different *Female, Chinese Group, Lismore*).

However, assimilation with Australian national identity was perceived as different as a result of marriage to a non-Australian.

For me, at least [I am] 95 percent Chinese. Even I'm here for more than 10 years but I don't have a strong feeling of Australia. They have Australian husbands so they have strong feeling of a difference, but I don't because my husband is Chinese. Most of the time at home we talk in Chinese *Female, Chinese Group, Lismore*).

4.7.4 Acceptance

Both cultural groups identified mutual acceptance as the most important attribute of belongingness.

I think it's like an acceptance of who I am, yes, my identity and then the surrounding or the community that accept who I am that I can speak the same language, eat the same food. We have similar
background that feeling. Yes, being accepted to be part of the
group (*Female, Chinese Group, Coffs Harbour*).

There's something about, whether it's the individuals or whether
it's the place that either accepts, draws me in or pushes me away.

(*Female, Anglo-Celtic group, Lismore*).

However, different levels of acceptance underpinning belongingness became
clearer in personal examples offered by both cultural groups.

So, the sense of belonging comes from within. An example of that
for me would be I call [place name] on the far south coast of New
South Wales, my heart home. That's where I was born, I spent 15
years there working with the Indigenous community down there
and I have longing to there. To get accepted or be considered to
belong there, you need to have been born there or have lived there
continuously for 35 years. Then they bestow a belonging upon
you. I have a sense of belonging there. But I've only been there
for 10 years or 15 years so I don't [yet feel I] actually belong there
(*Male, Anglo-Celtic Group, Lismore*).

…but the sense of belonging, just as [female] said, that is the feel
of acceptance by a particular group because ... under which group
your social ways. Then you have a sense whether I belong to that
group or not I belong to the people who love me, who care for
me, who accept me, yes. (*Male, Chinese Group, Lismore*).

Belongingness was perceived as being dependent upon acceptance in the
social system. When discrimination interrupted that acceptance, Chinese
participants described feelings of loss of belongingness, despite having Australian citizenship or long-term residency.

Yes, very, very uncomfortable and you see signs in bridges and driveways saying Asian go home. Now being an Asian you are actually telling me to go home. I have contributed equally to the [Australian] society. So, I felt insulted…I felt that well do I belong here? (Male, Chinese Group, Coffs Harbour).

A summary of attributes of belongingness by frequency of response in both cultural focus groups is in Figure 6.

Figure 6. Summary of attributes of a belonging experience by frequency of response as reported by Anglo-Celtic and Chinese focus groups

4.7.5 Continuum of belonging

Both Anglo-Celtic and Chinese participants articulated a clear distinction between the meaning of ‘belonging’ and ‘a sense of belonging’. Many agreed that belonging was experienced along a continuum between saying that they cognitively belonged at one end and emotionally felt a deep sense of belonging at the other.

Most places [that] I belong, I don't feel a sense of belonging

(Female, Anglo-Celtic Group, Lismore).
I mean you can belong to a local group or society. You can belong to a social group, but the sense of belonging is much deeper than that I think. It’s an innate thing within you and its either there or not…I don't think it's a choice in me (Male, Anglo-Celtic Group, Lismore).

I think it is a continuum of that. A sense of belonging to me sometimes means that well it could be superficial, a little bit superficial. Belonging that means you know that you are that belong (Male, Chinese Group, Coffs Harbour).

4.8 Discussion

The aim of the study was firstly to investigate the understanding of the concept of belonging, the psychological source and how belonging was experienced by Anglo-Celtic and Chinese cultural groups in regional Australia. A shared understanding of the concept of belonging was found in both Anglo-Celtic and Chinese cultural groups. Both cultural groups described belonging as being on a continuum, ranging from cognitive belonging at one end through to a deep emotional feeling of a sense of belonging at the other. The psychological source of a person’s belongingness along the continuum was found to emanate from the range of multiple social identities that made up their individual self-concept.

Secondly, the aim was to explore social identities and their relationship to belongingness for both cultural groups. Participants were found to have a similar number of social identities within their self-concept; however, the Chinese group were found to have higher overlap and less complex social identities than the Anglo-Celtic group. Social identities were found to align with multiple categories; such as, relationships, professions, ethnic-religious beliefs, and political affiliations.
Female participants were found to have a greater number of relationship categories than male participants across both cultural groups.

The third aim was to investigate whether mutual acceptance of a social identity was a primary attribute of belongingness. Acceptance was found to have the highest frequency of response by participants to describe their experience of a sense of belonging in relation to a social identity. Participant discourse also found that for a person to feel an emotional and meaningful sense of belonging, acceptance needed to be mutual. Participants reported that they needed to feel accepted by others and also self-accept a social identity that represented their membership of a social group.

The fourth aim was to explore the perceived importance of an Australian identity in underpinning belongingness for both cultural groups. An Australian national identity was not found to be a Level 1 contributor to belongingness for either the Anglo-Celtic group or the Chinese group. Familial identities were found to be of primary importance to belongingness for both cultural groups; however, Chinese participants perceived their Chinese ethnic identity as being equally important to belongingness.

The finding that the meaning of the concept of belonging was commonly understood in both cultural groups supported findings from previous studies. The Chinese phrase guīshū gān and its meaning supported the terminology found in other cultural studies such as ibasho from Japan (Kunikata et al., 2011), watan from Afghanistan (Braakman & Schlenkhoff, 2007) and peles from New Guinea (McGavin, 2016). Definitions of non-Westernised cultural terms for belonging encompassed aspects of emotional significance, acceptance, sharing, and being socially connected with others, and relating to a place that held a deep and personal meaning. Through interactive discourse between participants, both groups formed
the collective view that belonging was a psychological continuum, ranging from
cognitive belonging and aspects associated with gaining legal rights or citizenship at
one end, and a true sense of belonging that encompassed deeper and emotional
feelings of significance, importance, and personal meaning at the other.

Furthermore, participants through their interaction formed a consensus
suggesting that the psychological source of a person’s experience of belongingness
eemanated from social identities that make up a person’s self-concept. This
supported the hypotheses of Anant (1966) and Turner et al. (1987). Anant
hypothesised that a person’s membership of a social group precipitated their self-
identification with that group, and, as long as they continued to feel integral to the
group, they experienced an ongoing sense of belonging within that group. In a
similar way, self-categorization theory suggested that social groupings based on a
perceived common purpose allowed an individual to quickly determine their
position in relation to a social group. In order to belong to a social group an
individual was found to use a self-categorisation process to embrace a social
identity (Turner et al., 1987).

The findings in this study regarding the similar number and types of social
identities held within the self-concept of both Anglo-Celtic and Chinese participants
supported the conclusions of Deaux et al. (1995). The social identities chosen by the
participants could be classified within the same five social identity categories
proposed by Deaux (1995). However, in this current study, the finding of an
average of 15 social identities per participant was greater than Deaux’s finding of 8
per person. This could be explained by the variations in age, vocations, and life
experiences between the participants in this current study and Deaux’s study which
comprised 19-year-old students. The methodologies used in the two studies could
further explain the variation. In this study, focus group discussions produced data
generated through group interaction and participants could discuss their social identities freely. Thus, contributions in this study could be perceived as being stimulated by the dynamics of group interactions. On the other hand, participants in Deaux’s study were asked to respond individually to a written question regarding their social identities.

Family social identities involving choice (e.g., husband, mother) and identities concerning family of origin (e.g., son, sister) were discussed more frequently as having primary importance to belongingness for both cultural groups. Similarly, two studies in the UK found that family identities were ranked as the most important to a sense of belonging (Beddington, 2013; Marsh et al., 2007). Furthermore, in this current study, female participants from both cultural groups were found to place a higher value on close relationship-based identities than male participants in relation to belongingness. This supported findings of Baumeister and Sommer (1997) whereby men were shown to experience belonging through more acquaintance-based social group relationships.

Similar to the findings of Colic-Peisker (2010), the Chinese participants in this current study, determined that their professional academic/vocational identity was very important to their sense of belonging. Colic-Peisker found that well educated transnational knowledge workers perceived that sharing a professional identity with peers was a significant contributor to their belongingness.

This study found that the Chinese group had higher overlap of social identities and lower identity complexity than the Anglo-Celtic group supporting the hypothesis of Brewer et al. (2013). Brewer et al (2013) suggested that high overlap within the range of social identities was greater in a salient ethnic minority group (Asian-Australians) when compared with the Australian ethnic majority group. Brewer suggested that high overlap of social identities correlated to low complexity
in the identity structure. Chinese participants were able to articulate clearly the contextual and situational overlap of Australian and Chinese identities and felt they could express their 'Australianess' when the context or situation required.

This study found that acceptance of a social identity was the primary attribute underpinning an intrinsic sense of belonging in both cultural groups which supported previous findings regarding the attributes of belongingness (Hagerty & Patusky, 1995; Levett-Jones et al., 2009a). Both Anglo-Celtic and Chinese participants perceived acceptance as requiring mutuality, e.g., acceptance from others and self-acceptance. Anant (1966) had suggested that if either aspect of acceptance was not present a person might re-evaluate their membership and self-identification with the social group and choose to remove themselves from the group.

The finding in this study that Chinese identity held primacy of importance was consistent with research that showed ethnic and cultural identity to be dominant within minority group members’ self-concept in a multicultural environment (Brewer et al., 2013; Chaitin et al., 2009). Chinese participants articulated clearly the importance of Chinese national, Chinese-Australian, and Chinese cultural promoter identities and described promoting their culture at every opportunity through professional roles, personal presence, language teaching and use, food, and active involvement in community events. A Chinese cultural promoter identity was proposed as a positive way to gain majority acceptance and earn a legitimate place in Australian society. Similarly, Chinese participants perceived the proclamation of a bicultural identity as an active symbol of positive acculturation through personal involvement.

The associated relationship of bicultural and national identification with belongingness was consistent with the findings of Brettell (2006). Brettell had
found that migrants reconciled their belonging into two categories, political and cultural. Political belonging was suggested as being synonymous with the legal aspects of citizenship and resident entitlements associated with a host country identity; while, cultural belonging was suggested as being synonymous with a migrant’s ethnicity and heritage cultural identity. Additionally, Chinese participants in this study spoke of how citizenship, marriage to an Australian, and having Australian-born children strengthened identification with an Australian national identity.

Chinese participants also spoke of greater economic and social parity opportunities offered in Australia. This discourse was consistent with the findings of research into Indians living in Canada (Anant, 1969). Similar to Anant’s Canadian study, Chinese participants perceived the nature of Australian society gave them freedom of choice [to belong] and to experience acceptance within the social system. These findings also supported Obst and White (2007) who suggested that the ability to choose an identity lead to increased feelings of belongingness. Chinese participants also spoke of occasional demonstrations of public or private discrimination that interrupted feelings of positive belongingness in Australia.

Australian national identity has been suggested as the common and unifying social identity that can be shared by all residents and foster a collective sense of belonging in a multicultural setting (Scott, 1991). However, in this study the term ‘Australian’ was not found to provide a common bond for the Anglo-Celtic group as has been suggested by Hothi and Cordes (2008), and Anglo-Celtic participants appeared unable to reach consensus regarding an Australian national identity. Some Anglo-Celtic participants expressed envy towards minority cultural groups who appeared to have clarity regarding their identity and belongingness via their unique ethnic and cultural heritage. This finding was consistent with previous research that
showed that ethnic majority Australians largely ignored consideration of an intrinsic ethnic identity (Brewer et al., 2013). The majority did not consider Australian an ethnic identity, rather they considered the word ‘ethnic’ to be an antonym for Anglo-Celtic (Price, 1991).

The finding in this study that Australian national identity was not of primary importance to belongingness for Anglo-Celtic participants supported findings of Bell (2009) regarding the belongingness of the ‘European’ majority in New Zealand. Bell (2009) found that ethnic majority European New Zealanders felt lower levels of belongingness because of their self-comparison with minority indigenous Maoris. Findings in New Zealand related to younger people who felt they had less right to claim a strong sense of belonging than indigenous people. However, the similar finding in this current study was not due to Anglo-Celtic participant’s personal comparisons with Indigenous Aboriginal Australians; rather, it reflected the lack of clarity expressed, and degree of disassociation from an Australian identity. Many Anglo-Celtic participants described an unexplored emotional connection to their [non-Australian] cultural heritage and ancestries. Participants spoke fondly of their English, Scottish, Irish, or European heritage and ancestral connections. A lack of reconciliation of the alignment of ethnic and ancestral cultures with Australian national identity appeared to hamper clarity of Anglo-Celtic group expressions of a national identity.

The apparent disconnection of a psychological relationship between Australian national identity and belongingness for the Anglo-Celtic participants could be explained in part by Anant’s hypothesis that self-categorization of an identity did not automatically culminate in belongingness. As a member of the majority culture, there was no overt psychological projection of acceptance, valuation, or recognition from surrounding society, because ‘being Australian’ was
part of everyday living. Australian national identity and associated belongingness perhaps only became meaningful and acute in awareness when under threat (Breakwell, 1986) or in celebration of historic Australian events. It should be noted that Anant himself was an Indian living in Canada, and was likely to have been influenced by his own assimilation experiences into Canadian society at the time.

4.8.1 Limitations and further research

While Chinese people represent the third largest migrant group in Australia (ABS, 2011), there are many minority migrant groups and therefore, it could be expected that different views may be held by other groups. The finding that mutual acceptance was a primary attribute that secured an intrinsic sense of belonging for both cultural groups was important and suggested that further research was needed to investigate mutual acceptance in a larger sample of Australian residents, including other migrant groups with focus on acceptance of national identity in relation to belongingness.

Participants in both Anglo-Celtic and Chinese based focus groups self-identified as such, however due to individual variations in their cultural heritage, groups may not be homogenous. For example, participants in the Chinese Australian group included migrants that had come from mainland China, and others who originated from Malaysia. Experiences and contributions to the focus group discourse were sometimes different in relation to participants unique cultural heritage even though they self-identified as Chinese or Chinese Australian. Such differences in cultural heritage need evaluation in future research across different cultural groups.

The larger number of female than male participants may have influenced findings, particularly the number and importance of relational identities. Baumeister and Sommer (1997) suggested that females had a small number of close
relationships that contributed significantly to their sense of belonging; whereas, males engaged with a wider, and larger number of acquaintance-level relationships. Gender was not analysed in this study, however future studies need to explore these proposed gender differences.

4.9 Conclusion

Anglo-Celtic and Chinese participants shared a common understanding of the concept of belonging. A sense of belonging emanated from the social identities that make up our self-concept and each identity contributed varying levels along a continuum. Mutual acceptance of social identities was the key attribute that underpinned an intrinsic sense of belonging. Australian national identity was not found as a primary contributor to belongingness.
Chapter 5 - Study 3

Acceptance of Australian identity and belongingness

5.1 Chapter overview

Study 2 found that Anglo-Celtic Australians and Chinese Australians shared a common understanding of belonging; one in which the psychological experience of belonging emanated from personal involvement in their social identities. However, when an ‘Australian’ identity was compared with other social identities, while valued, it was not found to be of primary importance to a sense of belonging for either cultural group. Both cultural groups also shared the view that social identity acceptance was crucial to the experience of belongingness. To date, research in Australia has yet to examine the role of acceptance of Australian national identity, and its relationship to the maintenance of a sense of belonging in a multicultural society. Therefore, the aim of Study 3 was to explore the role and importance of acceptance of Australian identity, the contribution of Australian identity to belongingness of Australian residents, and to investigate acceptance of Australian identity and its contribution to belonging for non-Australian born residents who migrated from elsewhere.

5.2 Introduction

Australian Government policies seek to engender positive, harmonious and meaningful relations between the diverse cultural groups that make up Australia’s multicultural society so that all members share a sense of belonging (Australian Multicultural Advisory Council, 2011). In the context of a multicultural society, a sense of belonging or belongingness has been proposed as: “a subjective and dynamic experience derived from and activated by, personal involvement in salient social identities offered in a multicultural social system to the extent that a person
feels an integral part of that social system or environment” (Anant, 1966; Hagerty & Patusky, 1995; and, Mahar et al., 2013).

However, the idea that everyone has an equal opportunity to experience belongingness in Australia’s multicultural social system could be perceived as naive as the social system is complex and made up of a diverse mix of social identity memberships arising from different resident cultural groups.

A national identity of a country has been proposed as a superordinate social identity that allows all residents an equal opportunity of membership; and its adoption is argued to lead to a feeling of shared belongingness in a nation (Buonfino, 2007; Hothi & Cordes, 2008; Skey, 2010). As I have previously discussed, a national identity was described as a perceived alignment between a person’s self-concept and a nation concept (Scott, 1991). From this, one could assume that for self and national concepts to align within an individual, a person needed to both self-accept and also receive positive acceptance from others in a national identity.

Previous research has primarily focused on acceptance from others in a context-specific or situational social identity and investigated how it contributed to belongingness within those environments (Hagerty & Patusky, 1995). However, to date, research is yet to examine the concept of acceptance in a specific social identity, such as a national identity. The current study aimed to explore the role and importance of acceptance in relation to Australian identity in a multicultural society, and how, for Australian residents, acceptance of an Australian identity contributed to their sense of belonging.

5.2.1 Psychological factors relating to belongingness

Psychological factors are thought to characterise the construct of belongingness, indicating aspects of a person’s intrapersonal relationship with a
social identity as well as one’s interpersonal relationship with others in a salient identity. For example, a two-factor scale acceptance/inclusion and rejection/exclusion proposed by Malone et al. (2012) was argued to measure a general sense of achieved belongingness that was independent of any relationship or context-specific social identity. Acceptance from others was found to be an important predictor of positive attitudes towards the host country in adult migrants who had settled in Australia (Nesdale & Mak, 2000).

Acceptance was also described as one of five core dimensions of belongingness experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in Australia. (Neville et al., 2014). Hagerty and Patusky (1995) suggested that two-factors of valued involvement and fit underpin belongingness. Acceptance was one of several items contained within these factors. These same factors of valued involvement and fit were also proposed as underpinning belongingness in first-year college students (Hoffman et al., 2003). Valued involvement and fit could be argued to demonstrate aspects of interpersonal acceptance received from others.

On the other hand, Levett-Jones et al. (2009a) suggested that self-esteem and self-efficacy, together with connectedness, underpinned belongingness of clinical nurses in placement. Self-esteem and self-efficacy could be argued to be intrapersonal characteristics that reflect aspects of a person’s self-acceptance of an identity. Connectedness reflected interpersonal characteristics as it related more to receiving acceptance from others. Similarly, in a sports team context, Allen (2006) suggested that two-factors, connection and security, demonstrated characteristics that indicated acceptance from others and self-acceptance respectively.

In the current research, findings from Study 2, Chapter 4, suggested that identity acceptance was the primary characteristic that related to feelings of belonging in both Anglo-Celtic and Chinese cultural groups. Participants gave
anecdotal examples of both acceptance from others and self-acceptance that indicated a person might see and accept himself or herself in an identity [and therefore have an intrapersonal relationship with the identity] but may not feel accepted by others in that identity. For example, one Australian participant commented “I see myself as being from [place], it is my heart home. I have an [intrinsic] sense of belonging there…but to get accepted [by others] you need to have been born there or lived there continuously for 35 years” (p.84). However, the concept of acceptance from others and self-acceptance of a social identity, and the relationship of acceptance of a social identity to belonging was yet to be explored.

5.2.2 Acceptance

In earlier literature, the concept of acceptance has been described as having both social and therapeutic meaning. In a social context, the two concepts of social acceptance and perceived acceptance have been proposed. According to Leary (2010), social acceptance meant that other people indicated their desire to include an individual in their social group(s) and relationships. The need for social acceptance and belonging were suggested by Leary (2010) as being synonymous. The antithesis to social acceptance was suggested to be social exclusion (DeWall et al., 2011). On the other hand, perceived acceptance was defined as: “relationship specific and relatively stable cognitive appraisals that others care for and value us and that their concern is not contingent upon our holding particular attitudes or acting differently from how we typically act” (Brock, Saranson, Sanghvi, & Gurng, 1998, p. 6). The Perceived Acceptance Scale (PAS) was developed to measure and predict levels of adjustment and relationship quality pertaining specifically to family and friends (Brock et al., 1998).

In a therapeutic context, the concept of acceptance was defined as “a willingness to fully experience internal events, such as thoughts, feelings,
memories, and physiological reactions” (as cited in Kollman, Brown, & Barlow, 2009, p. 205). Acceptance therefore meant that a person was willing to develop intrapersonal experiences without engaging in obvious evasion or avoidance. Again, in a therapeutic context, ‘avoidance’ was suggested as being the antithesis of acceptance, and was described as “the phenomenon that occurs when a person is unwilling to remain in contact with particular private experiences ... and takes steps to alter the form and frequency of these experiences” (Hayes et al., 2004, p. 553).

These two definitions appeared to explain acceptance as an intrapersonal state of being willing to withstand psychological and physiological effects in relation to events and others. These definitions were not connected to an identity and, in the social sense, have only been examined in connection to family and friends. Even within the Need to Belong Scale (Leary, Kelly, Cottrell, & Schreindorfer, 2013) acceptance was posed only as simple relational questions such as …”I want other people to accept me; or, If other people don't seem to accept me, I don't let it bother me” (p. 624) without reference to any identity.

While these abovementioned scales have been shown to be valid, neither the concept of acceptance of a specific social identity nor the psychological variables that potentially constitute acceptance have been explored. As a result, the current study aimed to investigate the concept of acceptance in relation to a specific social identity.

5.2.3 Social identity

Social identity theory (SIT) proposed that belonging to a social group was an inherent characteristic of a social identity along with characteristics of its value, importance and emotional significance as perceived by an individual (Tajfel & Turner, 2010). However, the relative importance of multiple social identities to a person’s feelings of belongingness has been shown to vary. In Anglo-Celtic and
Chinese groups in Study 2, different social identities were found to vary in levels of importance and significance to a person’s sense of belonging (see Chapter 4). Family identities were rated the highest in relation to belonging for both Anglo-Celtic and Chinese participants; however, the Chinese identity was of equal importance to this group’s sense of belonging.

5.2.4 **Australian national identity**

Australian national identity has been socially constructed to represent societal values based on the historical collective and cultural majority of Anglo-Celtic ideology, religion and experience (Waldzus et al., 2004). However, Australian multicultural policy could be perceived as contradicting this majority-derived cultural identity as it was founded on principles that celebrate the diversity of different cultures (Australian Multicultural Advisory Council, 2011).

Nesdale and Mak (2000) proposed that the strength of migrant host country identification was based on a migrant having either a positive or negative acculturation attitude towards their host country. A positive attitude to Australian identity was found to strengthen self-acceptance of an Australian identity; whereas, a negative attitude towards the host country’s national identity strengthened a migrant’s ethnic identity. For example, in the Netherlands, a negative attitude was argued to be the outcome of discrimination experienced by migrants, and it was found to be a strong predictor of negative host-country national identification (Verkuyten, 2016). Verkuyten argued that discrimination activated migrants dis-identification with national identity and effectively detached and removed any psychological relationship with the national identity, resulting in a lowered sense of belonging within the host-society.

Brettell (2006) found that migrants differentiated between host nation ‘political’ belonging and their cultural heritage belonging. A host country national
identity [citizenship] was suggested to provide migrants with a political sense of belonging via associated civic rights and entitlements offered. Conversely, a cultural sense of belonging was linked to a country of heritage identity and was of greater emotional significance. However, a reason for the variances of perceived identity-related belonging was not explored. It could be construed that there has been a lack of understanding as to how people experienced belonging in relation to social identities and, in particular, how an Australian identity contributed to belonging and the role that self-acceptance may have played.

Drawing from belongingness theory (Anant, 1969), it was argued in the current study that the concept of acceptance of an Australian identity was meaningful when expressed as acceptance from others and self-acceptance, and that together they contributed to belonging when the Australian identity was salient. Until now acceptance of Australian identity, and the contribution of Australian identity to belonging, has remained unexamined in a multicultural environment, and was explored in this thesis.

### 5.3 Aim

The aim of Study 3 was to investigate the role and importance of acceptance of Australian identity, and its contribution to belonging, for Australian residents. Specifically, the study aimed to

- explore how acceptance of Australian identity was best explained for Australian residents;
- examine the relationship between acceptance of Australian identity and its contribution to belongingness; and
- investigate acceptance of Australian identity and its contribution to belongingness of non-Australian born migrants resident in Australia.
5.4 Method

5.4.1 Materials

A principal objective was to develop item statements to assess how participants experienced acceptance in relation to Australian identity. This began by examining characteristics that underlay the concept of acceptance in relation to social identity found in the literature review, the systematic review in Study1, and from the focus group discourse in Study 2. Additionally, characteristics of acceptance suggested by belongingness theory, prior studies explaining and/or measuring belonging, and existing belonging/identity scales were utilised. A pool of 20 items was generated.

Item statement construction

The 20 items that related to acceptance of social identity were collated and summarised and the construction of item statements was guided by Goldstein and Hersen (2000) to ensure only a single concept was communicated within each. Twenty item statements were constructed to elicit participant responses in relation to acceptance of Australian identity.

Item 1: Value. It has been argued that if a person perceived himself or herself to hold group membership they also viewed the group positively, valued the associated identity as part of their social makeup and their self-esteem was suggested as being enhanced (Bennett, Sani, Lyons, & Barrett, 1998; Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992).

Item statement: I value being Australian

Item 2: Pride. Found to be meaningful to migrant belongingness (Rooney et al., 2012), a key characteristic of self-esteem (Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992), and associated with people identifying as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander in
Australia (Neville et al., 2014).

Item statement: *I am not proud of being Australian* (Note: Reverse scored)

Item 3: *Importance*. Shown to be a vital characteristic of social identity (Tajfel, 1982), and one that contributed to perceptions of belongingness to a country, e.g., Israel (Tartakovsky, 2008) and Canada (Chow, 2007).

Item statement: *My Australian identity is important in how I see myself*

Item 4: *Emotional significance*. Proposed as a key characteristic of social identity (Tajfel, 1982) and found to be a measurement of levels of belongingness in the ‘Belonging to Canada scale’ (Chow, 2007).

Item statement: *I feel good within myself about being Australian*

Item 5: *Fit*. Both the SOBI-P scale (Hagerty & Patusky, 1995) and the Sense of Belonging-Clinical Experience scale (Levett-Jones et al., 2009a) incorporated the item *fit* within a measurement of belonging associated with a social group identity.

Item statement: *I do not fit in well with other Australians* (Note: Reverse scored)

Item 6: *Personal involvement*. Derived from the operational definition of belongingness and has been reliably demonstrated as measuring levels of community belonging (Itzhaky, 1995).

Item statement: *I personally involve myself in things that are meaningful to my Australian identity*

Item 7: *Commitment*. Found to be part of the cultural identity maintenance practices of a migrant diaspora, via behaviours such as home visits, communications and financial support (Zaidan, 2011), time spent in extracurricular activities in ethnic high school student groups (Faircloth & Hamm, 2005a), and also in the application of time, expertise and resources in other social groups (Hagerty & Patusky, 1995).
Item statement: *I do not contribute any of my time, skills, or money to help make being Australian better for me and others*’ (Note: Reverse scored)

Item 8: *Valued involvement.* Drawn from the SOBI-P scale (Hagerty & Patusky, 1995), and also from the Belonging in Clinical Experience Scale (Levett-Jones et al., 2009a).

Item statement: *I do not feel valued by other Australians*’ (Note: Reverse scored)

Item 9: *Inclusion.* Proposed as part of the GBS (Malone et al., 2012) measuring achieved belongingness.

Item statement: *Australians do not ask me to join in with them* (Note: Reverse scored)

Item 10: *Respect.* Drawn from research findings relating to the sense of belonging of Arabs who were resident in Australia (Hage, 2002), and also of nurses when in clinical placement roles (Levett-Jones et al., 2009a).

Item statement: *I feel respected as an Australian*

Item 11: *Recognition.* Drawn from McClure and Brown (2008) who proposed recognition as a key characteristic supporting the experience of belongingness in the context of a person’s work environment.

Item statement: *I am not recognised by others as Australian* (Note: Reverse scored)

Item 12: *Connectedness.* Drawn from the SCS, proposed as a measure of a sense of belonging. (Lee & Robbins, 1995).

Item statement: *I feel comfortable to ‘just be myself’ around Australians*’

Item 13: *Self-efficacy.* Demonstrated to support the experience of nurses in clinical placement roles (Levett-Jones et al., 2009a). It was also proposed as a characteristic of belongingness in migrants during their resettlement in Australia, whereby they were shown to acquire a level of cultural competence as Australians.
during the process of resettlement (Australian Survey Research Group, 2011)

Item statement: *I think I am pretty good at ‘being Australian’*

Item 14: *Integral*. Drawn from the operational definition of belongingness (Anant, 1966) and proposed as a characteristic underlying the experience of belongingness of nurses in clinical placement (Levett-Jones et al., 2009a), Catholic nuns, and people with a mental illness (Hagerty & Patusky, 1995).

Item statement: *I feel an integral part of Australian society*

Item 15: *Relatedness*. Drawn from Hagerty and Patusky (1995) who suggested relatedness was a primary characteristic measuring levels of belongingness.

Item statement: *I relate well to other Australians*

Item 16: *Autonomy*. Also referred to as self-determination and was one of five characteristics proposed by Cobigo, Mahar, and Stuart (2012) that related to belongingness. Autonomy of an individual to choose their own social group membership has been argued to positively influence their level of belongingness in those groups (Obst & White, 2007).

Item statement: *Some of my decisions and actions directly reflect my Australian values*

Item 17: *Reciprocity*. Drawn from the Personal Norm of Reciprocity Scale (Perugini, Gallucci, Presaghi, & Ercolani, 2003), proposed as one of five characteristics of belongingness (Cobigo et al., 2012). Reciprocity was also found as a characteristic in this current research whereby Chinese participants suggested that personal contributions made to a social group contained an expectation of contributions being reciprocated by the other members of the group (see Study 2 at Chapter 4).
Item statement: *My thoughts, feelings and behaviours of being Australian are mutually shared by other Australians*

Item 18: *Security.* Found to support a positive sense of belonging of nurses who were in clinical internship in UK and Australian hospitals (Levett-Jones et al., 2009a).

Item statement: *I feel my Australian identity is at risk* (Note: Reverse scored)

Item 19: *Cohesion.* A sense of union or intrapersonal cohesion of identities within a person’s self-concept was proposed as a key characteristic of belongingness by Miller (2006) and also suggested as measuring levels of belongingness in relation to social integration (Steele, 1996).

Item statement: *I feel unified with my Australian identity*

Item 20: *Alignment.* Related to cohesion (union) but set with an interpersonal rather than intrapersonal perspective.

Statement: *I see myself as ‘out of synch’ with the values of Australians* (Note: Reverse scored)

Another objective at this stage was to develop two additional statements to assess what level participants perceived their Australian identity contributed to their overall sense of belonging. The statement ‘*Being Australian has little to do with my sense of belonging*’ was rated with bipolar anchors of ‘strongly disagree’ (1) through to ‘strongly agree’ (7). (Note: this statement was reverse scored in an attempt to ensure participants considered the statement more carefully, rather than encourage what may have been considered a socially acceptable answer). The final statement ‘*Now please indicate to what extent you were thinking about your Australian identity when responding to the survey questions*’ aimed to check the effectiveness of the Australian identity salience manipulation. Once again bipolar anchors of ‘not at all’ (1) through to ‘a lot’ (7) were used for this last statement.
The survey questionnaire used to elicit data concerning acceptance of Australian identity combined both positive and negatively worded item statements, a method that was suggested to reduce acquiescence bias (Salazar, 2015). Salzar suggested that acquiescence bias may result in people responding without due regard for the content of the statement. The item statements formulated to measure the level of contribution that Australian identity made to participant’s sense of belongingness was negatively worded to promote cognitive reasoning; and in this case, to slow the thought process and elicit a more considered response. Salazar (2015) further suggested that negatively worded statements “contribute to the validity of the measurement by expanding the way in which individuals think and arrange their beliefs related to the construct under study” (p.192).

5.4.2 Participant recruitment

A convenience sample was recruited from September to December 2015 by email invitation sent to Southern Cross University staff, students, and alumni. A snowballing technique was also used to recruit participants, and individuals were invited to forward the survey link to others across Australia. The criteria for inclusion required that participants were proficient in English language and have resident status in Australia.

5.4.3 Sample

Overall, 367 responded however, 7 did not complete any data section and were removed, leaving a total of 360 participants ($n= 111$ males, $n= 247$ females, $n= 2$ neither male or female) who contributed to the study. The mean age of participants was 46.70 years ($SD= 12.65$) and comprised people who were born in Australia ($n=281$) including those who identified as Aboriginal ($n=13$), and people born outside of Australia ($n=79$). Those born outside Australia reported they originated from 33 different countries, with the largest single group coming from
the UK \((n=23)\), followed by New Zealand \((n=9)\), and then Canada \((n=5)\). Table D1 at Appendix D outlines the number of participants from each of the 33 countries. Sixty-two percent of participants reported being employed full or part time \((n=226)\), others were unemployed \((n=6)\), homemaker\s \((n=15)\), students \((n=87)\), retirees \((n=19)\), disabled \((n=3)\) and other \((n=1)\). Participant personal relationship status reported were 66% married-defacto \((n=239)\), 34 % single/widowed/divorced or separated \((n=121)\). Participant religious status was reported as no religion 67% \((n=242)\), Christianity all types 20\% \((n=73)\), Buddhism 3\% \((n=11)\) and all other religions combined 10\% \((n= 34)\)

5.4.4 Procedure

Participants were asked to complete an online computer-delivered survey that consisted of 3 parts. Part 1 was a manipulation check aimed to make Australian identity salient by capturing the meaning of Australian identity prior to responding to the item statements in Part 2, and Part 3 aimed to collect participant demographic data.

**Part 1.** The salience of participants’ Australian identity was manipulated so that participants would respond to the item statements set out in Part 2 with their Australian identity in mind. To accomplish the manipulation, participants were given the following statement and asked to type seven words or phrases in open text boxes.

We would like you to think about what your Australian identity means to you. You may identify with other national, ethnic or cultural identities as well, but for the moment we would like you to think about your Australian identity and what comes to mind when you think about being Australian. For some people, it might be the song of a kookaburra or the heat of a hot summers
day, while for others it may be seeing a picture of Uluru, the Aboriginal flag, multicultural diversity, or just having a BBQ with friends.

The online instrument was structured so that participants could not continue to respond to item statements relating to acceptance of Australian identity that followed in Part 2 without filling in at least three or more of the open text boxes capturing the meaning of Australian identity.

**Part 2.** The aim of Part 2 was to firstly elicit responses to the item statements relating to the characteristics of acceptance of Australian identity. A 7-point rating scale was adopted for participant responses to item statements as it allowed a “wide enough range of intensities from which to choose” (Desselle, 2005, p. 4). Bipolar anchors of ‘strongly disagree’ (1) through to ‘strongly agree’ (7) were used. A second aim was to elicit participant responses to a statement relating to the contribution of Australian identity to belongingness and thirdly, to check the effectiveness of the Australian identity salience manipulation.

**Part 3.** The aim of Part 3 was to elicit demographic details of gender, age, employment status, education level, marital status, living arrangement, national-cultural-ethnic identification, strength of cultural identification, religious affiliation, birth country, Australian citizenship status, language, and income from participants.

The online survey was sent to 12 PhD candidates as a pilot for review and feedback resulted in minor changes to the wording.

### 5.5 Data analysis

Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was used to explore the relationship between the 20 items proposed as characteristics of acceptance of Australian identity and its relationship with belongingness. A sample size ratio of at least 10 participants per item is suggested as sufficient (Kline, 1998, p. 63). In this study, the
participant to item ratio was almost 16:1. Principal Axis Factoring (PAF) was chosen as the best method to examine data elicited from participants as the aim of was to simplify the correlation matrix between the 20 items under consideration (Kline, 1998).

Further iterative analysis was undertaken to show the most parsimonious explanation for acceptance of Australian identity in this sample. Correlation analyses assessed the strength of relationship between acceptance of Australian identity and the dependent variable (DV) Belongingness. A standard multiple regression analysis (MRA) was used to assess whether acceptance of Australian identity was a significant predictor of Belongingness. Because migrants were of primary interest in this overall research, we investigated acceptance of Australian identity and Belongingness, in non-Australian born participants who had migrated to Australia. Five categories indicated perceived levels of cultural self-identification: ‘very much my own cultural group’; ‘mostly my own cultural group’; ‘bicultural’; ‘very much Australian’; and, ‘mostly Australian’. These categories were collapsed into three: ‘own culture group’, ‘bicultural including Australian’ and ‘Australian’ for analysis. This analysis expected to provide insight into migrant acceptance of Australian identity and its relationship to belonging.

Finally, to further explore what Australian identity meant to participants, responses from the Australian identity salience manipulation check in Part 1 were collated and analysed for frequency of use using a word association tool (Stacy & Ames, 2006).

5.6 Results

5.6.1 Acceptance of Australian identity

To investigate the underlying structure of the 20 items, a Principal Axis Factor analysis (PAF) with Direct Oblimin rotation was conducted with loadings
below .50 suppressed. The sample of 360 participants provided a ratio of 18 cases per item that satisfied requirements for a meaningful factor analysis (Kline, 1994). The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy of .937 indicated that the item explained by the factors was well above the acceptable level of .60, and Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity was significant (p<.001) indicating that the data were suitable for factor analysis (Allen & Bennet, 2010). The initial factor analysis indicated that a two-factor solution was likely and was found to account for 49.3% of the variance. The initial scree plot indicating the Eigenvalues and factors is set out in Figure 7. The scree plot shows that two factors abruptly increase in Eigenvalues above 1.

![Scree Plot](image)

*Figure 7. Initial scree plot of 20 items.*

A five-step procedure as suggested by Hair, Black, Babin, and Anderson (2007) then applied progressive iterations in order to find the best structural loading of items relating to acceptance of Australian identity. Multiple factor analyses with Oblimin rotations were run with each analysis removing items where eigenvalues were less than 1, factor loadings fell below the minimum criteria of .50 and/or communality was inadequate and below .30 (Hair et al., 2007). The final outcome of multiple iterations meant that nine items were removed from the original 20, leaving 11. The scree plot of the final 11 items is in Figure 8.
When rotated the 11 items plotted in groups on two axes, seven items grouped on Factor 1 and four on Factor 2. The scree plot of the 11 items in rotated space is in Figure 9.

The mean scores, standard deviations, factor loadings and communalities for the resulting two-factor solution with item Eigenvalues exceeding 1 that accounted for 63.6% of the variance are in Table 8.
Table 8
Means (M), standard deviations (SD), rotated factor loadings and communalities ($h^2$) for Acceptance of Australian Identity for final 11 items (N=360)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Factor 1</th>
<th>Factor 2</th>
<th>$h^2$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I value being Australian (Value)</td>
<td>5.84</td>
<td>1.51</td>
<td>.798</td>
<td>.090</td>
<td>.670</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My Australian identity is important in how I see myself (Importance)</td>
<td>4.58</td>
<td>1.84</td>
<td>.772</td>
<td>.015</td>
<td>.565</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel good within myself about being Australian (Emotional significance)</td>
<td>5.32</td>
<td>1.68</td>
<td>.741</td>
<td>.200</td>
<td>.695</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I personally involve myself in things that are meaningful to my Australian identity (Personal involvement)</td>
<td>4.90</td>
<td>1.62</td>
<td>.749</td>
<td>-.162</td>
<td>.427</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think I am pretty good at ‘being Australian’ (Self-efficacy)</td>
<td>5.11</td>
<td>1.64</td>
<td>.633</td>
<td>.255</td>
<td>.586</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some of my decisions and actions directly reflect my Australian values (Autonomy)</td>
<td>5.20</td>
<td>1.52</td>
<td>.788</td>
<td>-.100</td>
<td>.505</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel unified with my Australian identity (Cohesion)</td>
<td>4.77</td>
<td>1.80</td>
<td>.601</td>
<td>.297</td>
<td>.591</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do not fit in well with other Australians (R) (Fit)</td>
<td>5.55</td>
<td>1.53</td>
<td>.022</td>
<td>.732</td>
<td>.617</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do not feel valued by other Australians (R) (Valued involvement)</td>
<td>5.47</td>
<td>1.59</td>
<td>.027</td>
<td>.614</td>
<td>.426</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australians don’t ask me to join in with them (R) (Inclusion)</td>
<td>5.86</td>
<td>1.40</td>
<td>-.039</td>
<td>.635</td>
<td>.532</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I see myself as ‘out of synch’ with the values of other Australians (R) (Alignment)</td>
<td>4.71</td>
<td>1.78</td>
<td>.059</td>
<td>.623</td>
<td>.356</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Variable shown in brackets (); Boldface indicates highest factor loadings; R=Reverse scored item.

The items loading on Factor 1, value, importance, emotional significance, personal involvement, autonomy, efficacy, and cohesion were assessed as being intrapersonal and descriptive of the respondent’s relationship with their Australian identity. Factor 1 was named Self-Acceptance and was found to be reliable ($\alpha=.91$). High mean scores of Self-Acceptance indicated a high level of self-acceptance of Australian identity. Factor 2 items of valued involvement, fit, inclusion, and alignment were assessed as being interpersonal in nature as they were derived through receiving feedback from others. Factor 2 was named Acceptance from Others and was also shown to be reliable ($\alpha=.76$). High mean scores of Acceptance from Others indicated participants perceived that they were accepted by others in their Australian identity.
A bar graph of mean scores greater than 4.00 for each of the seven items that comprise Self-Acceptance are in Figure 10 and the four items of Acceptance from Others are in Figure 11.

![Bar Graph](image)

*Figure 10. The mean scores higher than 4.00 for seven items comprising Self-Acceptance of Australian identity (N=360). Dashed line represents average of item mean scores. Error bars represent 95% confidence interval.*

The mean scores of the Self-Acceptance items, *value, emotional significance, autonomy* and *self-efficacy* were above the average of the 7 items ($m=5.10$), whereas *personal involvement, cohesion*, and *importance* were below.
Belonging and Identity in Australia’s Multicultural Society

Figure 11. The mean scores higher than 4.00 for four items comprising Acceptance from Others. The dashed line represents the average of item mean scores. Error bars represent 95% confidence interval.

Mean scores for inclusion, fit and valued involvement were above the average of the four items ($m=5.40$) and alignment was below the average.

The scores for items comprising Acceptance from Others and Self-Acceptance were summated and are in Table 9, together with mean scores for Belongingness and salience of Australian identity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>M(SD)</th>
<th>LL</th>
<th>UL</th>
<th>95% CI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self-Acceptance</td>
<td>5.10(1.34)</td>
<td>4.97</td>
<td>5.24</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acceptance from Others</td>
<td>5.40(1.20)</td>
<td>5.27</td>
<td>5.52</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belongingness.</td>
<td>4.50(1.89)</td>
<td>4.31</td>
<td>4.70</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salience</td>
<td>5.76(1.19)</td>
<td>5.63</td>
<td>5.88</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: CI = confidence interval; SD = Standard deviation; LL = lower limits; UL = upper limits

Confidence intervals showed the mean Self-Acceptance was significantly lower than Acceptance from Others. Mean salience scores indicated that participants likely had Australian identity in their minds when responding.
5.6.2 Acceptance of Australian identity and Belongingness – total sample

To assess the size and direction of the relationship between Acceptance from Others and Self-Acceptance of Australian identity and Belongingness, a bivariate Pearson’s product-moment correlation coefficient (r) was calculated. The correlation to Belongingness was positive and significant for both Self-Acceptance $r=.42$, $p<.01$ 2-tailed, and Acceptance from Others $r=.37$, $p<.01$ 2 tailed.

To estimate the contribution of the two predictors of Acceptance from Others and Self-Acceptance to Belongingness, a standard multiple regression analysis was performed. The unstandardised ($B$) and standardised ($\beta$) regression coefficient and semi-partial (or part) correlation ($sr^2$) for each predictor in the regression model predicting Belongingness for the total sample is in Table 10. Acceptance from Others and Self-Acceptance of Australian identity accounted for a significant 19% of the variability of Belongingness of the total sample, $R^2=.20$, adjusted $R^2=.19$, $F(2,364)=44.82$, $p<.01$. Residuals were distributed normally, and multivariate outliers were not a concern as Mahalanobis distance did not exceed 13.82 for any cases in the data file. Both predictors were significant $p<.01$.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictor</th>
<th>$B$ [95% CI]</th>
<th>SE $B$</th>
<th>$\beta$</th>
<th>$t$</th>
<th>$p$</th>
<th>$sr^2$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self-Acceptance</td>
<td>.41 [.26-.56]</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.29</td>
<td>5.38</td>
<td>.00*</td>
<td>.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acceptance from Others</td>
<td>.36 [.19-.53]</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>.23</td>
<td>4.25</td>
<td>.00*</td>
<td>.04</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: CI = confidence interval.
* $p<.01$
### 5.6.3 Acceptance of Australian identity and Belongingness - migrant group

Mean scores and confidence intervals for salience, Acceptance from Others and Self-Acceptance of Australian identity and Belongingness for the migrant group are in Table 11.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>M(SD)</th>
<th>LL</th>
<th>UL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Salience</td>
<td>5.60(1.66)</td>
<td>5.28</td>
<td>5.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acceptance from Others</td>
<td>5.22(1.12)</td>
<td>4.97</td>
<td>5.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Acceptance</td>
<td>4.71(1.34)</td>
<td>4.41</td>
<td>5.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belongingness</td>
<td>4.25(1.83)</td>
<td>3.84</td>
<td>4.66</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: CI=confidence interval; SD=standard deviation; LL=lower limit; UL=upper limit

Confidence intervals showed that Self-Acceptance, Acceptance from Others, and Belongingness for the migrant group were not significantly different to the total sample. Mean salience scores indicated migrants had Australian identity in their minds when responding.

To assess the size and direction of the relationship between Acceptance from Others and Belongingness, and Self-Acceptance and Belongingness, a bivariate Pearson’s product-moment correlation coefficient ($r$) was calculated. The bivariate correlation with Belongingness for the migrant group ($n=79$) was positive and significant for Self-Acceptance $r=.36$, $p<.01$ 2-tailed. However, the correlation between Acceptance from Others and Belongingness was non-significant ($r=.13$, $p>.05$ 2-tailed).

A standard multiple regression analysis examined the predictors in relation to the dependent variable of Belongingness for the migrant group and results are in Table 12. Self-Acceptance and Acceptance from Others accounted for a significant 11% of the variability of Belongingness, $R^2=.13$, adjusted $R^2=.11$, $F(2,76)=5.56$, $p<.05$. Self-Acceptance accounted for 11% of the variability of Belongingness and...
was significant $p<.01$, however in combination with Self-Acceptance, Acceptance from Others was non-significant as a predictor of Belongingness in the migrant group after accounting for the variance of Self-Acceptance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictor</th>
<th>B [95% CI]</th>
<th>SE B</th>
<th>$\beta$</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>$p$</th>
<th>$sr^2$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self-Acceptance</td>
<td>.52[-.19,.85]</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>.38</td>
<td>3.10</td>
<td>.00*</td>
<td>.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acceptance from Others</td>
<td>-.08[-.48,.32]</td>
<td>.20</td>
<td>-.05</td>
<td>-.39</td>
<td>.69</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: CI = confidence interval.

* $p<.01$

### 5.6.3.1 Effects of cultural self-identification

The mean scores for Self-Acceptance, Acceptance from Others and Belongingness by migrant cultural self-identification are in Figure 12. Participant self-identification comprised five categories in the data collection phase, however these were collapsed into three for comparative analysis purposes: mostly/very own non-Australian cultural group ($n=13$), bicultural [including Australian] ($n=42$) and migrants who self-identified as mostly/very Australian ($n=24$).

![Figure 12](image.png)

*Figure 12. Mean scores higher than 2.00 of migrant Self-Acceptance, Acceptance from Others and Belongingness in three cultural group self-identification categories. Error bars represent 95% confidence interval.*
Confidence intervals indicated that mean scores of Self-Acceptance were significantly higher in the migrant groups who self-identified as ‘bic multicultural’ or as ‘Australian’, than those who self-identified only with their ‘own cultural group’. Mean Acceptance from Others was consistent between the ‘mostly/very own cultural’ and ‘bic multicultural’ groups and significantly higher in the migrant group who self-identified as ‘Australian’.

### 5.6.4 Indigenous Australians

In this study, a small group of Australian born participants self-identified as ‘Aboriginal’ or ‘Aboriginal Australian’. Even though the sample was statistically small, this cultural group is at the core of Australian society and I felt it worthy of reporting mean scores of Self-Acceptance and Acceptance from Others of Australian Identity and Belongingness (see Table 13).

**Table 13**  
Mean salience, Acceptance from Others and Self-Acceptance of Australian identity and Belongingness of the group self-identifying as Aboriginal (n=13)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>M(SD)</th>
<th>LL</th>
<th>UL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Salience of Australian identity</td>
<td>5.69(1.66)</td>
<td>5.18</td>
<td>6.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acceptance from Others</td>
<td>4.48(1.55)</td>
<td>3.54</td>
<td>5.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Acceptance</td>
<td>4.82(2.04)</td>
<td>3.59</td>
<td>6.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belongingness</td>
<td>3.38(2.66)</td>
<td>1.78</td>
<td>4.99</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: CI=confidence interval; SD=standard deviation; LL=lower limit; UL=upper limit*

Mean scores for salience of Australian identity and Self-Acceptance were similar to the migrant group (see Table 11), however mean scores for Acceptance from Others and Belongingness were significantly lower than the migrant group. Belongingness was the lowest mean score of any group however the large range for the confidence interval reflected the small sample. Standard deviations and the confidence intervals ranges were large due to the small sample size so comparisons were not meaningful at this time.
5.6.5 Mediation effects

Variance in Self-Acceptance mean scores found across different sub-groups raised the possibility that Acceptance from Others in relation to the contribution of Australian identity to belongingness was likely mediated by Self-Acceptance. To test this possibility within a single cultural group, a standardised regression analysis with Self-Acceptance as the mediator and Acceptance from Others the predictor of Belongingness of Australian-born participants \((n=279)\) was conducted. The path diagram is in Figure 13.

![Path diagram with standardized direct and indirect estimates of Self-Acceptance upon contribution to belongingness of Australian identity for Australia-born participants \((n=279)\) as predicted by Acceptance from Others (estimate of the mediated model in parentheses).

Note. ***\(p<.001\). **\(p<.01\).

Acceptance from Others significantly predicted Belongingness in the Australian-born group \(F(1.277) =25.34, p<.001, R^2 = .08\) with a correlational coefficient \(r = .49, t(277) = 5.03, p < .001\). Acceptance from Others also significantly predicted Self-Acceptance \(F(1.277) =55.63, p<.001, R^2 = .17, r = .47, t(277) = 7.46, p < .001\). Self-Acceptance also predicted the contribution of Australian identity to Belongingness \(r = .52, t(276) = 5.96, p < .001\). Together, Self-Acceptance and Acceptance from Others significantly predicted Australian identity’s contribution to Belongingness \(F(2, 276) = 32.01, p<.001, R^2 = .19\). The indirect effect of Acceptance from Others on Australian identity Belongingness as mediated by Self-Acceptance was \(.244 (CI=.149-.365)\). A Sobel test of this indirect effect was both positive and significant \(Z = 4.63, p<.001, \kappa^2 = .14\).
5.6.6 The meaning of Australian identity.

Using the responses from the Australian identity salience manipulation in Part 1, a word association analysis examined what Australian identity meant to individual participants. Overall, 2,235 words or phrases for Australian identity were elicited. Utilizing GWTEA software (Moloney & Blair, 2010), an initial analysis checked for overall frequency of use and these words were categorised into headings. Category headings then replaced the original words or phrases and a second frequency analysis was conducted. Resulting categories were then homogenised by combining words where meanings were considered the same; for example, “friendship” was placed under the “mateship” category heading. The 10 most frequently used words, their level of frequency, and the extent of their frequency compared to other words (frequency magnitude) for Australian born and non-Australian born participants were separated and are set out in Table 14.

Table 14
Most frequently occurring words elicited for Australian identity of Australian born (n=281) and non-Australian born groups (n=79)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Australian born</th>
<th>Non-Australian born</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>freedom</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>3.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>beach</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>3.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>multicultural</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>2.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bbq</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>1.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>safe</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>1.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>space</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mateship</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>1.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>family</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fair go</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lucky</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0.71</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Frequency magnitude = 100 / Sum of all frequencies in data set * Raw frequency of term (Callaghan, Moloney, & Blair, 2012).

Many of the elicited words were found to be consistent across both of groups. The top three words posed for what Australian identity meant to participants were *freedom*, *beach* and *multicultural*. 
5.7 Discussion

5.7.1 Main findings

Study 3 aimed to explore the role and importance of acceptance of Australian identity, and how acceptance related to a sense of belonging within a sample of Australian residents. There were five main findings from this current study. Firstly, two factors emerged that reliably explained acceptance of Australian identity in the total sample, Self-Acceptance, and Acceptance from Others. Self-Acceptance was defined as characteristic of the intrapersonal relationship an individual has with his or her Australian identity; while, Acceptance from Others was defined as characteristic of the interpersonal feedback received from others. Secondly, Self-Acceptance and Acceptance from Others were found to be significant when predicting the contribution of acceptance of Australian identity to Belongingness in the total sample. Thirdly, in the migrant sample, Acceptance from Others and Self-Acceptance also explained acceptance of Australian identity; however, only Self-Acceptance of Australian identity was significant when predicting levels of migrant Belongingness. Acceptance from Others was non-significant after accounting for the variance of Self-Acceptance. Low scores for Self-Acceptance of Australian identity corresponded with low levels of migrant Belongingness and higher Self-Acceptance scores equated to greater levels of Belongingness. Fourthly, migrants who identified as bicultural Australians were found to have significantly higher acceptance of Australian identity scores and correspondingly higher scores of belongingness than migrants who only identified with their own cultural group. Fifthly, high mean scores for Acceptance from Others indicated that the total sample perceived Australian society as being accepting of others. Lastly, findings from the word association task indicated that
two of the most prevalent word categories used by participants to describe personal meaning of Australian identity were *freedom* and *multicultural*.

Findings supported the suggestion that an individual’s acceptance of a social identity underpinned a positive psychological relationship with that identity and that acceptance represented *how* an individual experienced a sense of belonging. In the current study, the findings of two factors of acceptance of Australian identity provided empirical support for the theoretical argument put forth by Anant, 1966, 1969 who had suggested that both self-acceptance and acceptance by others in a social group were needed to experience a sense of belonging in that group. Results also supported the mutual acceptance argument of Barnes et al. (2004) where, in a multicultural setting, membership in a national identity needed both self and other’s acceptance in order to experience a sense of belonging in a host country.

However, the examination of the two factors in relation to migrants in this sample indicated that while Acceptance from Others mean scores were high, Self-Acceptance of Australian identity was found to be significant when predicting levels of migrant Belongingness after accounting for the variance of Acceptance from Others. Findings in the current study regarding migrants’ Self-Acceptance of Australian identity supported Nesdale and Mak (2000) who argued that self-acceptance of Australian identity underpinned a positive attitude of a migrant towards a host country identity, which in turn led to an increased level of belonging.

In this current study, higher Self-Acceptance mean scores corresponded positively to a higher contribution that Australian identity made to Belongingness. This finding was further explained by examining the seven items comprising Self-Acceptance of Australian identity. *Value* yielded the highest mean score of all items, followed closely by *emotional significance, autonomy and self-efficacy*. It was argued that participants assigned a high personal value and felt a high level of
emotional attachment to their Australian identity. High mean scores also indicated participants felt autonomous in their decision making and competent or efficacious in relation to their role as an Australian. This had been expected as the majority of participants (76.5%) self-identified as Australian.

Several items found to comprise the two factors of acceptance of Australian identity are coincidental with prior social identity measures. This coincidence was expected as items such as ‘emotional significance’ and ‘value’ have been proposed as a key characteristics of social identity (Tajfel, 1982). A sense of ‘cohesion’ of the social identities that make-up a person’s self-concept was proposed as a key characteristic by Miller (2006). Different terms used by other social identity researchers may also have similar meanings to items found. Factors or items such as centrality, in-group affect and in-group ties have been proposed by Cameron (2004) and could be interpreted by a reader as similar to items found in this study.

Within the Australian born group, a small number of participants self-identified as Aboriginal or Aboriginal Australians. The small sample size ($n=13$), meant that conclusions could not be drawn from the results; however, findings showed that Acceptance from Others and Belongingness in this sample group had the lowest mean scores of all sample groups and gave a slight insight into Aboriginal Australian belongingness.

The findings relating to the meaning of Australian identity demonstrated an unexpected consensus between Australian-born and non-Australian born participants. In the homogenisation process, the most frequent occurring word ‘freedom’ comprised other freedom-related terms such as ‘freedom of speech’, ‘democracy’, ‘freedom of movement’, freedom to explore and roam’, ‘free to be what I want’, respect for personal autonomy’, ‘freedom to live’, ‘freedom from violence’, and freedom and opportunity’. The term ‘freedom’ (by itself before
homogenisation) was elicited more frequently than the second most frequent word ‘multicultural’ by a ratio of 2:1. It is worth noting the consensus within this sample of Australian-born and migrant participants, that ‘Australianess’ meant experiencing freedom in many aspects of life. Objective terms that underpinned the homogenisation of the word ‘multicultural’ included ‘diversity’, ‘tolerance’, ‘inclusive’, ‘welcoming’, ‘accepting others’, ‘being accepting to other nationalities’, and ‘mutual respect’. Within this sample of participants, these terms demonstrated people were consistent in what they thought Australian identity meant.

5.7.2 Migrant group

This current study suggested that how a migrant experienced belonging was significant in relation to their self-acceptance of an Australian identity. There was a significant correlation between Self-Acceptance of Australian identity and Belongingness. To date, research has shown in a general context that acceptance received from others was important to a sense of belonging (Malone et al., 2012), and this was supported by the findings in this current study. Mean scores for Acceptance from Others were found consistent and high across all cultural groups, indicating that it played an important role in relation to a sense of belonging. However, while Acceptance from Others was found as an important factor explaining acceptance of Australian identity, Self-Acceptance was found to be significant when predicting levels of Belongingness of migrants after accounting for the variance of Acceptance from Others in this study.

Over half the migrants in this study (53%) self-identified as bicultural, including Australian. This bicultural group demonstrated significantly higher mean scores of Self-Acceptance and Belongingness when compared to the 16% of migrants who identified only with their own cultural group. Thirty percent of migrants self-identified as Australian, and as might be expected, this group reported
the highest mean scores of Self-Acceptance, Acceptance from Others, and Belongingness. These results suggested that when levels of Self-Acceptance of Australian identity increased, the contribution of Australian identity to Belongingness correspondingly increased.

5.8 Limitations and future research

While the aim of Study 3 was to explore ‘how’ a sample of Australian residents experienced belongingness in relation to Australian identity, the migrant subgroup of participants was of specific interest. Migrant participants in this study reported as originating from 33 countries (see Table D1 at Appendix D). The level of diversity of cultural heritage may be problematic in terms of reliably assessing an experience of acceptance and belongingness in relation to Australian identity for migrants whose individual circumstances and attitudes may vary. Due to the small size of each ethnic group represented in the study, the moderating effect of ethnicity in the relationship between belonging and Australian identity was not investigated. The moderating effect of ethnicity should be considered for future research in larger culturally or ethnically similar groups.

These limitations pointed to the need for a fourth study to extend, and confirm or refute the findings in Study 3 regarding acceptance of Australian identity and its contribution to belongingness in a larger, cognate migrant group that comprised a single cognate cultural group who were of Australian residents in Australia.

5.9 Conclusions

Acceptance played an important role in relation to Australian identity and belongingness. Two factors, Self-Acceptance and Acceptance from Others explained acceptance of Australian identity. Together, they predicted levels of
contribution of Australian identity to Belongingness for a broad range of Australian residents surveyed.

Specifically, both Acceptance from Others and Self-Acceptance of Australian identity were important to migrants, however Self-Acceptance was significant when predicting levels of its contribution to Belongingness after accounting for the variance of Acceptance from Others. Higher Self-Acceptance of Australian identity corresponded to higher levels of Belongingness for migrants. Migrants who identified as bicultural, including Australian, had higher levels of self-acceptance and belongingness than migrants who identified only with their own cultural group. Overall, both Australian born and migrant participants perceived Australia as accepting of others.
Chapter 6 - Study 4

Acceptance of Australian identity and Belongingness of Irish migrants living in Australia

6.1 Chapter overview

Study 3 found that two factors, Acceptance from Others and Self-Acceptance best explained acceptance of Australian identity for a sample of Australian residents and that together, these two factors positively contributed to Belongingness. The findings were drawn from a sample of Australian residents that comprised participants born in Australia and participants born overseas who had migrated to Australia. While both factors explained acceptance of Australian identity for the migrant participants, only Self-Acceptance was significant when predicting levels of migrant Belongingness after accounting for the variance of Acceptance from Others. The findings from Study 3 further indicated that levels of both Self-Acceptance of Australian identity and Belongingness were lower for migrants who identified strongly with their own culture, when compared to those who identified as bicultural Australians. It is important to recognise that the migrant participants in Study 3 originated from 33 different countries and thus, the sample size for each of the individual migrant groups was too small to meaningfully investigate acceptance of Australian identity and its contribution to belongingness for each of these groups.

Study 4 aimed to confirm if the two factors found in Study 3 explained acceptance of Australian identity, and if so, to examine their influence on belongingness for migrants who self-identified strongly with a single cultural group that, it could be argued, would assimilate or integrate into Australian society more easily than others. Berry (2011) argued that to integrate or assimilate into a host country mainstream society, a migrant must act to adopt and accept new identities.
Migrants with an Irish heritage have had a significant historical presence in Australia and, it could be argued that through their actions have contributed to Australia’s development in many areas. It could also be argued that migrants with an Irish heritage may assimilate easily into the Australian community and self-identify strongly with an Australian identity. However, Inglis and Donnelly (2011) contended that Irish migrants still identify strongly with their Irish cultural heritage. Therefore, Irish migrants were considered an ideal sample group to further the investigation of acceptance of Australian identity and its contribution to a sense of belonging.

6.2 Introduction

In the early twentieth century Ireland was categorised as the “most globalised society in the world” (Inglish, 2010, p. 16). It would perhaps seem logical to assume that globalisation leads people to experience less attachment to their heritage; however, a Contemporary Irish Identities (CII) study (Inglis & Donnelly, 2011) suggested otherwise. This study found that no matter where Irish people lived, they continued to experience a deep-seated sense of place and belonging from being Irish, much of which is argued to relate to the fact that many Irish people can trace their heritage across many generations. For example, a study respondent from Dublin stated “My whole family is and their family and family for generations you know are all from, we’re all Irish...” (p. 11). “People may move around the world, they may be open to change and other people, but they may still identify strongly with, and remained attached to, the place in which they grew up” (Inglis & Donnelly, 2011, p. 3).

3 The Contemporary Irish Identities (CII) was undertaken during 2003–5 at University College Dublin. The CII study was within the Identity, Diversity and Citizenship Program at the Geary Institute in University College Dublin (see, www.ucd.ie/geary)
In 2013, more than two million people in Australia, or approximately 10% of the population, claimed Irish heritage or identified as being Irish (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2013). The numbers of Irish people applying for Australian citizenship has risen in recent years with 2,843 Irish people seeking citizenship in 2014. This represented an increase of 65% from the previous year (Kenny, 2015).

Recently the Australian Federal Government proposed making the task of gaining Australian citizenship more difficult with an intent of deepening integration into the mainstream society (Reilly, 2017). The government’s proposal called for migrants to prove social and economic integration through language competence, work involvement, community engagement and Australian schooling of their children. Theoretically, it could be argued that, personal involvement in these areas by Irish migrants on the path to citizenship engendered the development of a level of cultural competence which, together with their own cultural heritage, enabled them to assume a bicultural identity. Accordingly, the current study examined to what extent Irish migrants who identified as bicultural felt their Australian identity contributed to their sense of belonging.

6.3 Aim

The aim of Study 4 was to investigate acceptance of Australian identity and its contribution to a sense of belonging for Australian residents who identified as Irish. Drawing on findings of Study 3, the study specifically aimed to

- investigate whether two factors, Self-Acceptance and Acceptance from Others explained acceptance of Australian identity;
- examine the relationship between acceptance of Australian identity and Belongingness for Irish migrants; and
- examine the effects of bicultural identification on acceptance of Australian identity and Belongingness for Irish migrants.
6.3.1 Hypotheses

As found in the Study 3 migrant group, it was expected that

- two factors, Self-Acceptance and Acceptance from Others would explain acceptance of Australian identity;
- Self-Acceptance would be significant in predicting levels of Belongingness; and
- levels of Self-Acceptance of Australian identity and Belongingness would be greater in migrants who self-identified as bicultural, e.g., Irish-Australian, when compared to those who self-identified only as Irish.

6.4 Method

6.4.1 Materials and procedure

The online computer-delivered survey used in Study 3 was adapted for use in this study. The survey consisted of 3 parts and statements were randomised by the computer system.

**Part 1:** Salience of Australian identity was manipulated to ensure that participants would respond to the item statements with their Australian identity in mind. Participants were given the following passage and asked to type seven words or phrases in open text boxes. Participants could not advance to the item statements in Part 2 without filling in at least three of the open text boxes capturing the meaning of Australian identity.

As someone with an Irish heritage who lives in Australia, you may identify as Australian. We would now like you to focus on what comes to mind when you think about being Australian. Please type the words or phrases that come to mind about what Australian identity means to you in the spaces below.
**Part 2:** The aim of Part 2 was to elicit participants’ responses to the 11 item statements drawn from Study 3 relating to the characteristics of acceptance of Australian identity. The a priori model of acceptance of Australian identity that comprised the two factors of Self-Acceptance (7 items) and Acceptance from Others (4 items) was utilised (see Table 15). A 7-point rating scale was adopted using bipolar anchors of ‘strongly disagree’ (1) through to ‘strongly agree’ (7).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Item statement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self-Acceptance</td>
<td>Value</td>
<td>I value being Australian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Importance</td>
<td>My Australian identity is important in how I see myself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Emotional significance</td>
<td>I feel good within myself about being Australian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Personal Involvement</td>
<td>I personally involve myself in things that are meaningful to my Australian identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Self-efficacy</td>
<td>I think I am pretty good at ‘being Australian’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Autonomy</td>
<td>I let other Australians I know make important decisions for me rather than make them myself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cohesion</td>
<td>I feel unified with my Australian identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acceptance from Others</td>
<td>Fit*</td>
<td>I do not fit in well with other Australians</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Valued Involvement*</td>
<td>I do not feel valued by other Australians</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Inclusion*</td>
<td>Australians do not ask me to join in with them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Alignment*</td>
<td>I see myself as ‘out of synch’ with the values of Australians</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Two more statements aimed to elicit the perceived contribution of an Australian identity to an Irish participant’s sense of Belongingness and make Australian identity salient in the minds of participants prior to responding. The first statement, ‘*Being Australian has little to do with my sense of belonging*’ was rated with bipolar anchors of ‘strongly disagree’ (1) through to ‘strongly agree’ (7), and reverse scored so participants considered the statement more carefully. The second statement ‘*Now please indicate to what extent you were thinking about your Australian identity when responding to the survey questions*’ served as a check to assess the effectiveness of the Australian identity salience manipulation. Anchors of ‘not at all’ (1) through to ‘a lot’ (7) were used for this last statement.

**Part 3:** The aim of Part 3 was to elicit demographic details of postcode, gender, country of birth, time since arrival, citizenship status, reasons for dual
Belonging and Identity in Australia’s Multicultural Society

citizenship, cultural/national self-identification, migrant generation, employment status, level of education, marital status, and income level. The full survey is at Appendix D.

6.4.2 Participant recruitment


A snowballing technique was also used to recruit participants through Irish contacts known to the author. Individuals were invited to complete the online survey and invited to forward the survey link to other Irish family members, friends and acquaintances. Six of the most popular Irish surnames including ‘Murphy’, ‘Doherty’, and ‘O’Sullivan’ were sourced (Matheson, 1909) and following a review of the SCU staff and student directory, a personal email invitation with a link to the survey was sent to members with the selected Irish surnames.

6.4.3 Sample

A total of 97 people responded; however, eight of the participants did not complete any data field in the survey and were eliminated, leaving a total of 89 respondents (n=33 males, n=49 females, no gender n=7) who contributed to the study. The mean age of participants was 52 years (SD=13.7). Participants were from
Victoria ($n=31$), South Australia ($n=13$), Western Australia ($n=13$), NSW ($n=17$) Queensland ($n=11$), and no postcode supplied ($n=4$). There were 73 participants who were born in Ireland and had migrated to Australia, and 12 were born in Australia. Sixty-five participants self-identified as Irish-Australian citizens. Over 77% ($n=69$) of participants had been resident in Australia for more than 4 years, with a majority of 56% ($n=50$) for more than 11 years. Sixty two percent ($n=55$) of participants were employed; 21% ($n=19$) retired, and the balance ($n=8$) were homemakers, students or unemployed. Of the total, 80% of participants had a tertiary level education.

6.4.4 Data analysis

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) applying maximum likelihood estimation procedures of IBM Amos 24 was used to investigate the model fit of the items comprising the two factors of acceptance of Australian identity found in Study 3, on eligible data from participants who self-identified as Irish. Following the factor analyses, descriptive statistics were calculated, and then correlation and regression analysis examined the linear relationship and predictive capacity of the factor solution with Belongingness specifically for Irish migrants. Finally, the effects of cultural self-identification on acceptance of Australian identity and prediction of its contribution to belongingness were examined.

CFA is often used for scale development and the validation of constructs (Jackson, Gillaspy, & Pure-Stephenson, 2009). In order to verify a CFA model and examine the item-factor relationships, both empirical and theoretical prerequisites have been suggested (Brown, 2015). These two prerequisites were met in this study; firstly, the two-factor model of acceptance of Australian identity found through Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) in Study 3 served as the empirical prerequisite;

Sample size is considered important for a CFA and a minimum of 100 responses was suggested (Blunch, 2013; Kline, 1994); however, a ratio of between 5 and 10 participants per item was also suggested as sufficient (Brown, 2015). In the current study, the participant to item ratio was 8:1 in the CFA. However, Marsh and Balla (1986) have suggested that effective analysis of smaller sample sizes can be managed through the right choice of indices to assess model fit.

Several indices were applied to this CFA as each offered different information regarding the fit of the proposed model. The chi-square test, root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) and its 90% confidence interval (90% CI), comparative fit index (CFI), and the Tucker Lewis Index (TLI) were selected as goodness-of-fit indices. Hu and Bentler's (1999) guidelines were used to establish an acceptable fit; these guidelines were: RMSEA ($\leq .06$), 90% CI $\leq .06$, CFI non-sig., CFI ($\geq .95$), and TLI ($\geq .95$). When viewed together, these different indices “give a more conservative and reliable evaluation of the solution” (Brown, 2003, p. 3). Finally, in order to be retained in the model, CFA items needed to exceed a standardised loading threshold of .4 (Brown, 2015).

6.5 Results

6.5.1 Acceptance of Australian identity

6.5.1.1 Confirmatory factor analysis

The 11 items comprising the two factors of acceptance of Australian identity found in Study 3 were analysed using CFA to find an acceptable model fit for the total Irish group ($N=89$). Model fit indicators for the two iterations of CFA (Models 1 and 2) are in Table 16. Model 1 showed model fit-measures for the two factors of acceptance of Australian identity to be significant. RMSEA (.09) was in the range
considered as a ‘mediocre fit’ (Schermelleh-Engel, Moosbrugger, & Muller, 2003). All standardised item loadings in Model 1 exceeded the .4 threshold, however a review of loadings showed that three items had significant covariant error residuals. Within Acceptance from Others the item of alignment covaried with inclusion (-.26), inclusion with valued involvement (.34), and in the factor of Self-Acceptance, cohesion covaried with self-efficacy (-.34). Brown (2015) suggested that error covariance may be attributed to ‘method effect’, such as items being reverse scored. In this study, alignment and inclusion were reverse scored. Also, the item statement statement regarding cohesion required a response to a concept of union of identities that may not have been commonly understood by all participants. Consequently, the error residuals of these three items were co-varied and a second analysis conducted. Model 2 showed improved overall model-fit indices; chi-square became non-significant (p>.05) and RMSEA (.06) also improved to acceptable levels. Model 2 fit indices for CFI, and TLI were both above .95. Together, the indices for Model 2 suggested an acceptable fit for a two-factor model of acceptance of Australian identity.

Table 16
Confirmatory factor analysis and goodness-of-fit indicators for models 1 and 2 of Acceptance of Australian identity (N=89)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>df</th>
<th>χ²</th>
<th>χ²/df</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>CFI</th>
<th>TLI</th>
<th>RMSEA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Model 1</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>72.15</td>
<td>1.68</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.96</td>
<td>.94</td>
<td>.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model 2</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>50.90</td>
<td>1.27</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>.98</td>
<td>.98</td>
<td>.06</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. df = degrees of freedom; CFI=comparative fit index; TFI=Tucker-Lewis index; RMSEA=root mean square error of approximation

The standardised factor loadings of items examined in CFA Models 1 and 2 for acceptance of Australian identity are in Table 17. A diagram of the final two-factor model for acceptance of Australian identity is in Figure 14.
Table 17

Standardised factor loadings for confirmatory models 1 and 2 for the two factors of Self-Acceptance and Acceptance from Others of Australian identity (N=89)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item Statement</th>
<th>Factor 1 (Self-Acceptance)</th>
<th>Factor 2 (Acceptance from Others)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Model 1</td>
<td>Model 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I value being Australian</td>
<td>.88</td>
<td>.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My Australian identity is important in how I see myself</td>
<td>.81</td>
<td>.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel good within myself about being Australian</td>
<td>.91</td>
<td>.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I personally involve myself in things that are meaningful to my Australian identity</td>
<td>.82</td>
<td>.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think I am pretty good at ‘being Australian’</td>
<td>.89</td>
<td>.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I let other Australians I know make important decisions for me rather than make them myself</td>
<td>.79</td>
<td>.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel unified with my Australian identity</td>
<td>.75</td>
<td>.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do not fit in well with other Australians</td>
<td></td>
<td>.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do not feel valued by other Australians</td>
<td></td>
<td>.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My Australian friends and colleagues include me in things that they do</td>
<td></td>
<td>.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I see myself as ‘out of synch’ with the values of Australians</td>
<td></td>
<td>.61</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Items with loadings boldfaced are the final two factors confirmed in Model 2. Inter-factor correlation of Model 2 ($r=.80$).

Figure 14. Two-factor model of acceptance of Australian identity
Mean scores, standard deviations, and confidence intervals for the 11 items comprising the factors of Self-Acceptance and Acceptance from Others confirmed in CFA Model 2 are in Table 18.

### Table 18

*Means (M), standard deviations (SD), and confidence intervals (CI’s) of the 11 items of CFA Model 2 (N=89).*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items and variables</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>LL</th>
<th>UL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Factor 1 Self-Acceptance</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value</td>
<td>5.30</td>
<td>1.67</td>
<td>4.95</td>
<td>5.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance</td>
<td>4.06</td>
<td>1.83</td>
<td>3.67</td>
<td>4.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional significance</td>
<td>4.80</td>
<td>1.73</td>
<td>4.43</td>
<td>5.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal involvement</td>
<td>4.65</td>
<td>1.74</td>
<td>4.29</td>
<td>5.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-efficacy</td>
<td>4.80</td>
<td>1.56</td>
<td>4.47</td>
<td>5.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autonomy</td>
<td>4.54</td>
<td>1.72</td>
<td>4.18</td>
<td>4.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cohesion</td>
<td>4.22</td>
<td>1.99</td>
<td>3.81</td>
<td>4.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Factor 2 Acceptance from Others</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valued involvement</td>
<td>5.67</td>
<td>1.71</td>
<td>5.31</td>
<td>6.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fit</td>
<td>5.66</td>
<td>1.76</td>
<td>5.29</td>
<td>6.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inclusion</td>
<td>5.60</td>
<td>1.84</td>
<td>5.21</td>
<td>5.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alignment</td>
<td>4.98</td>
<td>1.85</td>
<td>4.59</td>
<td>5.37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: LL=lower limit; UL=upper limit*

The mean scores for the four items comprising Acceptance from Others and the seven items comprising Self-Acceptance for the total Irish group were summated, and are shown in Table 19, together with the calculated mean scores for Belongingness and salience of Australian identity. Self-Acceptance and Acceptance from Others were reliable ($\alpha=.926; \alpha=.761$ respectively).
Table 19
Means (M), standard deviations (SD), and confidence intervals (CI’s) for salience, Self-Acceptance, Acceptance from Others of Australian identity and Belongingness for the Irish group (N=89)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>LL</th>
<th>UL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Salience</td>
<td>5.13</td>
<td>1.82</td>
<td>4.75</td>
<td>5.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Acceptance</td>
<td>4.62</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>4.30</td>
<td>4.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acceptance from Others</td>
<td>5.41</td>
<td>1.42</td>
<td>5.11</td>
<td>5.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belongingness</td>
<td>4.49</td>
<td>1.76</td>
<td>4.12</td>
<td>4.86</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: LL=lower limit; UL=upper limit

6.5.2 Acceptance and Belongingness for Irish migrants

The second aim was to examine the relationship between acceptance of Australian identity and Belongingness specifically of participants who were born in Ireland and migrated to Australia (n=73). Descriptive statistics were calculated for Irish migrants, and correlation and regression analysis were then used to examine the significance of the relationship between the Model 2 predictor variables Self-Acceptance and Acceptance from Others, and the response variable Belongingness.

Descriptives

The mean scores and confidence intervals for Self-Acceptance and Acceptance from Others and Belongingness for Irish migrants are in Table 20. Confidence intervals indicated that mean scores for Acceptance from Others were significantly higher than Self-Acceptance in the Irish migrant group. The mean salience of Australian identity indicated that the identity was primed in the minds of the Irish migrants at the time of their responses.
**Table 20**

Means (M) standard deviations (SD) and confidence intervals (CI’s) for salience, Self-Acceptance, Acceptance from Others of Australian identity and Belongingness for the Irish migrant group (n=73)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>M(SD)</th>
<th>LL</th>
<th>UL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Salience</td>
<td>5.14(1.84)</td>
<td>4.71</td>
<td>5.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Acceptance</td>
<td>4.55(1.48)</td>
<td>4.20</td>
<td>4.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acceptance from Others</td>
<td>5.43(1.42)</td>
<td>5.10</td>
<td>5.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belongingness</td>
<td>4.36(1.68)</td>
<td>3.96</td>
<td>4.75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. CI = confidence interval; SD = Standard deviation; LL = lower limit; UL = upper limit.

**Factor correlations and predictions**

A bivariate Pearson’s product-moment correlation coefficient (r) indicated that both Self-Acceptance (r=.74) and Acceptance from Others (r=.47) correlated significantly (p<.01 2-tailed) to Belongingness for Irish migrants.

The results of a multiple regression analysis that examined the relationship between Self-Acceptance, Acceptance from Others, and Belongingness are in Table 21. The regression model with the two predictors of Self-Acceptance and Acceptance from Others accounted for a significant 53% of the variability of Belongingness of Irish migrants, $R^2=.55$, adjusted $R^2=.53$, $F(2,70)=42.03$, $p<.01$.

Self-Acceptance had a significant positive regression weight indicating that Irish migrants with higher scores on this scale could be expected to have higher levels of Belongingness. Acceptance from Others provided no unique variance and therefore was non-significant in predicting Belongingness after accounting for Self-Acceptance.

**Table 21**

Unstandardised (B) and Standardised (β) regression coefficients with Confidence Intervals (CI’s) and squared semi-partial correlations (sr²) for the Self-Acceptance and Acceptance from Others of Australian identity as predictors of Belongingness of Irish migrants (n=73)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>B [95% CI]</th>
<th>SE B</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>sr²</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self-Acceptance</td>
<td>1.08 (.79-1.40)</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>.81</td>
<td>7.05</td>
<td>.00*</td>
<td>.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acceptance from Others</td>
<td>-.136 (-.41-.13)</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>-.11</td>
<td>-.96</td>
<td>.34</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: * $p<.01$
6.5.3 **Effects of bicultural identification for Irish migrants.**

The third aim of the study was to examine the effects of bicultural identification on acceptance of Australian identity and its contribution to Belongingness for Irish migrants. Of the total 73 Irish born participants, three self-identified as Australian and one did not respond, making a total of 69 responses available for data analysis. The comparison of mean scores for Self-Acceptance and Acceptance from Others, and Belongingness between migrants who self-identified only as Irish \((n=30)\), and those who self-identified as bicultural Irish-Australian \((n=39)\) are in *Figure 15*.

![Figure 15](image)

*Figure 15.* The mean scores higher than 2.50 for Self-Acceptance and Acceptance from Others, and Belongingness of Irish migrants by their cultural self-identification as Irish and bicultural Irish Australian. Error bars represent 95% confidence interval.

Confidence intervals indicated that mean scores for Self-Acceptance, Acceptance from Others, and Belongingness were significantly higher in Irish migrants who self-identified as bicultural Irish Australian when compared to those who self-identified as Irish only.

A comparison of the mean scores of the seven items of Self-Acceptance between migrants who self-identified as bicultural Irish Australian and those who
self-identified only as Irish is in Figure 16, with the four items of Acceptance from Others shown in Figure 17.

**Figure 16.** The mean scores higher than 2.50 of the seven items of Self-Acceptance of Irish migrants by cultural self-identification as Irish and bicultural Irish Australian. Error bars represent 95% confidence interval. Confidence intervals suggested that mean scores of all seven items of Self-Acceptance were significantly higher in Irish migrants who self-identified as bicultural Irish-Australian compared to those who self-identified as Irish.

**Figure 17.** The mean scores higher than 3.00 of the four items of Acceptance from Others for Irish migrants by cultural self-identification as Irish and bicultural Irish Australian. Error bars represent 95% confidence interval.
Confidence intervals suggested that mean scores of the four items of Acceptance from Others, valued involvement, inclusion, fit and alignment, were significantly different between Irish migrants who self-identified as bicultural Irish-Australian and those who self-identified as Irish.

6.6 Discussion

The aim of Study 4 was to investigate acceptance of Australian identity and its contribution to a sense of belonging for Australian residents who identified as Irish. Specifically, the aims were; firstly, to investigate whether two factors Self-Acceptance and Acceptance from Others explained acceptance of Australian identity in this cognate group; secondly, to examine the relationship between acceptance of Australian identity and Belongingness for Irish migrants; and thirdly, to examine the effects of bicultural identification on acceptance of Australian identity and Belongingness for Irish migrants.

Key findings

Confirmatory factor analysis found that a two-factor model, Self-Acceptance and Acceptance from Others reliably explained acceptance of Australian identity for Irish participants, and that both factors correlated positively and significantly to Irish migrant Belongingness. Self-Acceptance of Australian identity was found to be significant when predicting levels of Belongingness for Irish migrants. Migrants who self-identified as bicultural Irish Australians were found to have significantly greater levels of Self-Acceptance, Acceptance from Others, and Belongingness, than migrants who identified only as Irish.

Hypotheses

There were three hypotheses in this current study. The first, that two factors would explain acceptance of Australian identity, was supported. Self-Acceptance
and Acceptance from Others comprised the same 11 items discovered in Study 3, and were found to explain acceptance of Australian identity for the Irish group.

The second hypothesis, that Self-Acceptance of Australian identity would be significant when predicting levels of belongingness for Irish migrants, was supported. Self-Acceptance was found to be significant when predicting levels of Australian identity’s contribution to Belongingness of Irish migrants. Acceptance from Others had no unique variance and did not add to the prediction of Belongingness after accounting for Self-Acceptance. Higher Self-Acceptance scores corresponded with greater levels of Belongingness for Irish migrants.

The third hypothesis, that levels of Self-Acceptance of Australian identity and Belongingness would be greater in migrants who self-identified as bicultural Irish-Australian when compared to those who self-identified as Irish only, was supported. Self-Acceptance of Australian identity and the contribution it made to Belongingness were both found to be significantly greater in Irish migrants who self-identified as bicultural Irish-Australian than in those migrants who identified as Irish only. Acceptance from Others was also found to be significantly greater in the bicultural Irish Australian migrant group than those who identified as Irish only.

**The two-factor model for acceptance of Australian identity**

The key finding in this current study that two factors explained acceptance of Australian identity, confirmed findings in Study 3 and added support to Anant’s (1966) belonging hypothesis. Anant had suggested that mutual acceptance in a social identity, representing a person’s social group membership, was a prerequisite to them feeling a sense of belonging within the group. Anant had proposed that a person not only needed to feel accepted by others in a social group, but also needed to self-identify and accept themselves as a member of the group. Mutual acceptance enabled a person to experience a sense of belonging. The two factors of acceptance
found in this current research helped explain the concept of mutual acceptance of an Australian identity, and in-turn, mutual acceptance was found to significantly relate to a sense of belonging associated with that identity.

The two factors Self-Acceptance and Acceptance from Others were found to be correlated. This could be expected as both were factors of the higher-level construct of acceptance. In both Studies 3 and 4, a positive inter-factor correlation was found; however, the correlation was found to be greater in the Irish migrant group in Study 4 than in the diverse migrant group in Study 3. It could be argued that the increase of the inter-factor correlation may be explained by the level of diversity within each of the two migrant groups examined. In Study 4 the Irish migrant group was homogeneous in character, meaning all participants identified as a single cultural group social identity. Conversely, in Study 3 the migrant participants were more ethnically diverse originating from 33 countries and their ethnic group social identities could be considered heterogeneous in character as a result. Kline (1998) explained that factor analysis needs a full range of subjects, and that if a sample group is homogeneous, “…a factor may have little variance and thus not take up its proper place in the factor analysis” (p. 62). Therefore, the homogeneity of the Irish group may have affected the correlation between the factors. In particular, the lack of unique variance in the factor Acceptance from Others may be associated with what could be perceived as analogous interpersonal experiences of Irish migrants in Australia and, as a result, similar responses were obtained.

Of the two factors of acceptance of Australian identity, Self-Acceptance correlated positively and significantly with Belongingness of migrants in both studies. However, the findings relating to Acceptance from Others were different between this current study and Study 3. Acceptance from Others correlated
significantly with Belongingness in the Irish migrant group, but was not significant in the diverse migrant group. Additionally, in Study 3, the mean scores of Acceptance from Others were equivalent for participants who identified as bicultural Australian and those who identified strongly with their own culture. However, in Study 4 Acceptance from Others scores were significantly higher for participants who identified as bicultural Australian than those who identified as Irish.

A critical difference between the two studies may explain the dissimilar results. Participants for Study 3 were recruited as Australian residents without reference to any specific ethnic group; whereas, participants in Study 4 were specifically recruited because of their Irish identity. In both studies, the salience of Australian identity was manipulated in an attempt to elicit responses with the participant’s Australian identity in mind. In Study 4, participants were aware that their Irish identity had been the reason they were recruited and their Irish identity was mentioned again post the manipulation process. With regard to item statements relating to Acceptance from Others it is possible that for some participants their Irish identity had become salient when responding to statements about interpersonal feedback or experiences with others. Consequently, responses that emerged about acceptance from others may have related more to their Irish identity than their Australian identity.

In regression analysis, Self-Acceptance was found to be significant when predicting levels of migrant belongingness, Acceptance from Others provided no unique variance after accounting for Self-Acceptance and therefore did not demonstrate any predictive significance to levels of Belongingness. The significance of Self-Acceptance to predictions of Belongingness suggested an individual migrant had the scope to engage in a uniquely personal and meaningful
relationship with their Australian identity. The intrapersonal nature of self-acceptance could be argued to explain the greater variance in item scores relating to Self-Acceptance and, in turn, explain why this one factor had statistical significance when predicting migrant belongingness.

An examination of the scores for the 7 items that comprised Self-Acceptance may provide insight into why it was significant for Irish migrants. The item with the highest mean score within Self-Acceptance was value, which was significantly higher than the next two items with the closest mean scores of self-efficacy and emotional significance respectively. Importance (of Australian identity) was the lowest mean score of the items, and was preceded by items of cohesion and personal involvement. These findings suggest that participants valued their Australian identity highly, felt that their Australian identity was emotionally significant, and felt confident that they knew how to behave as an Australian. However, the findings show that migrants did not perceive their Australian identity as being very important in how they saw themselves, but it was a cohesive part of their self-concept and one they felt a personal involvement with.

**Bicultural identification**

The current study focused on Irish migrants, and reports of cultural self-identification offered an insight into the relationship between acceptance of an identity and levels of belonging for Irish migrants who were resident in Australia. Sixty-five of the 73 Irish migrant participants reported as having both Australian and Irish citizenship, however only 46 of these participants self-identified as bicultural. Irish migrants who self-identified only with their Irish identity demonstrated significantly lower mean scores for Self-Acceptance and Belongingness than Irish migrants who self-identified as bicultural Irish-Australian. This was also found to be the case in Study 3, where migrants who identified only
with their own cultural group had significantly less Self-Acceptance of Australian identity. Findings further supported Nesdale and Mak (2000), who found that strength of self-identification with Australian identity increased when a migrant has a positive attitude to their host country, and decreased when they identified only with their own ethnic group.

It has been suggested that the process of gaining Australian citizenship was a pathway to belonging (Australian Multicultural Advisory Council, 2011). By engaging in the citizenship process, migrants could be argued as developing a level of cultural competence and self-efficacy associated with being an Australian, and in turn, this could be further argued to increase their self-acceptance of an Australian identity. Self-Acceptance has been argued here to mean a migrant has internalised their ‘Australianess’ to a point where they experienced what has been suggested as a form of psychological citizenship. Psychological citizenship has been described as a subjective sense of being a citizen of a nation (Sindic, 2011).

The findings in this current study suggested that a positive relationship between Self-Acceptance of Australian identity and Belongingness existed within the Irish participants and signified that they indeed feel a sense of psychological citizenship in Australia. The current findings supported the idea that when a migrant develops an intrapersonal relationship with their Australian identity, it may positively influence personal acceptance of their ‘Australianess’ and in turn increase their belongingness.

6.7 Limitations and future research

The sample size could have influenced the results of the factor analysis. Typically, a minimum of 100 or more has been suggested, however the item/participant ratios were within suggested limits in this case. A larger sample of Irish participants may alter the results found here in the current study.
Findings regarding acceptance from others could be expected to differ in migrant groups who may be perceived as having more distinct ethnic markers, such as dress or skin tones. It could be argued that acceptance from others for migrants who have more distinct ethnic markers could be significantly influenced by public or personal discrimination. The Chinese group in Study 2 suggested that discrimination had a negative effect on their belongingness in Australia. Consequently, responses to items of Acceptance from Others, valued involvement, inclusion, alignment and fit, may be subject to greater variation if examined in migrant groups with associated ethnic markers that were more distinct than the majority or the cognate group of Irish participants in this study.

Over time, people have been shown to change how they self-identify (Kuo & Margalit, 2012); therefore, how people identified on the day and at the time of their response in respect to Australian identity and its importance to belongingness may vary if the studies were repeated on another date, or in a different context or situation.

The item statements concerning Self-Acceptance could be argued to elicit responses that reflected an individual’s thoughts and feelings about their Australian identity as self-acceptance could be considered intrapersonal in nature and independent of feedback received from others. On the other hand, responses in relation to the item statements concerning Acceptance from Others of Australian identity could be considered interpersonal in nature and specifically as reflecting experiences with others. If a participant identified only with their own culture, their responses may have reflected their perception of acceptance from others of their cultural identity rather than their Australian identity.

The two factors used to investigate acceptance of Australian identity and its contribution to belongingness were derived from a heterogeneous sample of
Australian residents comprising both Australian-born and non-Australian born migrants. However, the migrant group sample of Study 3 from which the two factors also emerged, were diverse and similar only to the extent of their non-Australian-born status. Study 4 aimed to investigate the two factors in a cognate Irish migrant group, however it is noted that this group was also diverse in their Irish heritage as they originated from different parts in Ireland, had varying lengths of residency in Australia and had different family situations. Research of other culturally similar groups resident in Australia is needed in the future to explore if the two factors of acceptance of Australian identity and its positive relationship to the contribution to belongingness is a consistent model.

6.8 Conclusions

Acceptance of Australian identity was important to the sense of belonging of Irish migrants. Two factors Self-Acceptance and Acceptance from Others, explained acceptance of an Australian identity of Irish migrants who were resident in Australia. Self-acceptance of Australian identity predicted levels of belonging for Irish migrants. Bicultural Irish Australian migrants who accepted their ‘Australianess’ had a correspondingly greater sense of belonging than migrants who identified only as Irish.
Chapter 7 - General Discussion and Conclusions

7.1 Overview of the Chapter

Humans are social creatures. We each have an inherent and fundamental need to belong, to feel like we are part of a group and to be accepted for who we really are. This chapter synthesises and discusses findings from the four studies undertaken to examine the concept of belonging and its relationship with Australian identity. As a multicultural society, Australia is socially and economically sustained through long-term migration, and there is a vital need to foster a positive environment such that everyone, particularly the near seven million migrants who are resident in Australia, can feel they belong regardless of their cultural background. Australian identity has been proposed as one that can be shared by all residents and foster a collective sense of belonging (Reilly, 2017). The overall research question of this thesis was…what is belonging, and what is the relationship, if any, between Australian identity and a sense of belonging of migrants’ resident in Australia.

The four studies presented in this thesis sequentially addressed the research question. The theoretical development of the concept of belonging (see Chapter 2) was considered fragmented. Consequently, I felt it important to establish a cohesive understanding of the concept for this research. The first study presented in Chapter 3 explained the construct of belonging and the basis of its relationship with social identity, including the key psychological characteristics of the interaction between them. The second study, presented in Chapter 4, drew from the findings of Study 1, and investigated if the understanding of belonging was shared culturally by Australian residents with either Anglo-Celtic heritage or Chinese heritage. The four focus groups used in this study also explored the role of Australian identity and its importance to belonging. Studies 1 and 2 found that acceptance of a social identity
was crucial to experiencing a sense of belonging. The findings from Study 2 were published in the journal of National Identities in mid-2015.

Drawing on the findings from Studies 1 and 2, the third study (Chapter 5) specifically examined acceptance of Australian identity and how it related to belongingness for Australian residents, including those who were born in Australia and those who had migrated from overseas. A range of items was developed that potentially comprised the experience of acceptance of a social identity, in this case, Australian identity. Exploratory factor analysis was applied to examine the relationship of the items for acceptance of Australian identity. Two factors emerged, Self-Acceptance and Acceptance from Others. The two factors were argued to reliably measure acceptance of Australian identity and to have a significant relationship with belongingness. Study 3 found differences in levels of acceptance of Australian identity and belongingness between the Australian born and migrant residents and, additionally, the study found differences in levels of acceptance of Australian identity and belongingness in migrants who self-identified as bicultural compared to those who self-identified only with their own cultural group. Migrant participants in Study 3 originated from 33 countries and the sample size for each cultural group was considered too small to reliably investigate acceptance of Australian identity and its contribution to belongingness for each of the diverse cultural groups.

Consequently, a fourth study was conducted that further investigated the two factors of acceptance of Australian identity and their relationship to belongingness in a cognate group of Irish migrants. Study 4 also examined acceptance of Australian identity and belongingness of Irish migrants who self-identified as bicultural Australian.
In this chapter, the findings were discussed in relation to the overall aim of the thesis, and in relation to prior research, in particular Anant’s belonging hypothesis. Section 7.3 presented a discussion of the limitations of the research and a summary and conclusions were presented in section 7.4.

7.2 General discussion

7.2.1 Aim and key findings

The aim of the thesis was to investigate the role and importance of acceptance of Australian identity and the contribution of Australian identity to a sense of belonging of migrants who were resident in Australia. The current research found that belonging was a complex, multidimensional psychological construct that was significantly allied to the positive social functioning of individuals and communities (Chapter 3). Diverse cultural groups were found to share a common understanding of belonging and moreover, acceptance within a salient social identity was found to be the crucial characteristic that underpinned an individual’s sense of belonging. This last finding supported research that had earlier suggested that acceptance was a primary characteristic that explained how belonging was experienced in the context of a social group (e.g., Hagerty & Patusky, 1995) and in relation to a general and non-specific population (e.g., Malone et al., 2012).

However, to my knowledge, this is the first study that has pooled a number of psychological characteristics that operationalised acceptance of a social identity, and from this pool, constructed items to investigate acceptance of Australian identity and its relationship to belongingness for migrants who were resident in Australia.

7.2.1.1 The construct of belonging

The construct of belonging was found to comprise seven interrelated dimensions, including three historically known dimensions and four new
dimensions which were synthesised as a result of this research. The three historical
dimensions were: the need to belong, antecedents to belonging and a sense of
belonging; and the four new dimensions found included: identity processes to
belong, practices to maintain belonging, factors that influence belonging and
consequences of belonging/not belonging. The dimension of interest to this research
was a sense of belonging, and Study 1, Chapter 3 found when a social identity
became salient, acceptance of the identity was the key characteristic of a sense of
belonging. Study 2, Chapter 4, confirmed this finding with participants in four
focus group discussions and in this study the number of individual social identities
claimed by participants ranged from 6 to 25 and were found to be associated with
three identity realms, personal, social, and space. These three identity realms were
suggested as comprising the psychological source of belonging. However, the level
of belonging was found to vary with different social identities, for example, familial
and vocational identities were seen as very important to belonging and others less
important.

7.2.1.2 Belongingness and acceptance of Australian identity

Findings regarding acceptance of Australian identity and belonging emerged
using a qualitative method in Study 2 and were extended using quantitative methods
in Studies 3 and 4. The second study, presented in Chapter 4, investigated
Australian national identity in relation to a sense of belonging for Australian
residents with either Anglo-Celtic heritage or Chinese heritage and found that while
an Australian identity was important, it was not of primary importance.

In the third study (Chapter 5), an important new finding regarding the
experience of belonging in relation to Australian identity emerged. Acceptance from
Others and Self-Acceptance were found as the two factors that best explained
acceptance of Australian identity for Australian residents comprising both
Australian born and migrants born overseas. Self-Acceptance was defined as an intrapersonal characteristic that reflected the internal relationship a person experiences with his or her Australian identity; whereas, Acceptance from Others was defined as an interpersonal characteristic that reflected the external feedback received from others. Seven items were found to comprise the factor of Self-Acceptance of Australian identity, value, emotional significance, importance, personal involvement, self-efficacy, autonomy, and cohesion. Four items were found to comprise Acceptance from Others of Australian identity, inclusion, valued involvement, fit and alignment. Acceptance from Others and Self-Acceptance of Australian identity were found to be reliable and significant when predicting Belongingness for the total sample of Australian residents.

Specifically, for the participants in both the heterogeneous migrant group (Study 3-diverse) and the homogeneous migrant group (Study 4-Irish), the two-factor model of Self-Acceptance and Acceptance from Others reliably explained acceptance of Australian identity. However, in both migrant groups, only Self-Acceptance was found to be significant when predicting levels of Belongingness after accounting for the variance of Acceptance from Others. Greater levels of acceptance corresponded to greater levels of belongingness. Acceptance from Others was found to significantly correlate with Belongingness in the homogeneous Irish group but was non-significant in the heterogeneous migrant group. Findings in both migrant groups showed that Self-Acceptance of Australian identity and Belongingness were significantly greater in migrants who identified as bicultural Australians, when compared to those who identified only with their own cultural group.
7.2.2 Findings in relation to prior research

Acceptance from others had been found to be a consistent item in relation to measurement of belongingness. In the Belongingness in Clinical Placement Scale, acceptance from others was reported as a freestanding variable (Levett-Jones et al., 2009a). The subjects in this case were nurse interns in clinical placement and the item statement read “It is important to feel accepted by my colleagues” (p. 158). However, Levett-Jones did not appear to expand on the meaning of the construct of acceptance. In the General Belongingness Scale (Malone et al., 2012) acceptance/inclusion was suggested as a measure of ‘achieved belongingness’ for application into a general population. Similarly, within the Need to Belong Scale (Leary et al., 2013), acceptance from others was proposed as “…I want other people to accept me” (p. 624).

In this current research, the approach used was to draw on characteristics from social identity theory and empirical research suggested as likely to comprise acceptance of a social identity. As a natural consequence, it could be expected that characteristics found to comprise the factors of Self-Acceptance and Acceptance from Others of Australian identity in this study were congruent with those of a social identity, such as ‘emotional significance’, ‘importance’ and ‘value’.

Findings that Acceptance from Others related positively to a sense of belonging concurred with suggestions of prior belonging studies. Leary (2010) had proposed that the need for social acceptance and belonging were synonymous and suggested that ‘social acceptance’ was indicated by a demonstrated desire by others to include a person in their social group(s) and relationships. In this current study, inclusion was found to be one of the four items that comprised the factor Acceptance from Others in Australian identity. Furthermore, two of the other items
found, *valued involvement* and *fit*, had earlier been proposed by Hagerty and Patusky (1995) as measures of a sense of belonging as part of the SOBI-P.

The findings relating to acceptance from others in the total Australian sample support other Australian-based social research that showed positive acceptance of migrants by others in Australian society was important to their sense of belonging (see Cummins, 2010; Markus, 2014; Markus, 2015). Acceptance from Others was shown to correlate with Belongingness significantly within the homogeneous Irish group and to a lesser extent in the heterogeneous group. This difference was attributed to the possible salience of Irish identity and discussed in Study 4 (see page 145).

It could be argued that the finding in the current study that Self-Acceptance of Australian identity significantly influenced migrant Belongingness concurs with earlier findings regarding migrant attitudes to Australian identity by Nesdale and Mak (2000). In the Nesdale and Mak (2000) study host country identification was measured using a scale from the Universal Ethnic Identity Scale (Nesdale et al., 1997) called ‘Belong to Australia’ which encompassed respondents’ feelings of ‘pride in belonging to Australia’. The findings suggested that when a migrant’s acculturation attitude was positive towards their host country, identification with their host country increased, which could be argued as indicating that migrants held a positive attitude towards their Australian identity and therefore experienced increased belongingness. Nesdale and Mak (2000) had also found that ‘acceptance from other Australians’ was a second influencing factor that predicted levels of migrant host country identification. However, the research in this thesis found that Acceptance from Others, while meaningful to migrants, lacked enough unique variance to make it significant when predicting Belongingness after accounting for Self-Acceptance.
The finding regarding the significance of Self-Acceptance of Australian identity also concurred with Barnes et al. (2004) who argued that when a nation’s concept and a person’s self-concept are congruent they constituted a mutually recognized social group membership, in other words membership was jointly recognised by the person and the group. In the context of this research, the greater levels of Self-Acceptance of Australian identity, particularly by migrants who self-identified as bicultural, could be argued as indicating a feeling of congruence between their own values, beliefs and behaviours, and those they associated with an Australian identity. In this current research, the most popular words migrants associated with Australian identity were freedom and multicultural and it could be argued that these principles may reflect the values most congruent with a migrant’s self-concept and may have constituted one of the primary reasons for choosing Australia as their new host country.

The finding regarding migrant bicultural identification and greater Self-Acceptance of Australian identity corresponded with findings of Obst and White (2007) regarding the relationship between social identity choice and belonging. Obst and White (2007) suggested that the greater the degree of choice a person had in claiming a social identity, the stronger the sense of belonging that person felt associated with that identity when salient. In this current research, migrants who chose to identify as bicultural Australian demonstrated significantly greater levels of Self-Acceptance of Australian identity and Belongingness when compared to migrants who chose to identify only with their own cultural group. In the Irish-Australian migrant group, Acceptance from Others scores were also significantly higher than participants identifying as Irish only. Deaux (2001) has suggested that the public proclamation of belonging associated with choosing a social identity illuminated a person’s embodiment of that social identity as part of their self-
concept. Thus, it could be argued that migrant bicultural Australian self-
identification indicated the embodiment of Australian identity as part of their self-
concept.

Findings that Self-Acceptance of Australian identity and Belongingness were significantly greater in migrants who self-identified as bicultural have also been linked to the development of cultural competence (LaFromboise et al., 1993). LaFromboise et al. (1993) argued that in order for a migrant to identify as bi-
cultural some degree of cultural competence in both cultures was needed, suggesting that “the key to psychological well-being may well be the ability to develop and maintain competence in both cultures” (p.402). Psychological wellbeing has been shown to be supported by a strong sense of belonging (Hagerty et al., 1996; Marsh et al., 2007).

7.2.2.1 Psychological citizenship

Bicultural self-identification when coupled with the adoption of Australian citizenship, potentially recognises a migrant’s psychological timbre with their host nation community. Australian citizenship has been suggested by the Australian Multicultural Council as offering migrants a pathway to a renewed sense of belonging (AMAC, 2011). A host country’s national identity and citizenship have been suggested as being entwined social concepts that can only be articulated psychologically within an individual (Moghaddam, 2008). The positive interweaving of national identity and citizenship has been argued to create within an individual a form of psychological citizenship, defined as a “subjective sense of being a citizen”, and proposed as the means by which “an individual distinguishes the concept from purely political citizenship” (Sindic, 2011, p. 203). Sindic (2011) suggested that political citizenship represented the civic entitlements offered by a host nation; whereas, psychological citizenship was intertwined with a personal
sense of sharing a national identity with the host country’s mainstream society. Brettell (2006) had previously referred to migrants experiencing both political and cultural belonging, the former argued to be cognitive in nature, and the latter emotional. While Brettell had argued that the emotional connection was associated with a migrant’s cultural identity, this research showed that Australian identity had a strong emotional significance for many migrants, to the extent that they willingly chose to integrate an Australian identity with their ethnic identity.

7.2.2.2 *Australian citizenship*

The Federal Government recently proposed making the task of gaining Australian citizenship more difficult for migrants as a means of strengthening integration into mainstream society (Reilly, 2017). To this end, the proposed citizenship process would require migrants to perform a range of activities considered representative of Australian mainstream society, such as learning English, engaging in the work environment, becoming involved in community events or placing their children in local Australian schools (Reilly, 2017). Language has been suggested as a “form of social capital that provides social power in addition to economic opportunities” (Nawyn, Gjokaj, Agbényiga, & Grace, 2012, p. 255).

Findings from Study 1 suggested that ‘performativity’ was an identity-making process that helped to cultivate an individual’s sense of belonging. Performativity was argued to be the capacity of actions, speech and communication used by a person to not only communicate but rather to effectuate and perform those actions associated with an identity (Fortier, 1999). Identity-making through performativity has been suggested to “confer a binding power on the action performed” and “mean that identities are constructed by the very expressions that are said to be their results” (Fortier, 1999, p. 43). Theoretically, the process of
acquiring Australian citizenship could be argued to be an Australian-identity-making process for migrants through performativity, as they focus on the language, activities and behaviours associated with being Australian. This author would suggest that the process of performativity based identity-making process has the potential to develop not only the cultural competence to acquire political citizenship for migrants, but also to develop a level of psychological citizenship described earlier.

It could be argued that, when a migrant’s feelings of ‘Australianess’ develop through awareness, knowledge, and practice, the seven items that were found to comprise Self-Acceptance of Australian identity in this research become more apparent. The value of an Australian identity may increase to an individual, it may become more emotionally significant and assume a greater importance alongside their ethnic identity. The process may reach a point whereby a migrant feels an Australian identity has become a cohesive part interrelated with other social identities that make-up their self-concept. Cohesion has been argued to mean that no internal conflict exists between a host country and ethnic cultural identities that cause personal distress (Martinez-Callaghan & Gil-Lacruz, 2017). Furthermore, by getting personally involved in Australian schools and local communities, developing competence in the English language, and adopting Australian cultural norms via the workplace, a migrant may begin to feel self-efficacious in behaving as an ‘Australian’ around others. That personal confidence in their Australianess may develop to a point that they feel confident to act autonomously in the aspects of decision-making concerned with being Australian.

7.2.2.3 Belonging theory

This current research proposed a novel, contemporary multidimensional theoretical model for the construct of belonging. The research empirically supported
the belonging hypothesis proposed by Anant in which he argued that the experience of a ‘real’ sense of belonging was derived from a person feeling an indispensable and integral part of a social group, rather than just being present in that social group (Anant, 1966, 1967, 1969). Interpreting this in the context of this current research, a migrant may theoretically belong as a resident in Australia through the legal and political entitlements offered by Australia’s multicultural policies and by adopting citizenship, and thus, feel accepted by others in Australian society. However, this current research has demonstrated as Anant had proposed, that both self-acceptance together with feeling acceptance from others in a social group were needed to underpin a sense of belonging in that group. This research empirically demonstrated for the first time, that the two factors Anant hypothesized, that emerged and now named by this author as Self-Acceptance and Acceptance from Others, explained acceptance of Australian identity. The findings further built on Anant’s theory firstly by describing the intrapersonal and interpersonal characteristics of acceptance of a national identity, and secondly by demonstrating that belonging associated with Australian identity can be reliably predicted for migrants in Australia by their levels of self-acceptance. I would argue that a migrant’s self-acceptance of an Australian identity underpins a form of psychological citizenship that engenders a real sense of belonging in Australia’s multicultural society. In Anant’s terms, they feel an integral and indispensable part of Australia’s social system.

7.3 Limitations and future research

The sample sizes and range of cultural groups may have been a limiting factor for some of the studies in this research. Only 23 participants comprised the focus groups in Study 2, and the majority of Anglo-Celtic and Chinese participants were drawn from academia. Results could vary with a larger number of participants,
and greater vocational and socio-economic diversity. Similarly, the Chinese focus
groups comprised non-Australian born migrants and it could be expected that 2\textsuperscript{nd} or
3\textsuperscript{rd} generation participants may have developed a stronger relationship with an
Australian identity and its associated belonging through their birth and being
educated in Australia.

While the size of the total sample for Study 3 was large, the number of
participants in the migrant sample may have affected results. The minimum
threshold suggested for conducting an exploratory factor analysis was 100
participants (Blunch, 2013). Alternatively, other researchers suggest that a ratio of
between 5-10 items per participant is sufficient (Kline, 1998). In Study 3, the initial
ratio was 7 migrant participants per item with the ratio rising to 11:1, producing the
most parsimonious and reliable factor solution for acceptance of Australian identity
in the final analysis. Similarly, a larger migrant sample size of Irish participants in
Study 4 may influence confirmation analysis of factors and other related results.

The majority of participants in Study 3 were of Anglo-Celtic origin, and all
the participants in Study 4 were of Irish origin. The reasoning behind the choice of
participants for Study 4 was to confirm or refute the findings regarding acceptance
of Australian identity in a group that, it could be argued, would integrate into
Australian society easily because of a lack of ethnic ‘markers’ distinguishing them
from the mainstream society. As stated, this thesis was not looking to investigate
the reasons ‘why’ migrants feel or do not feel a sense of belonging; rather, it
explored ‘how’ migrants experienced belonging relative to Australian identity.
Thus, it is acknowledged that findings regarding the four items that comprised
Acceptance from Others found in Study 3, could be argued to differ for migrants
originating from cultural groups with more distinct ethnic markers such as dress or
skin tones.
It could be argued that the Australian-born participants in Study 3 and the Irish participants in Study 4 share a level of cultural commonality. Combining the data from the Australian and Irish samples and conducting confirmatory factor analysis may provide further insight into the fit of the two-factor model.

Correlations between self-acceptance and acceptance from others and belongingness were stronger and greater respectively in the Irish sample (Study 4) than the mixed Australian-born/migrant sample (Study 3). On the surface, this may suggest that the relationship was stronger for the Irish sample than for the mixed sample, or influenced by the smaller Irish sample size. As previously discussed, it may relate to the extent to which, if any, Australians, as the majority group, think of themselves as self-accepting or being accepted as Australian. Because Australians are the dominant group they may not innately have to consider whether feelings of acceptance as an Australian contributes to their sense of belonging. The data available does not currently reveal what may be the case for these differences, as such, investigating this difference should be a consideration in future research.

Within the Australian born group, a small number of participants self-identified as Aboriginal or Aboriginal Australian. The small sample size meant that definitive conclusions could not be drawn; however, findings showed that Acceptance from Others and Belongingness in this sample group had the lowest mean scores of all sample groups. This insight into Aboriginal Australian belongingness indicated a strong need for future research of Indigenous Australians, their relationship with Australian identity and belongingness. To address the question of Australian identity and belonging for Indigenous Australians, the use of culturally appropriate research methodologies would be required.

The item statements concerning Self-Acceptance could be argued to elicit responses that reflected an individual’s thoughts and feelings about their Australian
identity as self-acceptance could be considered intrapersonal in nature and independent of feedback received from others. On the other hand, responses in relation to the item statements concerning Acceptance from Others of Australian identity could be considered interpersonal in nature and specifically as reflecting experiences with others. If a participant identified only with their own culture, their responses may have reflected their perception of acceptance from others of their cultural identity rather than their Australian identity.

This research aimed to investigate Anant’s hypothesis that related a person’s acceptance of a social identity with levels of personal belongingness. The hypothesis was supported. In relation to Australian identity, findings made a distinction between two factors of acceptance, Self-Acceptance and Acceptance from Others. However, the research did not relate how these two acceptance constructs may align with or overlap with a strength sense of social identity or existing measures of social identity. How and whether these constructs align or overlap needs to be investigated in future research.

In both Study 3 and Study 4, the use of the single dependent variable of ‘Being Australian has little to do with my sense of belonging’ is a limitation in this research. The variable aimed to assess the perceived level of contribution that Australian identity made to a participant’s overall sense of belonging. In simple terms, the statement required a participant to rate the level they felt their ‘Australianess’ contributed to their overall belongingness. This was a different measure than existing psychometric scales for the simple measurement of belonging or belongingness. Existing scales were found to be general in that they focused on assessing an individual’s belonging ‘to’ a country (Chow, 2007) or ‘achieved’ belonging without reference to any social identity, situation or context (Malone et al., 2012). Previous studies did not establish salience of a specific social identity
prior to measuring belongingness. As such, no previous scale was found to be adaptable as a specific measure of the perceived contribution that Australian identity made to a participant’s sense of belonging needed for this research. That said, a multi-item measure of the level of contribution that Australian identity made to belongingness compared to the contribution of other social identities was not developed in this research. This is a limitation that must be addressed in future research.

A further limitation relating to a participant’s understanding of the dependent variable statement may have skewed findings of Studies 3 and 4. As items that comprised the two factors of acceptance of Australian identity were drawn from social identity theory and empirical studies that related to belongingness and social identity, the perceived meaning of the dependent variable ‘Being Australian has little to do with my sense of belonging’ may have been misconstrued by respondents. The dependent variable was not designed as a measure of belongingness, but rather a measure of how much Australian identity contributed, among a range of social identities, to overall belongingness. As such, this was a different measure than existing psychometric scales. The development of a multi-item measure that can more reliably capture the level of any one social identity’s contribution to a person’s overall belongingness is a critical step for future research.

Over time, people have been shown to change how they self-identify (Kuo & Margalit, 2012); therefore, how people identified on the day of their response in respect to social identities and their importance to belongingness may vary if the studies were repeated at a later date.
7.4 Summary and conclusion

This research contributed new empirical knowledge regarding the concept of belonging, the importance of acceptance in relation to Australian identity and its implicit relationship to migrant belongingness in Australia. The distillation of acceptance in relation to a social identity into two parts, self-acceptance and acceptance from others, and in particular, the demonstration of how self-acceptance of Australian identity related to migrant belongingness, were important new additions to current empirical knowledge. Additionally, this research proposed a theoretical model for the overall construct of belonging suitable for application into any context or situation.

The conclusion drawn from this research was that acceptance of Australian identity comprises both self-acceptance and acceptance from others. Self-acceptance of an Australian identity significantly predicted levels of belongingness of migrants who were resident in Australia. I argue in support of the proposals of the Australian Multicultural Advisory Council (2011), Reilly (2017) and (Skey, 2010), that migrant adoption of an Australian identity and perception of sharing an Australian identity with the mainstream culture, contributes to the renewal of their sense of belonging as a valuable member of Australia’s multicultural society.

In respect to the concept of belonging, I conclude that it is a powerful, multifaceted psychological phenomenon that permeates almost every aspect of human existence. Belonging constitutes the glue that bonds the social fabric of many unique human cultures and inspires harmony between diverse groups in our multicultural societies. It underpins individual wellbeing, social cohesion of communities and the nation, and the development of social capital.

Everyone deserves to belong!

Everyone needs to belong!
Everyone can belong!

Theoretical model and explanation for the psychological construct of belonging.

Belonging is a subjective and dynamic psychological phenomenon that comprises seven interrelated dimensions. The need to belong is a fundamental human motivation for non-aversive relationships with others and is typically satisfied through personal involvement in social roles or groups that form a social system or a place, such that a person feels an integral part of that system or place. Belongingness is characterised by acceptance from others and self-acceptance of social identities in a person’s self-concept and is maintained by applying personal resources and engaging in role behaviours uniquely associated with social identities. Levels of belonging can be positively or negatively influenced by social, historical, and environmental factors. The quality of social and familial development in childhood and adolescence, and biology are antecedents to a person’s capacity for adult belonging. A positive sense of belonging enhances wellbeing, personal performance of individuals and groups, and underpins social cohesion of communities. A deficiency of belonging can result in social maladjustment or pathology of individuals and community conflict.
Chapter 8 - Implications, future research and epilogue

8.1 Implications

The awareness that Self-Acceptance of Australian identity was a significant factor influencing the renewal of migrant belongingness may aid officials who provide professional migration advice or assist those who have responsibility for guiding new residents along the path towards resettlement and integration. This research could be drawn on by policy makers in national, state, and local governments, as well as non-government organisations who are concerned with the development and implementation of multicultural strategies focusing on the principle that everyone in Australia deserves to experience a sense of belonging. Knowledge resulting from this research may assist organisations and individuals to define guiding principles and values that support a ‘culture of belonging’ for all in Australia. While yet to be developed, the values and principles that would underpin a culture of belonging could provide a framework to enhance social cohesion and reduce individual and intergroup conflict.

Findings from this research may also assist researchers involved in developing a better understanding of how the radicalisation process affects migrant youth in Australia. Research has suggested that factors associated with identity and social exclusion may be catalysts that inspire radicalisation (Angus, 2016). Angus argued that at an individual level, dislocation of identity and a lack of a sense of belonging were important factors, and at socio-cultural level, the main driver was suggested to be marginalisation and feelings of being an outsider to mainstream society through their minority group status (p. 5).

The integration and contribution of Australia’s migrants is critical to the long-term social and economic health of the whole population. This is particularly the case as the source of migrants shifts from countries such as, Britain, Europe, and
New Zealand to countries such as China and India. Cultural values and norms of Asian groups may be significantly different from those traditional migrant groups who may have experienced greater historical affinity with Australia’s mainstream society. The knowledge derived from this study may help place individual migrants, service providers and policy makers in a stronger position to reap the benefits for individuals, communities, and the nation.

A sense of belonging has been consistently shown as a vital mental health concept that contributes to individual wellbeing. Health professionals and practitioners who have patients or clients with dislocated identities or socially negative lifestyle identities affecting their sense of belonging and wellbeing may find the theoretical model of belonging proposed in this research supportive of therapeutic goals. For example, addiction therapy has demonstrated that focusing on a lack of belonging is a critical influence on addictive behaviours (Alexander, 2010). Similarly, one of the three causes of suicide has been suggested as thwarted belonging (Joiner, 2005). Therapists and educators in the fields of psychiatry, psychology and counselling may benefit from this research regarding the proposed model and theoretical framework of belonging.

8.2 Future research

The government of Australia has committed to continue a substantial migration strategy in order to drive the continuing economic development of the nation. Asian cultural groups from China and India are proposed as the primary source countries of Australia’s future migrants. It is therefore important to further investigate whether acceptance of Australian identity influences their sense of belonging in Australia. Integration of findings from this research with other research regarding acceptance and belonging of migrant youth is recommended.
Indigenous Australians are a deeply important part of Australian culture, history, and society. The number of participants who identified as Aboriginal in Study 3 was too small to draw meaningful conclusions; however, this cultural group is considered crucial to gaining a deeper understanding of acceptance of Australian identity and its relationship to belongingness. I would strongly recommend that future research examines these questions in a larger sample of Indigenous Australians. With the benefit of SCU incorporating the Gnibi College of Indigenous Australian People’s within the University’s structure, future opportunities to explore potential research projects should be explored.

8.3 Epilogue

Each time I have shared these findings regarding self-acceptance of Australian identity and its influence on belonging of migrants in Australia, at conferences or person to person, people have told me of ‘ah ha’ moments they have experienced during the presentations or conversations. Many migrants in the audience or elsewhere have stated that, for the first time since becoming resident in Australia, they have experienced a degree of clarity regarding their own sense of belonging. This new discovery, that a true sense of belonging was primarily linked to self-acceptance of an Australian identity, was a revelation to them. Communicating the findings relating to self-acceptance seemed to enabled these migrants to understand why they felt a ‘real’ sense of belonging had been missing within them. Many have commented that, until now, they had believed that belongingness was entirely about feeling accepted by others in Australian society; however, a lot admitted that, while acceptance by other Australians was not an issue, on its own that acceptance never seemed enough for them to experience a real sense of belonging as a migrant in Australia. In a small way, these anecdotal
responses from migrants in the public arena indicate some degree of meaningful resonance with migrant participants who were the focus this research.

In the introduction to this thesis I described the genesis of my PhD as being derived from my personal experience as an Australian migrant resident in the US for 10 years. My living and working there fulfilled a life-long career ambition to become a ‘global citizen’; however, a personal sense of belonging eluded me. After becoming a permanent resident and a ‘green card holder’, US citizenship was available to me by simply completing and posting a form with an application fee of several hundred dollars. During the period of my residency in the US I obtained the citizenship form twice and filled it out, however I could not bring myself to post it to the immigration authorities. Prior to going to the US, my dream and, I imagine, the dream of many people around the world at that time, was to gain US citizenship. As a successful corporate vice president in a large US based technology company I had it made! So why couldn't I do it? Why couldn't I post that form? I could not figure out an answer to this question.

I eventually did figure it out, and certainly the reason I had not acted has become much clearer to me as a result this research. It could be said that the US culture and Australian culture are very similar, especially in terms of what I would call the ‘Americanization’ of Australian culture through the large-scale importation of the consumerist culture, the commercialist culture, and the entertainment culture of the US. However, I personally found the opposite to be true and my perception that the values underpinning society in Australia were so different to those in America, meant that I was unable to imagine referring to myself, in part, as an American. I lived and worked there, I was successful in my career, but I could not adopt or align with the values I perceived an American identity stood for. Now, with the benefit of hindsight and the findings in my research, I realise that I could
have become a ‘political citizen’ by way of the US citizenship process, indicative of being accepted by others in the US. However, because I could not self-accept a US identity as part of my self-concept, I could not see myself as a ‘psychological citizen’, and consequently, I had no sense of belonging in the US. This research has answered a key question regarding migrant belongingness in Australia in relation to acceptance of Australian identity, and at the same time provided personal clarity to what was a significant dilemma for me at the time.

Before I finish, I want to describe why I love having an Australian identity and why it holds so much promise for everyone. In the introduction, I wrote of former refugee Hieu Van Le, who fled Vietnam by boat over 40 years ago and was installed as Governor of South Australia in 2014. I will let Governor Le have the final words in this account of his experience that illustrates what acceptance really means in Australia.

Amid chaos and as thousands of Vietnamese tried to flee the communists, Hieu Van Le, aged 22, and his sweetheart Lan decided to make the perilous trip in a small boat bound with hopes of reaching Australia.

"It was very dangerous and very risky, like many other refugees out there, I guess," he said.

He said they endured weeks of monsoonal downpours and storms and feared ending up in the bottom of the sea. But finally, the tiny boat made it to Australian waters and a remarkable welcome.
"Out of this curtain of mist we saw the little tinnie coming toward us, quite fast, and there were two blokes standing in it, shorts and singlets, sunhats on, white zinc cream on their noses, the fishing rod sticking up into the sky," he recalled.

"They waved at us and they come very close, very close and very fast to our boat and one of them raises the stubbie up as if proposing a toast.

"G’day, mate!” he shouted. "Welcome to Australia." (ABC News, 2014 June 26th)
References


Miller, L. (2006). Being and belonging. (Doctor of Philosophy PhD), University of Tasmania, Tasmania.


Young, Anne F, Russell, Ann, & Powers, Jennifer R. (2004). The sense of belonging to a neighbourhood: Can it be measured and is it related to health and well being in older women? *Social Science & Medicine, 59*(12), 2627-2637.


### Appendix A  Study 1  Supporting Documentation

#### Table A1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definitions</th>
</tr>
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</table>
| **Belongingness** (interchangeable with ‘a sense of belonging’) | a) A personal involvement in a social system, to the extent that the person feels himself to be an indispensable, and integral part of the system (Anant, 1966, p. 21; Hagerty et al., 1992a, p. 173).  
b) A deeply personal and contextually mediated experience that evolves in response to the degree to which an individual feels (a) secure, accepted, included, valued and respected by a defined group, (b) connected with or integral to the group and (c) that their professional and/or personal values are in harmony with those of the group. The experience of belongingness may evolve passively in response to the actions of the group to which one aspires to belong and/or actively through the actions initiated by the individual (Levett-Jones, Lathlean, Maguire, et al., 2007)  
c) A subjective feeling of value and respect derived from a reciprocal relationship to an external referent that is built on a foundation of shared experiences, beliefs or personal characteristics. These feelings of external connectedness are grounded to the context or referent group, to whom one chooses, wants and feels permission to belong. This dynamic phenomenon may be either hindered or promoted by complex interactions between environmental and personal factors (Mahar et al., 2013, p. 1026)  
d) The [need to be and] perception of being involved with others at differing interpersonal levels...which contributes to one’s sense of connectedness (being part of, feeling accepted and fitting in), and esteem (being cared about, valued and respected by others while providing reciprocal acceptance, caring and valuing to others(Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Somers, 1999 (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Somers, 1999)  
e) Belonging is an ontological state of standing in correct relation to one’s community, one’s history and one’s locality, and not belonging is a state of pathological misrelating within the self. (Miller, 2006, p. 244) |
| **Need to belong** | A fundamental human motivation for frequent, non-aversive interactions with ongoing relational bonds (Baumeister & Leary, 1995, p. 522). A core social motive of a need for strong, stable relationships with other people, and groups (Fiske, 2010, p. 17)* |
| **Antecedents to adult belonging** | Antecedents are those incidents that must occur before the existence of the concept [in adulthood] (Hagerty et al., 1992a) |
| **Ibasho – Japan** | The sense of recognizing the place where I can stay, be as my true self, and I can feel as I am (Kunikata et al., 2011, p. 2) |
| **Watan – Afghanistan** | A geographical, and social area where one feels at home and upon which one’s identity is based, a place where one’s family and friends live and where security, social warmth and a strong connection to the soil are experienced (Braakman & Schlenkhoff, 2007, p. 11) |
| **Level of comfort- Africa/ME/Asia** | The experience in a [host] country of feeling connected, happy, and confident in one’s mastery of navigating life in a new home-host country environment (Australian Survey Research Group, 2011) |
| **Peles - Melanesia** | Peles encompasses elements of ancestry, belonging, community, descent, emotion, identity, and sentience, and unites the binary of culture and nature’. A person’s peles established their social connections and obligations, kinship and identity (McGavin, 2016, p. 57). |
Appendix B  Study 2  Supporting Documentation

Study 2: Research Participation Invitation: Belonging and identity in Australia’s multicultural society

My name is Jeff Hodgins, and I am a PhD candidate under the supervision of Dr Gail Moloney, conducting research in the area of social psychology at Southern Cross University. My research involves investigating a sense of belonging within different cultural groups in an Australian multicultural environment.

I am conducting a specific research project to examine belonging in more detail between majority and minority cultural groups, and I invite you to participate. Your participation in this research is voluntary, and you must be 18 or over.

I invite your participation if you self-identify as being among one of the following two cultural groups:

a) An Australian resident with an Anglo-Celtic heritage
   You are either Australian, or non-Australian born, and either an Australian citizen, dual citizen or Australian resident, who identifies with a British, or Irish (or any UK) heritage, or someone who identifies jointly as English, Irish, Welsh, Scottish or similar.

b) An Australian resident with a Chinese heritage
   You are either Australian, or non-Australian born, and either an Australian citizen, dual citizen or Australian resident, who self-identifies as Chinese, or someone who self-identifies jointly as a Chinese-Australian or similar.

You will be invited to contribute your views in a focus group discussion lasting about 2 hours that will be held on SCU’s Lismore campus in late March and early April 2014. Focus group participants will be asked to discuss their views concerning belonging along with others from a similar cultural background.

This research project has Ethics Committee Approval ECN-14-025.

If you would like to participate or obtain further information, please email me directly on jeffrey.hodgins@scu.edu.au, or phone directly on 0435 992 639 to express your interest and I will provide more information.

Kind regards

---

Jeff Hodgins  
BPsysch(Hons), AMAPS  
Discipline of Psychology 
School of Health and Human Sciences  
Military Road, Lismore, NSW  
jeffrey.hodgins@scu.edu.au  
Mobile 0435992639
Focus Group Participant Information

Research Project: *Belonging in a multicultural society*
Focus Group: Australian resident

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research project. Your contribution is valued. The Focus Group Study you will be participating in and contributing to, is investigating what it means to belong in an Australian multicultural society.

Your first, and important task is to read the information document and begin to prepare your thoughts, and even perhaps make some notes about those thoughts. Please consider the questions that we are asking you to think about that information before arrival.

Your presence at, and commitment to the focus group is voluntary. This study presents minimal risk, however, if you feel that your participation may cause you to experience distress, then you may withdraw at any time, leading up to, or during the process.

I will protect your anonymity and only make group data available. I will answer any queries you have and ensure that any discomfort is minimized. The information gathered in the focus group or from the questionnaire will not be made public in any form that could identify you. The findings of this research project may be submitted to a peer-reviewed journal for publication at a later date and may be presented at conferences, but only group data will be reported.

Your involvement in this research will request you to:

1. Prepare for the focus group meeting by reading, and reflecting upon the information in this information sheet. Making notes of your thoughts in response to the questions shown below would be very valuable and may improve your contribution at the actual meeting.
2. Attend a two-hour focus group meeting to be held at the SCU campus.
3. Review the summary findings from your focus group meeting for accuracy.
4. Should you be further interested, full results of the final studies would be offered to you.

Under the guidance of the principal researcher, your Focus Group will be asked to:

a) Discuss the cultural relevance, and importance of a sense of belonging.
b) Discuss your experiences, and observations in others from your cultural viewpoint.
c) Complete a voluntary self-report questionnaire (see attached).

Focus Group Meeting Details:

Date: Thursday Morning, March 6th, 2014
Location: Coffs Harbour Campus, Meeting Room M1.32
Time: 9.00am
Facilities: Beverages, and morning tea,
Arrival: Please arrive on or before 9.00am.

Please bring the information sheets, completed questionnaire, and any notes you have. Thanks again for your agreement to become involved in this research. Apart from helping different cultural groups gain better understanding, I hope it provides insight into your own sense of belonging.

Ethical Conduct of Research
If you have any complaints or reservations about any ethical aspect of your participation in this research, you may contact the HREC through the Ethics Complaints Officer:

Ms Sue Kelly  
Ethics Complaints Officer and Secretary  
HREC  
Southern Cross University  
PO Box 157  
Lismore, NSW, 2480  
Telephone [02] 6626 9139 or fax [02] 6626 9145  
Email: sue.kelly@scu.edu.au

All complaints are investigated fully according to due process under the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research and this University. Any complaint you make will be treated in confidence and you will be informed of the outcome.

The Ethics Approval for this research is ECN-14-025

If you have any questions involving this research please do not hesitate in contacting us.

Researcher: Jeff Hodgins  
Supervisor: Dr Gail Moloney  
Supervisor: Dr Heather Winskel  
Discipline of Psychology  
Discipline of Psychology  
Discipline of Psychology  
jeffrey.hodgins@scu.edu.au  
gail.moloney@scu.edu.au  
heather.winskel@scu.edu.au  
Ph: 0435 992 639  
Ph: (02) 66593191  
Ph: (02) 66593191
Questions to consider prior to Focus Group attendance

These are questions concerning your sense of belonging. Please feel free to add to or change these in order to create your own story of what it means to belong. I am interested in your thoughts, feelings, and behaviours concerning your sense of belonging.

Question 1.
Please reflect for a moment and assess whether you recognize a strong need or desire to belong within yourself or see the need in others?

Question 2.
How important is feeling a sense of belonging to you? Is it as important as say feeling a sense of safety, or a sense of purpose?

Question 3.
Please think about the times, contexts or situations when you feel like you belong? Jot some of those times or situations down if you can.

Question 4.
When you have felt a sense of belonging, how would you describe your experience?

Question 5.
Are there times when you have felt you didn't belong? What were some examples you would be happy to share?

Question 6.
If there were times, what was your experience when feeling like you didn't belong?

Question 7.
Overall, what does a sense of belonging mean to you and how might you describe it?
Ethnicity Self-Report Questionnaire

How do you identify ethnically-nationality? ____________________________.

Please insert your self-identification in the questions below. If you identify with mixed ethnicity, please identify the primary cultural/national group first followed by a secondary culture/nationality if applicable. For example: Australian, Anglo-Australian, English, European Australian, Aboriginal Australian, Australian Indian or Chinese Australian…

Please respond by circling the number on each scale that best indicates how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

1. I identify myself as an (______________________). Insert your self identification between the brackets

   1 2 3 4 5

   Strongly Disagree  Strongly Agree

2. (____________________) are an important group to me.

   1 2 3 4 5

   Strongly Disagree  Strongly Agree

3. Being a (____________________) is an important part of how I see myself at this moment.

   1 2 3 4 5

   Strongly Disagree  Strongly Agree

4. Being a (____________________) feels natural to me.

   1 2 3 4 5

   Strongly Disagree  Strongly Agree

5. I identify with other (____________________) people.

   1 2 3 4 5

   Strongly Disagree  Strongly Agree

6. I'm proud to be a (____________________).

   1 2 3 4 5

   Strongly Disagree  Strongly Agree

7. The fact that I am a (____________________) is an important part of my identity.

   1 2 3 4 5

   Strongly Disagree  Strongly Agree

Study 2: CONSENT FORM

Title of research project: Belonging in a multicultural society

Name of researcher: Jeff Hodgins
Tick the box that applies, sign and date and give to the researcher

I agree to take part in the Southern Cross University research project specified above.  
Yes ☐ No ☐

I understand the information about my participation in the research project, which has been provided to me by the researchers.  
Yes ☐ No ☐

I agree to participate in the focus group moderated by the researcher.  
Yes ☐ No ☐

I agree to allow the focus group to be *audio-taped and/or *video-taped.  
Yes ☐ No ☐

I agree to make myself available for further interview if required.  
Yes ☐ No ☐

I agree to complete questionnaires asking me about my belonging and identity  
Yes ☐ No ☐

I understand that my participation is voluntary and I understand that I can cease my participation at any time.  
Yes ☐ No ☐

I understand that my participation in this research will be treated with confidentiality.  
Yes ☐ No ☐

I understand that any information that may identify me will be de-identified at the time of analysis of any data.  
Yes ☐ No ☐

I understand that no identifying information will be disclosed or published.  
Yes ☐ No ☐

I understand that all information gathered in this research will be kept confidentially for 7 years at the University.  
Yes ☐ No ☐

I am aware that I can contact the researchers at any time with any queries. Their contact details are provided to me.  
Yes ☐ No ☐

I understand that this research project has been approved by the SCU Human Research Ethics Committee  
Yes ☐ No ☐

Participants name: ______________________________________________________________

Participants signature: ______________________________________________________________

Date: ___________________________

☐ Please tick this box and provide your email or mail address below if you wish to receive feedback about the research.

Email: ______________________________________________________________
Study 2: Moderator Guide - Focus Group Meeting Outline

Agenda

8.45-9.00 Arrival, nametags, arrange seating, meeting room, facilities orientation
Participants complete demographics, ethnicity questionnaire.

9.00-9.10 Introductions, outline tasks, timings, and process

9.10-10.05 Belonging
Group discussion to elicit views on the relevance of belonging
Define/describe/summarise what belonging is, what it means, when and how people experience it and when they don't. Connect social identity and belonging.

10.05-10.10 Coffee Break

10.10-10.55 Belonging and Social identities
Hypothetical case study and social identity clusters as prompts to elicit range of social identities that are chosen or ascribed.

10.55-11.05 Concluding Process
Summarize
Advise on next steps.
Agree on future meeting
Thank you and close
Departure

Materials
Demographic questionnaire
Consent forms
Name Tags
Information sheets
Case study sheets
Note Paper, pens, blue tack
Whiteboard markers
Butchers paper and stand
Title of cluster categories of social identities on cardboard placard
5x7 cards ready to put social identities discussed by group under cluster heading
Recording devices - 2 (iphone)
Video recorder

Room and seating arrangements
Room to be booked on SCU campus
Seating to be half-circle facing white board/ paper stand

Introduction

Hello and welcome to the focus group. Thanks for taking the time to join us to talk about belonging. My name is Jeff Hodgins. With the support Southern Cross University, we are having discussions like this with other groups from different cultural backgrounds.

As we progress with the meeting today, there are no right or wrong answers to questions or statements, but rather differing points of view. Please feel free to share your point of view even if it differs from what others have said. Keep in mind that we're just as interested in negative comments as positive comments, and at times the negative comments are the most helpful. It is also important to let people finish what they may be saying before speaking your self. I may ask to bring comments to a close in consideration of time constraints.
We are recording this meeting because it is very important to capture all of your views and comments. People often say very helpful things in these discussions and we can't write fast enough to get them all down. Is that Ok with everyone? Please sign the consent form in front of you.

We will be on a first name basis in the group, however we won't use any names in our reports. You may be assured of complete confidentiality. The outcome from today will contribute with data from other cultural group sessions.

Well, let's begin. You all have nametags from your arrival to help us remember each other's names. Let's find out some more about each other. If you could tell us your name, how you identify, and also tell us one thing about yourself that others might find surprising.

I will be asking questions of you as a group based upon the question I provided in the information package I had provided. So, let's start with the first question.

**Question - What does ‘belonging’ mean to you?**

- Does a sense of belonging have the same meaning?
- Are their times, contexts or situations when you have felt a sense of belonging more than others? If so, what are some of those times/contexts or situations. What are they?
- Do you actively do anything in particular to satisfy your need to belong… or does it just happen?
  - If there are, what are those activities or behaviours?

**Question - Are there times when you have felt you didn't belong, and if so, what did you experience in feeling like you didn't belong?**

Please discuss the following statements…

*Our social identities determine help our sense of belonging?*

.................5 minute break..............
Social Identities

Introduction: In our discussion, we touched on the relationship between identity and belonging. I would like us to explore this relationship further. For clarity in what we are about to discuss.

In the material in front of you, there is a case study. I would like you to read it along with me, and then I am going to ask some questions about its contents in relation to social identity.

Case Study: Moderator hands out case study and ask group to read along it as he reads it aloud. Moderator will then open discussion about social identities and links it with prior discussion about belonging. Moderator then turns the 5 by 5x7 card over to reveal the different cluster headings of social identities. Moderator displays to examples of social identities written on 5x7 cards in the case study by each of the cluster headings. He then asks for group to for social identities they can observe in them self or others. Social identities by each cluster uncovered are written on 5x7 cards and placed on the table.

Question: What social identities do you recognize of yourself or that you observe in other

Cluster 1: Relationships
Cluster 2: Vocational/Avocational
Cluster 3: Personal/Stigmatized
Cluster 4: Political Affiliation
Cluster 5: Ethnicity/Religion

Question: Have we missed any important social identities that are not covered under or by these 5 clusters.

When all social identities discussed and agreed have been tabled.

SI’s that the group feels are important to a sense of belonging

Now I would like to ask you to chose those social identities that you feel are important to your sense of belonging and if possible the situation or context they occur within. If you think of new ones please just add it to the list.

Conclusion

Question: "Of all the things we discussed today, what to you was the most important?"

Summary and close

The moderator and RA would summarise the group data, highlighting the most important of aspects raised during the meeting.

Question: "Is this an adequate summary?"

Review the purpose of the study and then asks the participants:
"Have we missed anything that you feel is important?"

All group participants will be thanked, and the meeting will close.
Immediately after each focus group

- Draw a diagram of seating arrangement by name
- Digitally photograph all material posted on boards
- Spot check recording to ensure it has operated properly
- Conduct debriefing between moderator and RA
- Note themes, thoughts, hunches, interpretations, and ideas
- Compare and contrast this focus group to other groups
- Label and file field notes, recordings and other materials

Soon after the focus group—within hours analyze individual focus group.

- Make back-up copy of recording to computer and arrange resources for transcription
- Researcher analyst listens to recording, reviews field notes and reads transcript when available
- Prepare report of the individual focus group in a question-by-question format
- Support with amplifying quotes
- Share report for verification with RA present at the focus group

When all focus groups completed, analyze the series of focus groups

- Compare and contrast descriptions of belonging and social identities by categories of individual focus groups
- Look for emerging themes by question and then overall
- Construct typologies or diagram the analysis
- Describe findings, themes and use quotes to illustrate

Finally, prepare a report

- Use narrative style
- Select a few quotes for illustration
- Sequence by question or theme
- Share/discuss report for verification with other researchers
- Revise and finalize report
### Social identities and sense of belonging

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IDENTITY</th>
<th>SITUATION OR CONTEXT</th>
<th>IMPORTANCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>In public</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Ravi and Mary are both 40 years old, and live in Alice Springs. Ravi is an orthopaedic surgeon and Mary a registered nurse, and both work in the Alice Springs Hospital. They emigrated from Mumbai India in 1998. It was very difficult in the beginning as their qualifications were not immediately transferrable and both had to undergo 1-2 years in student training to ensure they complied with the professional standards demanded by the Australian Government to be registered in their respective professions.

Ravi is a Parsi, as his family. He has 2 brothers, who along with his parents live in suburban Mumbai. Mary is Catholic, as is her family. Both were born in India. Ravi is a vegetarian due to his traditional cultural and religious beliefs, and although Mary is not vegetarian by heritage, she shares the same diet as her husband. They have two children, Kevin and Karen, who are 12 and 10 years old respectively. They speak English in their daily lives and to their children, but both are fluent in the heritage languages of Farsi and Hindi. They speak this when with their parents or back in Mumbai with friends.

At the same time, Mary’s sister emigrated and now lives with her husband and two children in Sydney. Both Mary and her sister were also successful in bringing their parents to Australia in 2002 after their own successful settlement. Their parents live near Ravi and Mary in Alice Springs in rental accommodation that they help them with financially. Mary’s sister lives in Sydney, and is married with 2 children.

They are honest, hard working, and reliable couple. They own their own home in Alice Springs. They visit Ravi’s parents and siblings in India on a regular basis. They volunteer some of their spare time in the schools of their children as reading mentors, and also in humanitarian groups that support improvement in the health and well being of the many Aboriginal people in town. They are also avid campers and with their children spend regular weekends out camping in the bush.

Mary has progressed to be a head nurse in the Intensive Care Unit (ICU). IN her spare time she is an avid gardener and has a productive vegetable garden for her own families benefit, but also gives away half of her produce to others in need.
Ravi is a leader of an alcohol and substance abuse reparation group seeking to change the towns drinking culture and limit availability of alcohol with in the town limits. Ravi has been subjected to discrimination from individuals due to his Indian heritage at different times, and as a result of his leadership of this citizen group. Mary is involved in her children’s school as an active member on the P & C Association and regularly volunteers her time for functions and events.

They want a good life for their children and believe strongly that a supportive and loving family, and education and hard work are the way to success in life. They are conservative in their political views, and Mary attends to a Catholic church group regularly. Ravi studies Avestan texts as there is no other Parsi’s in Alice Springs with whom to share his faith. They both are regularly involved in a small local Indian Community Association and are active with the group at different important traditional celebrations.

They feel happy and safe living in Australia, call Australia their ‘home’ and feel they are accepted, fit in and actively contribute to their local community. They feel they belong.
Study 2 Field Report: Focus Group 1 – Anglo-Celtic (Pilot)

On March 6, 2012 an Anglo-Celtic pilot focus group meeting was held on Coffs Harbour campus in Meeting Room 132.

The objective of the pilot focus group was to test the planned procedures, material, content and timing designed to meet the aim established for focus group meetings with 3 future cultural groups selected for data collection. The process was to run the meeting as planned, make an assessment as to whether the meeting aim was met, and to receive feedback from participants after the meeting had been closed.

The aims of the focus group participants were:

. To investigate the meaning and relevance of a sense of belonging in their cultural group
. To provide a description of a sense of belonging.
. To elicit a range social identities
. To allocate those social identities to either:
  a) a chosen or ascribed category and
  b) either an aligned/non-aligned category to a sense of belonging

Participants were recruited from the postgraduate student population at the SCU Coff Harbour campus with the aid of the administrator of the Postgraduate Student Association. Of a total of 12 approached and interviewed, 7 committed to attend. Five participants attended, 3 females and two males, with an average age of 51 years. Apologies were later received from one of the non-attendees, 1 remains unaccounted for. All self-identified as Australian and were PhD candidates, 4 from psychology and 1 from education. Participants mean strength of self-identification was just above a midpoint score ($M=2.56$). One male participant scored 1 on most items of the 7-point Likert scale, meaning he perceived a very low level of agreement with an Australian identity.

The room was set up as per plan with a large central table, comfortable seating for participants was arranged I a ‘U’ shape on 3 sides of the table. Each participant was provided a writing pad and pen, and 10 5 x 7 cards and a marker. A demographic form was provided to capture participant information. 6 sheets of Butchers paper was placed round the walls for capturing group comments. Five 5x7 cards containing a social identity category prompt were pinned to the surrounding walls with their blank side showing. An audio recorder was set in the middle of the table.

Participants arrived, selected their nameplate, served themself a beverage, and chose their own seat at the table. The moderator stood at the end of the table in the middle of the ‘U’. The moderator had requested an early arrival so as to start the meeting promptly at 9 AM, participants complied and the meeting commenced on time.

The moderator thanked participants for the attendance and introduced himself. He explained the general aim, structure and length of the meeting. The moderator asked for permission to
record the meeting and advised that data would remain confidential. He then turned on the recorder. The moderator asked each participant to introduce themselves by saying their name, how they self-identified, and to tell the group something that was not well known about themselves. This served to have people warmly engage with others and brought some humor through the unique aspects participants shared.

The moderator then began asking a series of open questions to elicit the group's thoughts about belonging/a sense of belonging. The questions asked were based upon those provided in the participant information sheet.

Firstly, the group was asked to share their thoughts about belonging and what it means. They were questioned on what thoughts or feelings came to mind.

Next, the group was asked whether they thought there was a difference between belonging and a sense of belonging.

The group was then asked when they felt a sense of belonging what did they experience.

Next, the group discussed what it meant to them if they didn't belong and what was their experience.

Finally, the group was asked to create a description of a sense of belonging.

During this process of discussion, the moderator captured keywords and comments using whiteboards and the Butchers paper materials surrounding two sides of the room.

The introduction and discussion on belonging was brought to a conclusion at about 10:10 and a short 5 - 6-minute break was held where participants collected a beverage and cake then returned to their seat.

The moderator then introduced the potential relationship of belonging and identity and asked the participants to explore this relationship. The marked up 5x7 cards with the 5 SI categories were then turned around to act and explained, and used as prompts to elicit social identities from participants. A prepared case study was handed out to participants and then read out loud by moderator. The participants were asked to extract the identities they observed of the couple in the case study. The moderator drew upon a prepared set of 5x7 cards with social identities of the couple in the case study. These were used as examples to guide understanding of what was being asked of them. When it became clear that the participants could identify social identities, the moderator then requested the participants contribute new ones beyond the case study, those social identities that they could identify with themselves or observe in others.

All social identities elicited (or provided by the moderator as examples from the case study) and from their observations were written on 5x7 cards and placed on the table in front of them. A total of 81 social identities were marked on the cards. The moderator then asked participants to separate the social identities into those that were chosen and those that were
ascribed by somebody else. Participants stood and moved the cards around on the table into what became 3 sections. The first section were those social identities that were ascribed, the second section were those that were chosen, and the participants determined that a third section was a hybrid. The group felt that hybrid social identities could have gone either way.

At 10:55 a.m. the moderator recognized that the objective of allocating the social identities into those that aligned with a sense of belonging and those that did not was not feasible in the allocated time and was not pursued.

The moderator thanked for their active engagement and good work, and summarised what had been accomplished in the meeting. The moderator then asked the participants what they felt was the most important aspect of the group discussion. The participants were then asked to complete the demographic data and ethnicity/nationality form. The recorder was turned off. Intending to remain on-time with the 2-hour meeting commitment, the meeting was closed 11:05am.

As this was a pilot focus group, participants were then asked to provide feedback to the moderator about the procedure, materials, questioning, content, and any overall feelings of the focus group.

**Feedback from participants**

- Participants said it was a very enjoyable discussion, and that they had felt it helped them personally become a little clearer about their own sense of belonging. They also felt it was a worthwhile research project. They advised that they felt a difference between the first and the second sections of the focus group. The first section being an open discussion between them about a sense of belonging, whereas the second section asked them to take specific ‘harder’ actions via determining social identities in the case study and of themself. Consequently, participants said that they enjoyed the first section and the second section felt like a bit of work. A general comment was that it wasn't until part way through the second section, that the connection of social identity and belonging started to become more apparent and make sense to them. They then engaged more deeply with the process when they felt clarity about that. The group suggested that social identity should be defined more clearly. They felt the moderation was handled well, in that the meeting content and agenda was moved along at the right pace, that materials were well presented, the room layout and meeting structure worked well (notwithstanding the lack of a clear bridge from Section 1 to Section 2. They appreciated the on-time start and finish.

**Moderator Comments**

**Focus Group aims**

- To investigate the meaning and relevance of a sense of belonging in their cultural group
The questions about a sense of belonging were used by the moderator in too much of a ‘conversational style of question’. The word ‘sense’ in the phraseology of belonging brought much more recognition and discussion about the cognitive and affective nature of belonging than expected.

- To provide a description of a sense of belonging
  This seemed that keywords could be captured that would go in a description but getting participants to write one would take the second section/and hour or more.

- To elicit a range social identities
  This was shown to done effectively, however it needs a better bridge from the belonging discussion section to the SI elicitation.

- To allocate those social identities to either:
  a) a chosen or ascribed category and
  b) either an aligned/non-aligned category to a sense of belonging
  When the social identity section was completed, the moderator had the choice to either have participants split the social identities between chosen and described, or to have them allocate social identities that supported a sense of belonging and those that didn't. I chose the former, However, only one of these sub-aims can be met in the timeframe and in the logical flow of the meeting. Based upon the pilot experience the connection between identity and belonging should be used, as the chosen/ascribed was a new concept for participants to have to understand.

The demographic questionnaire needs to be more comprehensive

Changes to Focus Group as a result of the Pilot

1) The meeting will be videoed as well as audio recorded to gain better indication of nuances of responses.
2) Moderator to ask specific, consistent and crisp questions equally in all focus groups
3) A new statement for discussion will be added “It is difficult to know a sense of belonging when we are unsure of our identity” This question will be the bridge from the sense of belonging segment discussion through to social identity segment. A definition of social identity will be put up on a wall and turned around at the commencement of the segment on social identity elicitation.
4) The aim of differentiating social identities into those that participants feel serve their sense of belonging, and those that don't will be pursued. In other words, the end of the social identities capturing session, participants will be asked to segment the social identities into those that serve a sense of belonging and those that don’t. The chosen vs. ascribed question will be dropped

Study 2 Focus Group 1 Notes

Notes
What does belonging or a sense of belonging mean to you?
Home
Family
Safety –physical and emotional
Belonging and Identity in Australia’s Multicultural Society

My tribe and feeling supported
Belong to…..
Belonging is an action
Responsibility (in your birth Family) versus SOB (Your marriage created family)
It's a feeling
Felt more in its absence
A Sense’
Calming
Means acceptance and understanding from others
Groups I belong to I don't count them as contributing to my SOB
SOB = more personal/inside both head and heart
History a factor in SOB….eg family a big influence on SOB
Externally – when categorized by a group there is not a feeling of belonging
Identify with historical culture
Feel protected

Do we all have a need to belong?
It is a basic/fundamental need
I belong to my children
Belonging is not a possession
Belonging has an inherent commitment
Reliance upon belonging
Very important for people to ‘get you’
Not important sometimes
Feel belonging when with a similar group
‘My tribe’
Shared experiences historically, particularly shared values
I belong in the ocean
I belong in the bush
I belong to a problem and am alone with it
Belong to your self
Connected feeling but not necessarily with them
Internal knowing of belonging to family and friends

Don't belong……..
No history of shared experience/or attachments
Place of ethnic difference
Lacking in self-efficacy/ feel like an imposter
Autonomy and self-actualization, but become ‘too good for us’ (for old group)
Belonging is not static, it is dynamic and things change
Feel uncomfortable
Lack feeling of safety, confidence, feel like an outsider, lonely, alien, angry, anxious
Fear of not being heard, understood, others not understanding who you are
Ostracized from groups

Keywords for a SOB
Acceptance
Safety
Being understood
Included
Comfort
Caring
Sharing
Respect
Dynamic Commitment (conscious)
Relationships
Common values
Experienced in a group, a family, a vocation, an area of interest

What was important to you today from this discussion?
Understanding what my sense of belonging is
How to better define it
Sharing other peoples perspectives
All of us have a core need for belonging
Labels are on everyone and some labels make it very difficult
Study 2 Focus Group 2 Field Report

Cultural Group: Australians with an Anglo-Celtic heritage
Date: March 20th, 2014
Location: Meeting Room Z1.90, SCU campus Lismore

Aims

1. To investigate the meaning and relevance of a sense of belonging
2. To elicit a range of social identities if connection made
3. To elicit a range of individual social identities, their situation, and ranked importance to a sense of belonging

Participants were recruited through email invitation to the staff and student population of SCU Lismore, and from a local community group. A total of 39 responses were received for the category group of Anglo Celtic heritage. In additions to responding personally to all with Participant Information Sheets, several follow up email reminders were made to those who had agreed to participate. A total of 10 people confirmed their attendance up to 2 days prior, however 8 attended on the day, comprising 6 females, and 2 males. The average participant age was 46.2 years (Age range 26-65). Education levels included High School Certification, undergraduate degrees, Masters and PhD. Five participants were Australian born and 3 were not, but were long-term residents and Australian citizens. Those born overseas had an average length of residency in Australia of 33.3 years. Mean strength of ethnicity-nationality was 3.84, and individually the participants self-identified as:

- Australian-Aboriginal (with Anglo heritage)
- British-Yorkshireman
- Anglo-Australian
- Anglo-Celtic Australian
- English-Eurasian
- Anglo-Australian
- Australian
- Australia-1/2 Dutch (also with Anglo heritage)

See Appendix A.

The room was set up with a large central table, comfortable seating for participants was arranged in a ‘U’ shape on 3 sides of the table. Each participant was provided a writing pad and pen, and 10 5x7 cards and a marker. Participant consent forms were provided. Demographic and Ethnicity Questionnaires had been sent prior by email. Five 5x7 cards containing a social identity category prompt were pinned to the surrounding walls with their blank side showing. An audio recorder was set in the middle of the table, and a video recorder at one side.

Participants arrived, selected their nameplate, served themself a beverage, and chose their own seat at the table. The moderator stood at the end of the table in the middle of the ‘U’. The moderator had requested an early arrival so as to start the meeting promptly at 9 AM, participants complied and the meeting commenced on time. Participant consent and demographic forms were completed and collected.

The moderator thanked participants for the attendance and introduced himself. He explained the general aim, structure and length of the meeting. The moderator asked for permission to record the
meeting and advised that data would remain confidential. He then turned on the audio and video
recorders. The moderator asked each to introduce them self by saying their name, how they self-
identified, and to tell the group something that was not well known about them self. This served to
have people warmly engage with others and brought some humour through the unique aspects
participants shared.

The moderator then asked a series of open questions to elicit the group's thoughts about a belonging
and a sense of belonging, in order to meet the first aim of the focus group

Firstly, the group was asked to share their thoughts about belonging and what it means. After some
discussion, the moderator questioned whether there was a difference between belonging and a sense of
belonging. Next, the group was asked whether there were times contexts or situations where they had
felt a sense of belonging more than others; they were asked to describe these. Then, the group was
asked as to whether they carried out certain behaviours or activities in order to belong.
The group was then asked whether there were times or situations that they felt they did belong and if
so what was their experience in feeling like they belong.

The moderator indicated that the group had drawn relationship between identity and belonging and
that the next section will help us examine the relationship.

Finally, the group was asked to discuss this following statement…

"Our social identities determine or help our sense of belonging".

A short break ensued when this discussion completed.

This second section was intended to meet the second aim of the focus group, that of eliciting a range
of social identities.

The moderator indicated that the group discussion had raised the relationship between identity and
belonging, and that in order to explore this the group would use a case study. The moderator read the
case study aloud and participants read along with a copy that was provided. When completed, the
moderator outlined the task for the focus group. The task was to extract the social identities that from
the case study. To assist this process, the moderator turned over the five social identity cluster group
headings that were pinned on the board. The moderator then went through each of these cluster
headings, to describe examples of social identities within the case study. Then, the moderator asked
the group to identify those social identities under each heading progressively. When social identities
appeared to be exhausted for a particular cluster, the group moved to the next one. Social identities
were written by each group member, 5x7 card in front of them and placed at the central area on the
table.

The moderator thanked them for their good work and outline the final task to meet the third aim of
eliciting data concerning social identities personally relevant to each participant. Each individual was
now asked to complete a form that had been provided by the moderator. The moderator asked each
person to write down those social identities they felt were connected to their sense of belonging and to
write the situation where they experience that. After concluding that the moderator asked that they
rank the importance of each identity. They could rank multiple 1’s 2’s etc. Participants spent 15
minutes, completing this task.
The moderator then summarized briefly what had been discussed, asked the group whether anything significant was missing, and asked each participant what they felt most important came out of the meeting for them.

All forms were collected from participants.

The meeting was closed and recorders turned off.

Summary of Results:

Social Identities

The total number of social identities elicited from the focus group was 91.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of SI</th>
<th>Part.1</th>
<th>Part.2</th>
<th>Part.3</th>
<th>Part.4</th>
<th>Part.5</th>
<th>Part.6</th>
<th>Part.7</th>
<th>Part.8</th>
<th>Mean</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Relationships</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vocational/Avocational</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Personal/Stigmatized</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ethnicity/Religion</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Political Affiliation</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Social Identities</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

See Table B1 for details.

The mean number of individual social identities reported for the group was 17. The range was 11 - 25 social identities. Vocational/Avocational (m= 7.0) was the most highly cited type of SI from each participant, followed by relationships (5.1). See Appendix C.
Study 2 Social Identities Elicited from Focus Group Participants in Clustered Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cluster</th>
<th>Identity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity/Religion</td>
<td>Alice Springs Resident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity/Religion</td>
<td>Atheist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity/Religion</td>
<td>Australian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity/Religion</td>
<td>Baptist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity/Religion</td>
<td>Buddhist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity/Religion</td>
<td>Catholic</td>
</tr>
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<td>Ethnicity/Religion</td>
<td>Christian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity/Religion</td>
<td>Church of England</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity/Religion</td>
<td>English person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity/Religion</td>
<td>Eurasian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity/Religion</td>
<td>Hindu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity/Religion</td>
<td>Immigrant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity/Religion</td>
<td>Indian Australian</td>
</tr>
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<td>Lismorian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity/Religion</td>
<td>Nonheist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity/Religion</td>
<td>Parsi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity/Religion</td>
<td>Protestant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity/Religion</td>
<td>Sydneyite</td>
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<td>Personal/Stigmatized</td>
<td>Centerlink Recipient</td>
</tr>
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<td>Personal/Stigmatized</td>
<td>Criminal</td>
</tr>
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<td>Personal/Stigmatized</td>
<td>Cross Dresser</td>
</tr>
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<td>Personal/Stigmatized</td>
<td>Disabled Person</td>
</tr>
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<td>Personal/Stigmatized</td>
<td>Drug Addict</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Environmentalist</td>
</tr>
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<td>Gay</td>
</tr>
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<td>Personal/Stigmatized</td>
<td>Humanitarian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Mentally Ill Person</td>
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<td>Narcotics Anonymous Member</td>
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<td>Personal/Stigmatized</td>
<td>Non Drinker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal/Stigmatized</td>
<td>Non-smoker</td>
</tr>
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<td>Personal/Stigmatized</td>
<td>P-Plate Driver</td>
</tr>
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<td>Personal/Stigmatized</td>
<td>Pensioner</td>
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<tr>
<td>Personal/Stigmatized</td>
<td>Protestor</td>
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<tr>
<td>Personal/Stigmatized</td>
<td>Senior Citizen</td>
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<td>Smoker</td>
</tr>
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<td>Personal/Stigmatized</td>
<td>Straight person</td>
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<td>Transgender Person</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Conservative</td>
</tr>
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<td>Labour voter</td>
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<tr>
<td>Relationships</td>
<td>Aunt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationships</td>
<td>Brother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationships</td>
<td>Cousin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationships</td>
<td>Daughter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationships</td>
<td>Friend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationships</td>
<td>Grandmother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
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<td>Pet Owner</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Son</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationships</td>
<td>Step Grandmother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationships</td>
<td>Step Mother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationships</td>
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<td>Woman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocation/Avocation</td>
<td>Biker</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vocation/Avocation</td>
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<td>--------------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
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<td>Vocation/Avocation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vocation/Avocation</td>
<td>Community Leader</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Crafts person</td>
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<td>Dancer</td>
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<td>Doctor</td>
</tr>
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<td>Vocation/Avocation</td>
<td>Dog Walker</td>
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<td>Equity Practitioner</td>
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<td>Vocation/Avocation</td>
<td>Factory Worker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocation/Avocation</td>
<td>Gardener</td>
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<td>Gym Member</td>
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<td>Lifestyle Medicine Practitioner</td>
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<td>Musician</td>
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<td>Nurse</td>
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<td>Yoga Participant</td>
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Study 2 Individual participant’s social identities and their relative importance to a sense of belonging.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender/ SI’s</th>
<th>Cluster</th>
<th>Identity</th>
<th>Importance to SB</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Relationships</td>
<td>Mother</td>
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<tr>
<td>24 x SI</td>
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<td>Rel = 7</td>
<td>Relationships</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
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<td>Voc = 13</td>
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<td>Friend</td>
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<td>Per = 3</td>
<td>Relationships</td>
<td>Counselor</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eth = 1</td>
<td>Relationships</td>
<td>Daughter</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pol = 0</td>
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<td>7</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Sister</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Personal/Stigmatized</td>
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<td>Non-Smoker</td>
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<td>Knitter</td>
<td>Not rated</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vocational/Avocational</td>
<td>Gardener</td>
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<td>Vocational/Avocational</td>
<td>Dressmaker</td>
<td>Not rated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ethnicity/Religion</td>
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<td>Not rated</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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Belonging and Identity in Australia’s Multicultural Society
| Rel=2 | Personal/Stigmatized | Vegan | 2 |
| Voc = 3 | Relationships | Father | 4 |
| Per = 4 | Vocational/Avocational | Counselor | 5 |
| Eth = 2 | Relationships | Partner | 6 |
| Pol = 0 | Vocational/Avocational | Student | 7 |
| Personal/Stigmatized | Recovering Addict | 8 |
| Vocational/Avocational | Yoga Instructor | 9 |
| Personal/Stigmatized | Immigrant | 9 |
| Personal/Stigmatized | Criminal | 10 |
| Female | Relationships | Mother | 1 |
| 13 SI | Relationships | Female | 1 |
| Rel=5 | Relationships | Sister | 1 |
| Voc = 6 | Relationships | Partner | 1 |
| Per = 1 | Relationships | Carer | 1 |
| Eth = 1 | Vocational/Avocational | Yoga Practitioner | 2 |
| Pol = 0 | Personal/Stigmatized | Mentally Ill Person | 2 |
| Vocational/Avocational | Dancer | 3 |
| Vocational/Avocational | Gardener | 3 |
| Vocational/Avocational | Artist | 3 |
| Vocational/Avocational | Uni Graduate | 4 |
| Vocational/Avocational | Equity Practitioner | 4 |
| Ethnicity/Religion | Non Religious Person | 5 |
Study 2 Focus Group 3 Field Report

Cultural Group: Australian permanent residents/citizens with Chinese heritage
Date: March 27th, 2014
Location: Meeting Room Z1.90, SCU campus Lismore

Aims

1. To investigate the meaning and relevance of a sense of belonging
2. To elicit a range of social identities
3. To elicit a range of individual social identities, their situation, and ranked importance to a sense of belonging.

Participants were recruited through by email invitation to the staff and student population of SCU Lismore and Coffs Harbour, and through snowballing beginning with individuals who were Chinese Post Graduate students in Lismore. A total of 16 responses were received for the category group of Australian residents with Chinese heritage. Offers from International student officers were explored however potential student participants were not permanent residents or citizens and therefore did not meet the criteria. It became apparent that participants offering their attendance were based in both Lismore and Coffs Harbour. A decision was made to hold two groups, one in Lismore and one in Coffs Harbour. In addition to responding personally to all who expressed interest with Participant Information Sheets, several follow up email reminders were made to those who had subsequently agreed to participate.

A total of 5 people confirmed and attended on the day. Participants comprised 4 females, and 1 male. The average age was 49.6 years (Age range 43-60). Education levels included tertiary, undergraduate degrees, Masters and PhD. All five participants were born in China and were long-term residents or Australian citizens, with an average length of residency in Australia of 17 years. Mean strength of ethnicity-nationality was 3.91, and individually the participants self-identified as:

- Chinese
- Chinese Australian
- Chinese Australian
- Chinese Australian
- Australian

See Appendix A for details.

The room was set up with a large central table, comfortable seating for participants was arranged in a ‘U’ shape on 3 sides of the table. Each participant was provided a writing pad and pen, and 10 5x7 cards and a marker. Participant consent forms were provided. Demographic and Ethnicity Questionnaires were sent prior to the meeting by email. Five 5x7 cards containing a social identity category prompt were pinned to the surrounding walls with their blank side showing. An audio recorder was set in the middle of the table, and a video recorder at one side.

Participants arrived, selected their nameplate, served themselves a beverage, and chose their own seat at the table. The moderator stood at the end of the table. The moderator had requested an early arrival so as to start the meeting promptly at 9 am, 4 out of 5 participants complied and the meeting commenced on time. One person was about 10 minutes late. Participant consent and demographic forms were completed and collected.
The moderator thanked participants for the attendance and introduced himself. He explained the general aim, structure and length of the meeting. The moderator asked for permission to record the meeting and advised that data would remain confidential. He then turned on the audio and video recorders. The moderator asked each to introduce themselves by saying their name, how they self-identified, and to tell the group something that was not well known about themselves. This served to have people warmly engage with others and brought some humor through the unique aspects participants shared.

The moderator then asked a series of open questions to elicit the group's thoughts about belonging and a sense of belonging, in order to meet the first aim of the focus group.

Firstly the group was asked to share their thoughts about belonging and what it means. After some discussion the moderator questioned whether there was a difference between belonging and a sense of belonging. Next, the group was asked whether there were times contexts or situations where they had felt a sense of belonging more than others; they were asked to describe these. Then, the group was asked as to whether they carried out certain behaviours or activities in order to belong.

The group was then asked whether there were times or situations that they felt they did belong and if so what was their experience in feeling like they belong.

The moderator indicated that the group had drawn a relationship between identity and belonging. Hence the group was asked to discuss this following statement…

"Our social identities determine or help our sense of belonging".

A short break was held when discussion of this statement completed.

This second section was intended to meet the second aim of the focus group, that of eliciting a range of social identities.

The moderator indicated that the group discussion had raised a relationship between identity and belonging, and that in order to explore this the group would initially use a case study to show the nature of social identities. The moderator read the case study aloud and participants read along with a copy that was provided. When completed, the moderator outlined the task for the focus group. Their task was to extract the social identities that from the case study. To assist this process, the moderator turned over and displayed five social identity cluster group headings from prior research papers. These were pinned on the board. The moderator then went through each of these cluster headings, to describe examples of social identities within the case study. When it was clear that the group could observe social identities and understood the task, the moderator asked the group to nominate social identities they held of themselves or observed under the cluster headings with in their own cultural group. When social identities observations appeared to be exhausted for a particular cluster, the moderator moved the group moved on to the next one. Social identities were written by each group member on a 5x7 card in front of them, and placed at a central area on the table.

When the group had exhausted nominating social identities the moderator thanked them for their good work, and outlined the final task to meet the third aim, that of eliciting data concerning social identity personally relevant to each participant. Each individual was then asked to complete a form provided with headings of social identity, situation and importance. The moderator asked each person to write down social identities they felt were connected to their sense of belonging, the situation where they experience that identity, and then to rank the importance of each identity as it related to a sense of belonging. They could rank multiple 1’s 2’s etc. Participants spent 15 minutes, completing this task.
The moderator then summarized briefly what had been discussed, asked the group whether anything significant was missing, and asked each participant what they felt most important came out of the meeting for them.

The moderator then asked them to propose an equivalent Chinese term for a sense of belonging. They did so with full consensus that the term meant a sense of belonging. The term was:

Guīshū gǎn

The group proposed this meant ‘the feeling in ones heart about sharing similar values, language, and social experiences, and feeling accepted and valued by others’.

All residual forms were collected from participants.

The meeting was closed and recorders turned off.

Summary of Results:

Social Identities:

The total number of social identities elicited from the focus group was 62. See Appendix B for complete listing.

<table>
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<th>Type of SI</th>
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<th>Part.2</th>
<th>Part.3</th>
<th>Part.4</th>
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</table>

The mean number of individual social identities reported by the participants was 14.6. The range was 12 – 16 social identities. Vocational/Avocation (m = 7.6) was the most highly cited type of SI from each participant, followed by relationships (m = 5.6). See Appendix C for details.
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<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Country</th>
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<td><a href="mailto:shi.zhou@scu.edu.au">shi.zhou@scu.edu.au</a></td>
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<td><a href="mailto:quyue914@yahoo.com.au">quyue914@yahoo.com.au</a></td>
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<td>Stephanie Xuemei Zhang</td>
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<td><a href="mailto:stephanie.zhang118@gmail.com">stephanie.zhang118@gmail.com</a></td>
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49.6 17 3.8 3.6 3.2 4.4 3.8 5.0 3.5 3.01
### Social Identities Elicited from Focus Group Participants in Clustered Groups

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<td>Niece</td>
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<td>Parent</td>
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<td>Volunteer</td>
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<td>62</td>
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</table>
Individual participant nominated social identities, and their ranked importance to a sense of belonging.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender/ SI’s</th>
<th>Cluster</th>
<th>Identity</th>
<th>Importance to SB</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Female</td>
<td>12 x SI</td>
<td>Relationships</td>
<td>Mother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Eth = 0</td>
<td>Relationships</td>
<td>Neighbour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Per = 0</td>
<td>Vocational/Avocational</td>
<td>Cultural promoter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Pol =0</td>
<td>Vocational/Avocational</td>
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<td>Driver</td>
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<td>Worker</td>
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<td>16 x SI</td>
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<td>Neighbour</td>
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<td>Relationships</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Eth = 0</td>
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<td>Drive</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cook</td>
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Study 2 Focus Group 4 Field Report

**Cultural Group:** Australian permanent residents/citizens with Chinese heritage

**Date:** April 3rd, 2014

**Location:** Meeting Room M1.32, Coff Harbour campus, Coff Harbour

**Aims**

1. To investigate the meaning and relevance of a sense of belonging
2. To elicit a range of social identities
3. To elicit a range of individual social identities, their situation, and ranked importance to a sense of belonging.

Participants were recruited through by email invitation to the staff and student population of SCU Lismore and Coffs Harbour, and through snowballing beginning with individuals who were Chinese Post Graduate students in Lismore. A total of 16 responses were received for the category group of Australian residents with Chinese heritage. Offers from International Student Services officers were explored however potential student participants were not permanent residents or citizens and therefore did not meet the criteria. It became apparent that participants offering their attendance were based in both Lismore and Coffs Harbour. A decision was made to hold two smaller groups, one in Lismore and one in Coffs Harbour. In addition to responding personally to all who expressed interest with Participant Information Sheets, several follow up email reminders were made to those who had agreed to participate.

A total of 4 people confirmed for the Coffs Harbour Group and all attended on the day. Participants comprised 3 females, and 1 male. The average age was 41 years (Age range 31-50). Education levels included undergraduate degrees, a Masters and PhD. Three participants were born in Malaysia of Chinese parents, two were long-term residents or Australian citizens, two were short term residents, with the average length of residency in Australia was M =16 years. Mean strength of ethnicity-nationality was 4.29, and individually the participants self-identified as:

- Chinese
- Chinese
- Malaysian Chinese
- Chinese

See Appendix A for details.

The room was set up with a large central table, comfortable seating for participants was arranged in a ‘U’ shape on 3 sides of the table. Each participant was provided a writing pad and pen, and 10 5x7 cards and a marker. Participant consent forms were provided. Demographic and Ethnicity Questionnaires were sent prior to the meeting by email. Five 5x7 cards containing a social identity category prompt were pinned to the surrounding walls with their blank side showing. An audio recorder was set in the middle of the table, and a video recorder at one side.

Participants arrived, selected their nameplate, served themself a beverage, and chose their own seat at the table. The moderator stood at the end of the table. The moderator had requested an early arrival so as to start the meeting promptly at 9 am, participants complied and the meeting commenced on time. The moderator again asked for permission to record the meeting advised that data would remain confidential. Participant consent and demographic forms were completed and collected.
The moderator turned on the audio and video recorders, thanked participants for their attendance and introduced himself. He explained the general aim, structure and length of the meeting. The moderator asked each to introduce themselves by saying their name, how they self-identified, and to tell the group something that was not well known about them. This served to have people warmly engage with others and brought some humor through the unique aspects participants shared.

The moderator then asked a series of open questions to elicit the group's thoughts about a belonging and a sense of belonging, in order to meet the first aim of the focus group.

Firstly the group was asked to share their thoughts about belonging and what it means. After some discussion the moderator questioned whether there was a difference between belonging and a sense of belonging. Next, the group was asked whether there were times contexts or situations where they had felt a sense of belonging more than others; they were asked to describe these. Then, the group was asked as to whether they carried out certain behaviours or activities in order to belong. The group was then asked whether there were times or situations that they felt they did belong and if so what was their experience in feeling like they belong.

The moderator indicated that the group had drawn a relationship between identity and belonging. Hence the group was asked to discuss this following statement... "Our social identities determine or help our sense of belonging".

A short break was held when participant discussion of this statement completed.

This second section was intended to meet the second aim of the focus group, that of eliciting a range of social identities.

The moderator indicated that the group discussion had raised a relationship between identity and belonging, and that in order to explore this the group would initially use a case study to show the nature of social identities. The moderator read the case study aloud and participants read along with a copy that was provided. When completed, the moderator outlined the task for the focus group. Their task was to extract the social identities that from the case study. To assist this process, the moderator turned over and displayed five social identity cluster group headings from prior research papers (Relational, Vocational/Avocational, Political, Ethnicity/Religion, and Personal/Stigmatized). These cluster headings were pinned on a board for reference during the discussion.

The moderator then went through each of these cluster headings, to describe examples of social identities within the case study. When it was clear that the group could observe social identities and understood the task, the moderator asked the group to nominate social identities from the case study, then of them self or observed under the cluster headings within their own cultural group. When social identities observations appeared exhausted for a particular cluster, the moderator moved the group to the next one. Social identities were written by each group member on a 5x7 card in front of them, offered to the other participants for acceptance and placed at a central area on the table.

When the group had exhausted nominating social identities the moderator thanked them for their good work, and outlined the final task to meet the third aim of the meeting, that of eliciting data concerning those social identities personally relevant to each participant. Each individual was asked to complete a form provided with headings of social identity, situation and importance. The moderator asked each person to write down social identities they felt were connected to their sense of belonging, the situation where they experience that identity, and then to rank the importance of each identity as it
related to a sense of belonging. They could rank multiple 1’s 2’s etc. Participants spent 15-20 minutes, completing this task.

The moderator then summarized briefly what had been discussed, asked the group whether anything significant was missing, and asked each participant what they felt most important came out of the meeting for them.

The moderator asked participants if they would propose an equivalent Chinese term for a sense of belonging. They did so with full consensus that the term meant a sense of belonging. The term was:

*Guǐshǔ gǎn*

The group proposed this meant a sense of belonging in the terms they had talked about in the meeting.

All residual forms were collected from participants.

The meeting was closed and recorders turned off.

**Summary of Results:**

Social Identities:

The total number of social identities elicited from the focus group was 62. See Appendix B for complete listing.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SI Types</th>
<th>Part. 1 Fem</th>
<th>Part. 2 Fem</th>
<th>Part. 3 Mal</th>
<th>Part. 4 Fem</th>
<th>Mean</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>9.7%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Personal/stigmatized…..</td>
<td>8</td>
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<td>Total Social Identities</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The mean number of individual social identities reported by the participants was 15.5. The range was 14 – 17 social identities. Relationship types ($M = 6.5$) were the highest mean cited SI from each participant, followed by Vocational/Avocation types ($M = 6.5$). See Appendix C for details.
## Participant Details

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chinese Focus Group</th>
<th>Email</th>
<th>Participant Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yun Lok Lee</td>
<td>yun)<a href="mailto:lok.lee@scu.edu.au">lok.lee@scu.edu.au</a></td>
<td>Male 30, Malaysia, Chinese, Christian, PhD 4.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sue Fann Lue</td>
<td><a href="mailto:livelyue@gmail.com">livelyue@gmail.com</a></td>
<td>Female 31, China, Chinese, None, Bachelor 3.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Szu Hann-Lee</td>
<td><a href="mailto:szu.lee@scu.edu.au">szu.lee@scu.edu.au</a></td>
<td>Female 50, Malaysia, Chinese-Christian, Masters 4.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yeem Mei Leong</td>
<td><a href="mailto:yeemei@yahoo.com">yeemei@yahoo.com</a></td>
<td>Female 33, Malaysia, Malaysian-Chinese, Christian, Bachelor 3.57</td>
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</table>
Social Identities Elicited from Focus Group Participants in Clustered Groups

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</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Indian Community Member</td>
</tr>
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<td>Brother</td>
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<td>Daughter</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Food Lover</td>
</tr>
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<td>Hindu</td>
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</tr>
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<tr>
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Belonging and Identity in Australia’s Multicultural Society
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<td>27</td>
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Individual participant nominated social identities, and their ranked importance to a sense of belonging.

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<th>Gender/ SI's</th>
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<td>1</td>
</tr>
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<td>Vocational/Avocational</td>
<td>Cook</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td></td>
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Appendix C  Study 3  Supporting Documentation

Information for Participants

Research Survey: A sense of belonging and Australian identity

Thank you for contributing to this important survey. You will need to self-identify in whole or in part as Australian...as an Australian citizen, an Australian permanent resident or Australian resident. You may also self-identify with other cultural or ethnic groups; however, this survey will ask you to particularly respond to your Australian identity.

The survey will take around 15 minutes or so to complete. Your anonymity is assured as the information from the completed questionnaire will only be available to the researcher and will not include details such as your phone number. You cannot be identified through your responses.

Possible discomforts or risks
If you do feel concerned about participating in this research, please feel free to discontinue your participation at any stage. If you feel concerned about anything raised by this study, please feel free to contact myself, Jeff Hodgins, or my supervisors Dr Gail Moloney; or Dr Heather Winskel on the phone numbers provided below.

The risks associated with participation in this study are considered minimal however some questions may cause you concern. If you feel any concern following participation in the study please contact Lifeline on 131 114 or Beyond Blue on 1300 22 4636, or SCU Counseling in Lismore 02 6626 9131, Coffs Harbour 02 6659 3263, and the Gold Coast 07 8249 3227.

Responsibilities of the researcher:
I will protect your anonymity and answer any queries you have to ensure that any discomfort is minimized. The information gathered from the questionnaire will not be made public in any form that could identify you. Your participation in this study is strictly voluntary and your confidentiality is assured. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time. You may also elect not to answer any questions asked. The findings of this research project may be submitted to a peer-reviewed journal for publication at a later date and may be presented at conferences.

Responsibilities of the participant:
To participate in this research you must be over 18 years old. By proceeding to participate in the survey, it is inferred that you understand the following statements listed below:

- I understand that my participation is voluntary
- I understand that I will remain anonymous in the data collected in this experiment
- I understand that I can terminate my participation in this survey at any time without any negative consequences
- I understand that the data collected in this experiment will be kept securely for 7 years at Southern Cross University and then destroyed.

Ethical Conduct of Research

Belonging and Identity in Australia’s Multicultural Society
Dear Gail, Heather and Jeffrey,

Thank you for the expedited ethics application received 13th August 2015. This was considered by the Chair of the HREC Professor Bill Boyd and is found to be of merit, low risk and meeting the Statement principles. I am pleased to advise you that ethics approval has been granted for this research project. Please note the ethics approval number above. Your responsibilities under this approval are as follows:

1. The Coordinating Principal Investigator will immediately report anything that might warrant review of ethical approval of the project on the Adverse Events form.

2. The Coordinating Principal Investigator will immediately notify the SCU HREC, on the appropriate form, of any change in protocol.

3. The Coordinating Principal Investigator will report to the SCH HREC annually in the specified format and notify HREC when the project is completed.

4. The Coordinating Principal Investigator will notify the SCU HREC if the project is discontinued at a participating site before the expected completion date, with reasons provided.

5. The Coordinating Principal Investigator will notify the SCU HREC of any plan to extend the duration of the project past the approval period listed above and will submit any associated required documentation.

Researchers conducting a study in a country other than Australia, need to be aware of any protocols for that country and ensure that they are followed ethically and with appropriate cultural sensitivity.

Should you have any queries about the SCU HREC’s consideration of your project please contact ethics.lismore@scu.edu.au. The SCU HREC Terms of Reference, membership and standard forms are available from http://scu.edu.au/research/index.php/dds?cat_id=1225#cat1225.

SCU HREC wishes you every success in your research.

Kind Regards,

per Prof. Bill Boyd Chair, Human Research Ethics Committee
Study 3: Recruitment Email Invitation

Heading in email subject line: Research Invitation: National identity and a sense of belonging

My name is Jeff Hodgins and I am a PhD candidate in Social Psychology at Southern Cross University.

I am conducting valuable social psychological research to better understand how people with different social and cultural backgrounds experience a sense of belonging in Australia. The aim of my research is to understand how we perceive our experience of a sense of belonging in our social world, particularly in Australia’s multicultural society.

I would appreciate if you could make time to complete an online questionnaire. It is simple, quick and easy. Log into the survey using the link below, and simply follow the instructions. The questionnaire should take you approximately 20 minutes to complete.

Please note you must be 18 or over to participate, your participation is completely voluntary and you are under no obligation to participate.

Here is the link: (example only). Please click on the link to start.


If you do have time to participate, I would welcome providing you feedback when the research is complete. You will find information about how to receive feedback at the end of the survey that you have kindly contributed to.

It would also be very valuable and helpful if you could forward this invitation to other members of your cultural group.

Thank you.

Jeff Hodgins  
BPsych (Hons), PhD Candidate  
Discipline of Psychology  
Southern Cross University  
jeffrey.hodgins@scu.edu.au

Dr Gail Moloney  
Senior Lecturer  
Department of Psychology  
Southern Cross University  
gail.moloney@scu.edu.au

Dr Heather Winskel  
Senior Lecturer  
Department of Psychology  
Southern Cross University  
heather.winskel@scu.edu.au
Study 3: Online Survey

Participant Information Statement

Research Title: Identity and a sense of belonging in Australia.

Thank you for contributing to this online survey. It will take around 20 minutes or so to complete. Your anonymity is assured as the information from the completed questionnaire will only be available to the researcher and will not include details such as your phone number. You cannot be identified through your responses.

Possible discomforts or risks

If you do feel concerned about participating in this research, please feel free to discontinue your participation at any stage. If you feel concerned about anything raised by this study, please feel free to contact myself (Jeff Hodgins), or my supervisors (Dr Gail Moloney; or Dr Heather Winskel), on the numbers provided below.

The risks associated with participation in this study are considered minimal however some questions may cause you concern. If you feel any concern following participation in the study please contact Lifeline on 131 114 or Beyond Blue on 1300 22 4636, or SCU Counseling in Lismore 02 6626 9131, Coffs Harbour 02 6659 3263, and the Gold Coast 07 8249 3227.

Responsibilities of the researcher

I will protect your anonymity and answer any queries you have to ensure that any discomfort is minimized. The information gathered from the questionnaire will not be made public in any form that could identify you. Your participation in this study is strictly voluntary and your confidentiality is assured. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time. You may also elect not to answer any questions asked. The findings of this research project may be submitted to a peer-reviewed journal for publication at a later date and may be presented at conferences.

Responsibilities of the participant

To participate in this research, you must be over 18 years old.

By proceeding to participate in the survey, it is inferred you understand the following statements listed below:

- I understand that my participation is voluntary
- I understand that I will remain anonymous in the data collected in this experiment
- I understand that I can terminate my participation in this survey at any time without any negative consequences
- I understand that the data collected in this experiment will be kept securely for 7 years at Southern Cross University and then destroyed.

Ethical Conduct of Research

If you have any complaints or reservations about any ethical aspect of your participation in this research, you may contact the HREC through the Ethics Complaints Officer:

Ethics Complaints Officer and Secretary
HREC, Southern Cross University
PO Box 157, Lismore, NSW, 2480
Email: ethics.lismore@scu.edu.au

All complaints are investigated fully according to due process under the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research and this University. Any complaint you make will be treated in confidence and you will be informed of the outcome.
The Ethics Approval for this research is ECN-xx-xxx

If you have any questions involving this research please do not hesitate in contacting us.
Click the "Next" button if you are over 18 years old, understand the statements above and agree to participate.
Study 3: Survey Item Statements

Personal perceptions of what your Australian identity means to you

We would like you to think about what your Australian identity means to you. You may identify with other national, ethnic or cultural identities as well, but for the moment we would like you to think about your Australian identity and what comes to mind when you think about being Australian. For some people, it might be the song of a Kookaburra or the heat on a hot summers day, while for others it may be seeing a picture of Uluru, the Aboriginal flag, feeling safe, multicultural diversity or just having a BBQ with friends.

Please type the words of phrases that comes to mind in the spaces below. There are no right or wrong answers.

Phrase 1
Phrase 2
Phrase 3
Phrase 4
Phrase 5
Phrase 6
Phrase 7

Keeping those thoughts in mind about what your Australian identity means to you...Please read each of the following statements and then click on the number that best represents your thoughts and feelings as to the extent that you agree or disagree with the statement. There are no right or wrong answers and your honesty is appreciated.

Survey statement pool by attribute

I value being Australian

I am not proud of being Australian

My Australian identity is important in how I see myself

I feel good within myself about being Australian

I personally involve myself in things that are meaningful to my Australian identity

I do not contribute any of my time, skills or money to help make being Australian better for me and for others

I do not feel valued by other Australians

My Australian friends and colleagues include me in things that they do

I feel respected as an Australian

I am not recognized by others as Australian

I feel comfortable to ‘just be myself’ around other Australians

Australians do not ask me to join in with them

I do not fit in well with other Australians

I think I am pretty good at ‘being Australian’

I feel an integrated as part of Australian society

As an Australian I feel happy with my social and work social relationships

I let other Australian’s I know make important decisions for me rather than make them for myself

My thoughts, feelings and behaviours of being Australian are mutually shared by other Australians

I do not need to act like an Australian to feel I belong
Some of my decisions and behaviours directly reflect my Australian values

My Australian identity is at risk

I feel and unified with my Australian identity

I see myself as ‘out of synch’ with the values of other Australians\textsuperscript{R}

Being Australian has little to do with my sense of belonging\textsuperscript{R}

Now please indicate to what extent you were thinking about your Australian identity when responding to the questions…

\textbf{Note:} 1. Items scored with a 7-point Likert-type rating choice from strongly disagree to strongly agree

2. \textsuperscript{R} Items are reverse scored

3. *All item questions are randomised to each individual respondent in the survey tool*
Study 3: Demographic Questionnaire

Would you kindly complete the following questions and tell us about yourself?

Cultural-Ethnic Group
With what cultural or ethnic group do you most strongly self-identify? Please type it here in the box provided. For example: Australian, Chinese, Maori, British, or Scottish. If you self-identify strongly as with more than one cultural or ethnic identity, a bicultural identity such as an Indian Australian, Lebanese Australian, then please indicate that by typing your chosen bicultural identification in the box below.

Now we would ask you to please rate your self in the cultural-ethnic identity you have nominated above, according to the following statements about your identification by marking the box to the right that seems to apply best for you

I am ……. Very much of my own cultural group ☐
…….. Mostly of my own cultural group ☐
…….. Bicultural ☐
…….. Mostly Australian ☐
…….. Very much Australian ☐

Gender
What is your gender? ……. Please mark one:
male ☐ female ☐ Neither male nor female ☐

Religion
Do you self-identify with a religion or spiritual group? Please choose one. Yes ☐ No ☐

If you chose yes, could you type your religion in the box…

Age
Please indicate your age by ticking the correct box.
18-29 ☐
30-44 ☐
45-59 ☐
60+ ☐

Marital status
Please tick the box that best fits your current status
Married ☐
Single ☐
Widowed ☐
Defacto ☐
Divorced ☐

Country of birth
Were you born in Australia? Yes ☐ No ☐
If not born in Australia, what is your country of birth? Please type it here

If not born in Australia, how long since your arrival?
Less than 1 year ☐
1-3 years ☐
4-5 years ☐
6-10 years ☐
11 years or more ☐

Generation
If your family migrated to Australia, what generation are you
1st generation ☐
2nd ☐
3rd ☐
4th ☐
5th ☐
Citizenship and Residency
Are you an Australian citizen, permanent resident (PR) or resident?
Please mark the box the indicates best for you
Australian Citizen ☐ PR ☐ Resident ☐

Nationality
Do you identify with two nationalities and hold dual citizenship?
Yes ☐ No ☐ Not yet, in process ☐

If you answered ‘yes’ or ‘in process’ the question of dual nationalities, in addition to Australian citizenship, what other nationality-citizenship do you hold. Please type the non-Australian nationality in the box below.

Which of the following reasons did you choose to hold a second nationality
Please choose one
Migration and commitment to Australia ☐
Born in Australia but wanted family heritage connection ☐
Primarily professional or work related ☐
None of the above ☐

Language
What language is your first and if applicable, your second language
Please type them in the boxes
1st ☐ 2nd ☐

Employment and other status
Please tick the box that best fits your current status
Unemployed ☐ Homemaker ☐
Student ☐ Employed full time ☐
Employed part time ☐ Retired ☐
Disabled ☐

Education:
Please indicate your highest level of education.
Primary School ☐ Secondary ☐
Tertiary ☐

Income.
If you are comfortable, please indicate your annual income in one of the ranges shown.
No income ☐ Under $10,000 ☐
$10,000 -30,000 ☐ $31,000-60,000 ☐
$61,000-100,000 ☐ $100,000 + ☐

If you would like to make any comments to the researcher please type them in the box below.

If you would like to receive results of this research, please provide your email address by typing it in the box. Note that you email address will be recorded but it will not be associated with your responses

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. Your contribution is highly valued, and very appreciated. Please click on COMPLETE to exit the survey.
Table C1
Most Frequently Occurring Words Elicited for Australian Identity of Australian born (n=281) and Non-Australian Born Participants (n=79)

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<td>1.37</td>
<td>diversity</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2.03</td>
</tr>
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<td>safe</td>
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<td>0.82</td>
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<tr>
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<td>13</td>
<td>0.71</td>
<td>democracy</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.74</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix D  Study 4  Supporting Documentation

Study 4. Email for recruitment if Irish participants

Heading in email subject line: Irish in Australia - Research Invitation
Dear...the secretary, the president etc.,
My name is Jeff Hodgins, and I am currently completing my Ph.D. research in Psychology under the supervision of Dr Gail Moloney and Dr Winskel at Southern Cross University in NSW. My research is investigating how people with different social and cultural backgrounds experience life in Australia. The Irish community has a long and important history in Australia, and their input into this research would be extremely valuable. I would like to invite people who identify as Irish and are also Australian residents to complete a short online survey and wonder if you would consider distributing the invitation (shown below) to members of your community (organisation, group)
This research has been approved by Southern Cross University ECN 15-242.
If you have any questions at all please don’t hesitate to ask .
----------------------------------
Research invitation regarding Irish life in Australia
Hi, my name is Jeff Hodgins, and I am currently conducting my PhD research in Psychology under the supervision of Dr Gail Moloney and Dr Winskel at Southern Cross University in NSW.
My research is investigating how people with different social and cultural backgrounds experience life in Australia. I would like to invite people who identify as Irish and are also Australian residents to participate in this research by completing a short online survey. The Irish community has a long and important history in Australia, and your input into this research would be highly valued.
Here is the link: Please click on the link to start, or copy and paste it into your browser
https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Irish
If you would like to contribute to this research please click on the link below. The link will take you to a short online survey that will take you around 10 minutes to complete. The survey is confidential and your anonymity is assured. The information gathered from the questionnaire will not be made public in any form that could identify you. This research has been approved by Southern Cross University ECN 15-242
Results of this research can be made available to you if you wish and request.
If you do have time to participate, I would welcome providing you feedback when the research is complete. If you wish to receive feedback on the results of this survey please email your request to myself, Jeff Hodgins on the email address shown below.
Thank you.

Jeff Hodgins  
BPysch (Hons), PhD Candidate 
Discipline of Psychology 
Southern Cross University 
j.hodgins.10@student.scu.edu.au
Dr Gail Moloney  
Senior Lecturer 
Department of Psychology 
Southern Cross University 
gail.moloney@scu.edu.au
Dr Heather Winskel  
Senior lecturer 
Department of Psychology 
Southern Cross University 
heather.winskel@scu.edu.au
Information for Participants

Research Survey: A sense of belonging and Australian identity

Thank you for contributing to this important survey. You will need to self-identify in whole or in part as Australian...as an Australian citizen, an Australian permanent resident or Australian resident. You may also self-identify with other cultural or ethnic groups; however, this survey will ask you to particularly respond to your Australian identity.

The survey will take around 15 minutes or so to complete. Your anonymity is assured as the information from the completed questionnaire will only be available to the researcher and will not include details such as your phone number. You cannot be identified through your responses.

Possible discomforts or risks
If you do feel concerned about participating in this research, please feel free to discontinue your participation at any stage. If you feel concerned about anything raised by this study, please feel free to contact myself, Jeff Hodgins, or my supervisors Dr Gail Moloney; or Dr Heather Winskel on the phone numbers provided below.

The risks associated with participation in this study are considered minimal however some questions may cause you concern. If you feel any concern following participation in the study please contact Lifeline on 131 114 or Beyond Blue on 1300 22 4636, or SCU Counseling in Lismore 02 6626 9131, Coffs Harbour 02 6659 3263, and the Gold Coast 07 8249 3227.

Responsibilities of the researcher:
I will protect your anonymity and answer any queries you have to ensure that any discomfort is minimized. The information gathered from the questionnaire will not be made public in any form that could identify you. Your participation in this study is strictly voluntary and your confidentiality is assured. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time. You may also elect not to answer any questions asked. The findings of this research project may be submitted to a peer-reviewed journal for publication at a later date and may be presented at conferences.

Responsibilities of the participant:
To participate in this research you must be over 18 years old. By proceeding to participate in the survey, it is inferred that you understand the following statements listed below:

- I understand that my participation is voluntary
- I understand that I will remain anonymous in the data collected in this experiment
- I understand that I can terminate my participation in this survey at any time without any negative consequences
- I understand that the data collected in this experiment will be kept securely for 7 years at Southern Cross University and then destroyed.

Ethical Conduct of Research

Ethical Conduct of Research

If you have any complaints or reservations about any ethical aspect of your participation in this research, you may contact the HREC through the Ethics Complaints Officer:
Personal Perceptions of Australian identity

As someone with an Irish heritage who lives in Australia, you may identify as Australian. We would like you to focus on what comes to mind when you think about being Australian.

Please type the words or phrases that come to mind about what Australian identity means to you in the spaces below. You will need to type at least three responses in order to move to the next section, but preferable more if you can. There are no right or wrong answers, just what you personally feel…

Word or phrase
Word or phrase
Word or phrase
Word or phrase
Word or phrase
Word or phrase
Word or phrase

Perceptions of Australian identity

Keeping those thoughts in mind about what Australian identity means to you…

Please read each of the following statements and then click on the number that best represents your thoughts and feelings as to the extent that you agree or disagree with the statement. There are no right or wrong answers and your honesty is appreciated.

I value being Australian

My Australian identity is important in how I see myself

I feel good within myself about being Australian
I do not feel valued by other Australians

My Australian friends and colleagues include me in things that they do

Australians do not ask me to join in with them

I do not fit in well with other Australians

I think I am pretty good at ‘being Australian’

Some of my decisions and behaviours directly reflect my Australian values

I feel and unified with my Australian identity

I see myself as ‘out of synch’ with the values of other Australians

Being Australian has little to do with my sense of belonging

Now please indicate to what extent you were thinking about your Australian identity when responding to the questions...

Note: 1. Items scored with a 7-point Likert-type rating choice from strongly disagree to strongly agree
2. ✓ Items are reverse scored
3. *All item questions are randomised to each individual respondent in the survey tool

Demographic Questionnaire

It is very important in a survey such as this to know something about you. We would appreciate you taking a few more minutes to complete this final and important section. Your information is confidential and anonymous. You cannot be identified through the information provided here.

Would you kindly complete the following questions and tell us about yourself?

What is your postcode?

What is your gender?

What is your age?

Were you born in Australia?

Yes

No

If not born in Australia, how long since your arrival?

Less than 1 year

1-3 years

4-5 years

6-10 years

11 years or more

If you were not born in Australia, what is your country of birth? Please type the country in the box below.

What is your Australian citizenship or residency status? Please choose the status below that best fits you.

Australian citizen

Permanent resident

Resident

Temporary resident

Other (please specify)
Do you hold dual citizenship with another country in addition to being an Australian citizen?

Yes
No
Not yet but I am in the process of applying to Australian authorities
Not yet but I am in the process of applying to my home country authority

If you answered ‘yes’ or ‘in process’ the question of dual nationalities, in addition to Australian citizenship, what other nationality-citizenship do you hold. Please type the non-Australian nationality in the box below.

Which of the following reasons did you choose to hold a second nationality
Please choose one

I have migrated here and became a permanent resident of Australia
I was born in Australia but also wanted a family and cultural heritage connection to my homelands
It made sense due to my professional or work related reasons
My children were born in Australia
Other (please specify)

Please indicate how you self-identify culturally or nationally by typing in the box below. For example you may identify with a single national or cultural identity such as ‘Irish’ or ‘Australia’. You may also self-identify with more than one national, cultural or ethnic identity (e.g., as Irish Australian).

Now could you please respond in relation to how you self-identified in the question above. Click on the box below and choose the best answer from those displayed.

I identify ……

Very much of my own cultural group
Mostly of my own cultural group
Bicultural
Mostly Australian
Very much Australian

If your family migrated to Australia, what generation are you?

1st generation—means you are the first member of a family who acquired citizenship or permanent residence in Australia after migrating from another country
2nd generation—means you were naturally born in Australia to one or more parents who were born somewhere other than Australia
3rd generation or more
Not applicable

What is your employment status?

Please tick the box that best fits your current status
Unemployed
Homemaker
Student
Employed full time
Employed part time
Retired
Disabled

Please indicate your highest level of education.

Primary School
Secondary
Tertiary

What is your marital status? Please tick the box that best fits your current status
Married
Single
Widowed
Defacto
Divorced

If you are comfortable, please indicate your annual income in one of the ranges shown.
No income
Under $10,000
$10,000 -30,000
$31,000-60,000
$61,000-100,000
$100,000 +

You are done. If you would like to make any comments to the researcher please type them in the box below.

If you would like to receive results of this research, please provide your email address by typing it in the box. Note that your email address will be recorded but it will not be associated with your responses.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. Your contribution is highly valued, and very appreciated. Please click on COMPLETE to exit the survey.
Appendix E  Journal Publication

The importance of Australian national identity to a sense of belonging of Anglo-Celtic and Chinese cultural groups in regional Australia

This study explored the primacy of importance of Australian national identity as underpinning belongingness of Anglo-Celtic and Chinese cultural groups. A mixed method approach comprised focus groups and interviews. Australian national identity did not hold primacy of importance to a sense of belonging in either group, however family identities were of primary importance to both, together with cultural identity of the Chinese. Anglo-Celtic’s felt culturally disassociated, whereas Chinese sought majority acceptance through cultural promotion, and bicultural identification. Findings call for further research of Australian national identity of the majority and other minority cultural groups.

Keywords: national identity; cultural identity; belonging; majority; minority

Introduction

Belonging is a psychological concept receiving intensified attention politically, socially, and academically in an increasingly trans-migratory and multicultural world. Governments with multicultural policy settings (e.g., Australia, UK, and Canada) acknowledge the critical nature of a sense of belonging and its important role in fostering social harmony and cohesion (Bond, 2006; Moran, 2005; Skey, 2013), and its significance in the development of social capital (Carpiano & Hystad, 2011). Australia’s multicultural population of 23.4 million people (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2014) comprises an Anglo-Celtic majority, and many minorities including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, multi-generational British, European, New Zealander, Pacific Islander, Asian, African, American, and middle-eastern immigrants. The Australian government intends political and social equivalence, and unity among its many resident cultures such that “everyone experiences a sense of belonging” (AMAC, 2011, p. 5). However, with 27% of the population and the parents of one in every two people not born in Australia, an 80% citizenship rate for immigrants (Smith, Wykes, Jayarajah, & Fabijanic, 2011) and an estimated four million dual nationals (Rubenstein, 2015), is unity and a sense of belonging possible for all Australians?

National identity has been proposed as the common identity that underpins a sense of belonging for all members of a multicultural society (Buonfino, 2007; Guerra, 1992; Hothi & Cordes, 2008; Skey, 2010). It is argued that national identity in a multicultural society unifies the cultural majority with a diverse range of minority cultural groups (Gray & Griffin, 2014; Moran, 2011). This study explored the relationship between Australian national identity and belongingness in majority and minority cultural groups from a social psychological perspective.

Australian national identity is described as a perceived congruence between self-concept and a nation-concept (Scott, 1991). Congruence is argued to be based upon a “mutually recognized membership” (Barnes, Auburn, & Lea, 2004, p. 187), meaning that the member-identifier and other group members jointly and severally recognize and accept legitimacy of membership identity status. However, Australian society is dominated by those with an Anglo-Celtic heritage and culture, and collective majorities are argued to portray characteristics of national identity according to their own ancestry, values and experiences (Waldzus, Mummendey, Wenzel, & Boettcher, 2004). This projection of a national community identity by the majority is suggested to be shaped in part in response to a perceived threat upon mainstream identity from increased immigrant influxes (Wright, 2011). Consequently, as cultural boundaries are argued as defining the criteria constructing national identity in the first place (Bhambra, 2006, p. 32), the meanings embodied by the majority in creating a national identity may become problematic for a minority to feel a sense of belonging to the nation (Bhambra, 2006; Bond, 2006; Wright, Citrin, & Wand, 2012). Minorities may feel unable to rightfully lay claim, and consequently experience belonging to a host national identity because of negative or discriminatory reactions expected from the majority.
Making a bona fide claim to a national, cultural or ethnic identity requires that an individual distinguish, align to, and accept identity characteristics. Cultural identity markers are associated with an individual’s embodiment of beliefs, traditional knowledge, and practices of their heritage country or society. Language is also argued to be a distinctive marker substantiating an individuals claim and expression of their national or heritage identity (Yogeeswaran, Adelman, Parker, & Dasgupta, 2014). Bond (2006) suggests that the three most prominent symbols of national identity are residence, birth and ancestry. However, young Asian-Americans were found to believe that physical traits (principally being ‘white’), values and national symbols defined the American national identity (Park-Taylor et al., 2008), thereby making it improbable to ever feel legitimate as a US national.

Resident minorities in multicultural host country societies are argued to establish their belonging through their cultural heritage identity, and associated social and familial identity relationships within their host country, and in their homeland (Chaitin, Linstroth, & Hiller, 2009; De Bree, Davids, & De Haas, 2010; Grün, 2009; Haggis & Schech, 2010). In some minority groups, cultural identity and religious identity are suggested as being inseparable, in particular Muslims (Verkuyten & Martinovic, 2012), and Jews (Ressler, 1997). For example, higher ethn-religious identification of Muslims has been shown to relate to lower national host identification, whereas high identification ethnic non-Muslims positively associated with higher national identification (Verkuyten & Martinovic, 2012).

Two approaches have been proposed as to how minority cultural groups reconcile a national versus cultural identity. First, some minority group members distinguish their belongingness as being both ‘political’ and ‘cultural’ (Brettell, 2006). Political belonging emanates from a host country’s national citizenship identity with its civic rights, responsibilities, and entitlements, whereas cultural belonging focuses upon cultural heritage, place of birth, a homeland and inherent cultural practices and traditions, and upon social and familial relationships. Secondly, minority group members are argued to reconcile host national and homeland cultural identities through self-identification of a merged or integrated bicultural social identity as exemplified by ‘Asian Australian’ or ‘Indigenous Australian’ (Benet-Martínez, Leu, Lee, & Morris, 2002).

Research to date has primarily focused upon belonging in relation to cultural-ethnic identity of immigrant minorities in host country societies (Chaitin et al., 2009; De Bree et al., 2010; Grün, 2009; Phinney & Ong, 2007), with little research interest on the majority. For example, acculturation studies in the UK have found ethnic minority levels of assimilation with the majority identity increased across successive generations (Platt, 2014). Australian research has examined ethnic identification in relation to attitudes towards host country culture (Rooney, Nesdale, Kane, Hattie, & Goonewardene, 2012), antecedents for successful settlement of refugees in Australian communities (Fozdar & Hartley, 2012), and dimensions of indigenous belonging (Neville, Oyama, Odunewu, & Huggins, 2014). A general sense of belonging of ethnic minorities in Australia has also been found to be high, however it was not specifically related to Australian national identity (Markus, 2014). Research to date in Australia has yet to examine the importance of national identity to belongingness relative to cultural and other social identities associated with both majority and minority cultural groups. The concepts of belongingness, and social identity and national identity are now discussed.

**Belongingness**

Belongingness refers to the *individual experience of belonging*, or a sense of belonging⁴. In a multicultural society, belongingness is a consequence of an individual’s personal involvement and commitment to social memberships within the social system, such that they feel accepted, socially legitimate, valued, integrated and secure (Anant, 1966, p. 22). According to Anant (1966) personal involvement is both an antecedent to, and a consequence of, complete assimilation in a social membership to the extent that an individual feels as one within the social system. Social identity researchers consistently argue that a sense of belonging is psychologically anchored in social identities that an individual assimilates or integrates into the construction of their self-concept (Deaux, 1991; Easterbrook & Vignoles, 2012; May, 2013; Tajfel, 1982).

Assimilation of or integration with, a social identity supportive of meaningful belongingness is characterized by mutuality of acceptance (Barnes et al., 2004). Mutuality means an individual both claims and accepts a membership identity as their own, and also feels accepted and valued in that identity by relevant others (Anant, 1969; Phinney & Ong, 2007). Anant argued that while membership acceptance and recognition by other group members were important characteristics of belonging, identification with the group does not only involve these characteristics. He suggested a person could self-identify with a category or group but if he or she were not

---

⁴ Belongingness and sense of belonging are used interchangeably in this article.
accepted, valued or recognized by that group, they might participate, but would not experience belongingness. In a US example, Asian Americans were found to feel as American as ‘white’ counterparts, but sensed they were not perceived and accepted as such in their self-claimed American identity (Cheryan & Monin, 2005).

More recent research across a diverse range of social identities has demonstrated mutual acceptance as a key characteristic of belongingness. Hagerty, Lynch-Sauer, Patuisky, Bouwsema, and Collier (1992) found acceptance, and also valued involvement and fit underpinned belongingness in Catholic nuns, depressed patients, and students. Similarly, qualitative studies in Australia and the UK found acceptance, valued contribution, and fit as key characteristics of belongingness of nurses (Levett-Jones, Lathlean, Higgins, & McMillan, 2009; Levett-Jones, Lathlean, McMillan, & Higgins, 2007). Congruence of values and legitimacy of place (in the social context) with personal and group relationships were also found as additional characteristics.

**Social Identity**

National identity is argued to be a socially constructed social identity (Bond, 2006). Social identity is defined as “that part of an individual’s self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership of a social group (or groups), together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership” (Tajfel, 1981, p. 255). Social identities are suggested to contain an inherent perception of belonging (Tajfel, 1982), as they offer an individual both the opportunity, and means to satisfy this fundamental human need (Baumeister & Leary, 1995).

Social identities relate to social role, category or group membership and are adopted using a process of categorization (Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987). Identity categorization occurs through either self-selection or ascription by others. Categorization of national identity can either be ascribed naturally through birth within a country, or a self-selected by an immigrant born elsewhere who resides in a host country. In the latter a migrant may identify with dual nationality, one ascribed by birth and one selected by choice due to residency. Belongingness is demonstrated to be higher when social identities are self-selected, however this finding has yet to be examined in relation to national identity (Obst & White, 2007).

Social identity has also been referred to as ‘collective’ identity as the self represents shared qualities with other members of a group (Ashmore, Deaux, & McLaughlin-Volpe, 2004; Hogg, 2001). However, social or collective identity has been differentiated from ‘personal’ identity, which is defined as being “the idiosyncratic characteristics of an individual comprising their attitudes, memories, behaviours and emotions that distinguish them from other individuals” (Hornsey, 2008, p. 206).

To date, five types of social identities have been identified; ethnic/religious, political, relationships, personal/stigmatized, and vocational/avocational, with each type having different characteristics (Deaux, Reid, Mizrahi, & Ethier, 1995). Characteristics of these identities include their centrality and hierarchy (Deaux et al., 1995), importance or prominence (Ashmore et al., 2004), and strength of attachment (Kuo & Margalit, 2012). In respect to importance for example, national identity in Britain was found to rate third behind family and occupational identities (Beddington, 2013). In a US study, 76% of individuals nominated religion as their primary identity category, and rated it as very or somewhat strong among nationality, race/ethnicity, gender and occupation categories (Kuo & Margalit, 2012). Importance of singular identities is well researched, however we are argued to each hold multiple social identities in our self-construal and how they interrelate may impact our attitude, and presentation to others (Deaux, 2001).

**Multiple social identities**

Individuals are argued to have the capacity to hold a range of group identities within their self-construal, with each identity held relating to its context (Forehand, Deshpande, & Reed, 2002). Deaux (1995) found individual’s held approximately 13 social identities encompassing all five types. However, when compared to an ethnic majority group, the racial-ethnic identity of a minority group member may be the only different social identity, as others such as religious, relational, vocational or personal types could be similar and shared by the ethnic majority. The overlap, complexity, and consequences of multiple identities is addressed in the psychological concept of social identity complexity (SIC)

Social identity complexity is defined as “an individual’s subjective representation of the combination of his or her multiple ingroup memberships” (Roccas & Brewer, 2002, p. 88). According to SIC it is not the number of social groups identified with, but of greater importance is how different identities interrelate that affects the level of inclusiveness offered by an individual. In the SIC model, where there is high overlap of social ingroup memberships, a single compounded identity category may result. For example, a person may hold identities as a female, a lawyer and Asian, and converge these to form a single compounded identity as a female Asian lawyer.
Miller, Brewer, and Arbuckle (2009) describe this converged identity as a simple structure (p. 80) with high overlap. The opposite of this is a complex identity structure where this person may distinguish her group identities, by identifying as a woman and a lawyer and an Asian. This complex identity structure in the SIC model features low overlap, and is proposed as being more inclusive towards others than a simple structure. Each distinct membership has the potential to incorporate a different set of in-group members from each membership, and the sum of all three means greater inclusiveness than that of a compounded identity (Miller et al., 2009).

The SIC model also predicts differences between majority and minority group identity complexity due to the importance of ethnic-cultural identity. In the convergent identity example of Asian female lawyer, the Asian identity is suggested to dominate by the individual and others. By comparison, Brewer, Gonsalkorale, and van Dommelen (2013) suggest that within Anglo-Celtic Australians the ethnic identity of 'Australian' is largely ignored. Asian-Australians in-group identities were also proposed as being lower in complexity (higher in overlap) than those of Anglo-Australians.

**Social identity context-situation, salience and primacy**

The importance of a social identity is subject to its context-situation, and salience (Deaux, 2001). Social identity salience represents a “state of personal activation characterized by heightened sensitivity to identity-relevant stimuli” (Forehand et al., 2002, p. 1086). In the course of one day, the same person through different identities may feel belongingness to different degrees according to different social contexts and situations (Jaspal & Cinnirella, 2011; Mc McConnell, Shoda, & Skul borstad, 2012). A context-situation is argued as the activating prompt for a social identity [to become salient] and influences representative behaviours, perceptions, and performance (Forehand et al., 2002).

Identity primacy of importance is argued to shift in relation to different identities over time and is strongly influenced by situational triggers. Importantly though, while salience has been shown to prompt recall of beliefs, emotions and behaviours associated with an identity, underlying beliefs, emotions and behaviours were found to remain consistent even when identity primacy changed (Kuo & Margalit, 2012).

**National identity and belongingness**

Research findings on national identity and belongingness in Britain, Canada, and New Zealand have been varied. Majority Anglo-Celtic identifying members in England claimed an unquestionable sense of national belonging along with an experience of an ‘ontological’ level of security (Skey, 2010). In another study, British national identity ranked fourth behind family, friendships and lifestyle social identities for perceived importance to a sense of belonging by 92% of self-identified ‘white Anglo’ participants (Marsh, Bradley, Love, Alexander, & Norham, 2007). Age (ranging from 40 to 80 years) was demonstrated as the best predictor of a strong sense of belonging associated with the British national identity (Beddington, 2013). In an aligned British study, the major drivers of a weak sense of belonging to Britain in descending order were age (younger people were less likely to feel strongly that they belong), overseas birth (in a non-Commonwealth country), length of stay/residence, and socio-economic marginality (Ali & Heath, 2013). In a New Zealand study, the majority Caucasian ‘Pakeha’ cultural group struggled with questions of personal belongingness relative to the Indigenous Maori. This was in spite of being born in, resident and committed to New Zealand, and politically and culturally secure within a bicultural national identity recognized in the Treaty of Waitangi (Bell, 2009).

Mutual acceptance has been shown to predict positive identification with Australia. When Australian migrants felt accepted by the dominant majority and also had a positive acculturation attitude, a greater sense of belonging in Australia ensued. However, when mutualty was not apparent and immigrants demonstrated higher degrees of ethnic involvement, a rejection of host country identification resulted (Nesdale & Mak, 2000).

Individuals from the same cultural groups living in two distinct social systems have been found to perceive belongingness differently in accordance with their social positioning in each society. Asian Indians living in Canada were found to have higher perceived levels of belongingness than Indians living in India, but lower levels than majority Canadians (Anant, 1967, 1969). Historically, the Indian caste system determines an individual’s social location as immutable within one of a hierarchy of six castes established by birth (Smith, 1994). Inter-caste levels of belongingness of the Indian-resident sample also varied between the four castes represented of Brahmins, Vaishyas, and Sudras, and Kshatriyas. Kshatriyas experienced higher levels of belonging through greater positive social interaction with the ruling British in India. Kshatriyas corresponded congruently with British social customs as their caste was historically identified as warriors, property owners, and rulers. Through identity congruence and social legitimacy, Kshatriyas experienced mutual acceptance with British rulers.
Primacy of vocational identity-belonging over national or cultural identity has been demonstrated in transnational knowledge workers in Australia and Indonesia (Colic-Peisker, 2010). Highly credentialed professionals originating from many different countries demonstrated primacy of identity importance to belongingness as being aligned to a globally recognized professional/vocational identity. Territorial place, community, original home culture, or other aspects suggested as constituting ‘normal’ identity-belonging foundations were not important to this group. Rather, they described themselves as cosmopolitan and “citizens of the world” (p. 484), and experienced mutual acceptance, valuation, and recognition through their personal involvement and commitment to, and with professional peers.

The study aimed to explore the importance of national identity as underpinning belongingness in a multicultural society as suggested by Buonfino (2007), Guerra (1992), Hotli and Cordes (2008), and Waldzus et al. (2004). Specifically, the aim of this study was to examine if Australian national identity held primacy of importance in underpinning perceived belongingness among the social identities of Anglo-Celtic and Chinese cultural groups in regional Australia.

Drawing upon Anant (1966) and Skey (2010), Australian national identity was expected to hold primacy of importance to Anglo-Celtic’s belongingness, however Chinese cultural identity was expected to be more important to belongingness. It was also expected that the complexity of social identities relating to belongingness would be lower in Chinese than the Anglo-Celts, as suggested by Brewer et al. (2013). Mutuality of acceptance was expected to be a primary attribute of belongingness for both groups as hypothesized by Anant (1966).

Method

Overview

Due to cross cultural nature of the study, a mixed method approach incorporating a focus group methodology with interviews was used. A focus group methodology enabled participants to respond to the topic in a manner that was relevant and meaningful to them in their cultural context (Gill, Stewart, Treasure, & Chadwick, 2008). The focus group process also incorporated an interview process in order to elicit individual data. This approach draws upon previous research where both exploratory group and individual approaches were utilized to elicit social identities (Deaux et al., 1995; Deaux, 1991), and examine relationships between social identities and belonging (Marsh et al., 2007).

Design

There were two phases of the data collection. Phase 1 used prompted focus group discussions. Phase 2 elicited individual responses to structured verbal questions and the completion of a personal identity table. This method converged responses from the focus group discussion with individual level data collected within the group setting.

Four focus and interview groups comprised two Anglo-Celtic, and two Chinese cultural groups. National and cultural identity were not communicated as the focus of the meeting in either the preceding information sent to participants or during the meeting. Priming has been shown to influence self-identification (Kuo & Margalit, 2012), influence cognitive and emotional responses (Forehand et al., 2002), and engender an alignment of salience and importance effect (Brenner, Serpe, & Stryker, 2014).

Sample selection and recruitment

Anglo-Celtic and Chinese cultural groups within the Northern Region and North Central Coast regional towns of Lismore and Coffs Harbour respectively were invited to participate in this study. Both towns have a majority Anglo-Celtic population with 14% and 18% of residents born overseas respectively. Asians represent 2% and are second only to 4-6% of those from NW Europe. In Lismore’s urban areas, Chinese (Mandarin) is one of the three most common languages spoken at home other than English, and in Coffs Harbour Mandarin is one of four (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2014).

Australian government immigration policy aims to grow regional economies through humanitarian migrant resettlement, however little research concerning Australian relationships among cultural groups resident in regional areas has been conducted. Chinese are Australia’s third largest immigrant, and citizenship adoption group following those from the UK and New Zealand. Importantly in relation to this study, the Chinese are the second longest continuous ethnic migrant group after immigrants from Great Britain (DIAC, 2011). As the longest Australian tenured Asian minority group, the Chinese cultural group was considered to have experienced greater opportunity for assimilation with Australian national identity over other more recently arrived immigrant groups. Both Lismore and Coffs Harbour have small, long-term resident Chinese cultural groups.
In the current study, an Anglo-Celtic cultural identity was defined as Australian citizens/permanent residents of British or Irish heritage, who were either born in Australia or the UK, who self-identify as Australian, Anglo-Australian or similar. The Chinese cultural identity was defined as either Australian, or non-Australian-born, and either citizens, or permanent residents, who self-identify as Chinese, or with a joint national-cultural self-identity which includes Australian.

Participants self-identifying as Anglo-Celtic or Chinese were recruited by email using convenience sampling (Castillo, 2009) and snowballing (Babbie, 2001) through university and local community groups residing in Lismore and Coffs Harbour.

**Participants**

In total, 22 people participated in four focus groups. The Anglo-Celtic group \((n=13)\), comprised males (4), and females (9) and the Chinese group \((n=9)\) comprised males (2), and females (7). Mean ages of Anglo-Celtic were \((m = 48.2\) years, \(SD = 11.3\)), and Chinese \((m = 45.8\) years, \(SD = 8.3\)). Ten Anglo-Celtic participants were born in Australia, two in Britain, and one in Hong Kong. All Chinese participants were 1st generation immigrants with an average residence of 16.5 years in Australia. The majority of participants were educated at a Bachelor levels or above, and all participants were fluent in English.

**Materials**

An information sheet with questions prompting participants to explore thoughts, feelings and behaviours about their belongingness was emailed prior to the meeting in order to stimulate their interest. It is argued that when participant interest levels are stimulated in a topic, contributions are more tangible and meaningful (Bender & Ewbank, 1994). A 5-item strength of ethnicity scale adapted from the National Identity Scale (Doosje, Branscombe, Spears, & Manstead, 1998) was used to compare strength of ethnicity between the two cultural groups. For example, participants were asked to respond from 1 to 5 on a Likert Scale to a statement such as ‘Chinese is an important group to me’. One meant strong disagreement and 5 strong agreement with the statement. A demographic data sheet elicited details of age, cultural group, gender, country of birth, years resident in Australia, ethnicity/nationality, generational level (if Australian), religious/spiritual affiliation and highest education achievement.

**Procedure**

The focus groups were held in conference rooms on university campuses in Lismore and Coffs Harbour, facilitated by the first author, and were video recorded. Upon arrival, focus group members completed a voluntary self-report questionnaire with background information, an informed consent form, the Strength of Ethnic identity form. Participants were then invited to introduce themselves. Each focus group meeting lasted two hours with and was broken into two phases, with each lasting approximately one hour.

**Phase 1**

The aim of the meeting was outlined to group participants as discussing the cultural relevance, importance and experience of a sense of belonging. The first phase opened with the question:

‘Would you share with the group your thoughts about a sense of belonging and what it means to you? What thoughts or feelings come to mind?

Both the Anglo-Celtic and Chinese groups were asked if a sense of belonging was a relevant cultural and personal concept, and each group was asked to describe their collective understanding. Prompts from the information sheet questions sent prior to the meeting were then used. Examples of question prompts include:

a) How important is feeling a sense of belonging to you?

b) Please think about the times, contexts or situations when you feel like you experience a sense of belonging?

**Phase 2**

Phase 2 aimed to elicit both group and individual responses about participant’s social identities. When group discussion reached a point of natural saturation where no new expression of what their belonging experiences were, a question was posed to the group as to how a sense of belonging was experienced. This question acted as a bridge from group discussion to individual responses in Phase 2.

Phase 2 began by reading a hypothetical case study of a migrant family living in another regional town. The
case study acted as a prompt designed to stimulate exploratory discussions about social identities, but not to limit the discussion (Greenbaum, 2000). After the case study reading, participants were asked as a group to nominate, discuss, and then document on blank postcards the social identities adopted in their everyday lives as they experienced them personally, and also observed in others. For example, ‘academic’ may have been written on a postcard. The completed postcards of social identities were placed on the table in front of all participants.

Each individual was then asked to draw from the postcards on the table in front of them, and others they thought of, and list as many social identities they felt related to their personal experience of belongingness on a blank data sheet. When individual identity lists were completed, participants were then asked to assign their perceived level of importance (1, 2 or 3) of their sense of belonging for each listed social identity. Level 1 being assigned to identities they perceived as most important to their sense of belonging, followed by less important levels of 2 and 3. A Level 1 identity acknowledged its primacy of importance to belongingness. Multiple identities could be placed at the same level of importance.

**Analysis**

The recorded discussions from the four focus groups were transcribed and imported into Nvivo Version 10 software.

The primary aim of the analysis was to investigate the relative importance of national identity with perceived belongingness by converging both group and individual data. A secondary aim was to investigate the nature of belongingness.

The analysis initially compared the data from the strength of ethnicities scale to investigate any differences between the cultural groups. Analysis then compared ethnic-national-cultural identities as self-reported on the demographic form, the scale, and ethnic-cultural social identities lists related to levels of belongingness. This analysis investigated Anant’s proposition that self-identification alone did not mean an individual experienced belongingness associated with an identity.

The personal social identities collected in Phase 2 were then analyzed by comparing the quantity and composition by identity type and gender in order to investigate the range and complexity of multiple identities. Analysis then consolidated all individually reported social identities into a composite list comprising Levels 1, 2 and 3 of importance to belongingness by gender, type and cultural group. National and cultural identities were then investigated as to their Level 1 primacy of their importance related with belongingness. By collating and interlocking both group and individual identity data, the analysis aimed to examine the overall question of primacy of national identity relative to the dimension of belongingness among identities across both cultural groups.

Analysis of the qualitative group data was converged with quantitative participant responses. Discourse was analyzed to investigate participant experiences concerning connection to, or primacy of importance of, national, and/or ethnic-cultural identity in association with belongingness in both cultural groups. Analysis of the qualitative data then focused on investigating the commonality and relevance of the belonging construct between the two cultural groups. Inductive analysis of the qualitative data coded key-words and phrases in the group discourse that represented the perceived attributes of belongingness. Key words were used to investigate the hypothesis that mutual acceptance was an important attribute of the belongingness experience. This included coding words and terms describing experiences of not belonging.

**Results**

**Overview**

This study collected both qualitative and quantitative data concerning the relationship between national identity and belongingness, and qualitative data regarding characteristics of belongingness. The quantitative data is presented first, followed by focus group discussion with analysis and discussion.

**Strength of ethnic identification**

The mean strength of ethnicity of the Chinese cultural group \((m = 4.1, SD = 0.7)\) was greater than the Anglo-Celtic group \((m = 3.7, SD = 0.8)\).

**Demographic, ethnicity, and belongingness self-identification comparison**
Table 1 gives ethnic-cultural identities and their frequencies of Anglo-Celtic and Chinese cultural groups as self-reported on demographic and strength of ethnicity data forms. Table 2 follows and shows Chinese and Anglo-Celtic group ethnic-cultural identities and their frequencies related to belongingness Levels 1, 2 and 3.

Social identities – Anglo-Celtic and Chinese cultural groups

The average number of social identities collectively described by cultural group participants on postcards was Anglo-Celtic (88) and Chinese (62).

Table 3 below shows the mean quantity of social identities and standard deviation by type of identity self-identified by Male (M) and Female (F), and total identities, for Anglo-Celtic, and Chinese groups. Overall, individual social identities ranged from a minimum of 6 to a maximum of 25.

Table 4 below shows the composite summary of all self-identified social identities and their frequency of primacy (Level 1) importance to a sense of belonging by males and females and type in both Anglo-Celtic and Chinese cultural groups.

Focus group, analysis and discussion

The study was conducted in two phases. The first phase used interactive group discussion, and the second elicited individual responses from the group. This section brings together individual results and focus group discourse to analyse and discuss the findings.

National identity and belongingness

A common ethnic-national identity expression was not apparent with most Anglo-Celtics and many talked of their diverse ancestries. The term ‘Australian’ did not provide a common bond of national identity for the Anglo-Celtic group as suggested by Hothi and Cordes (2008). A variety of identity expressions was demonstrated between demographic and ethnic identities (Table 1), and identities associated with belongingness (Table 2).

I sort of reluctantly identify as Australian. I think about it and go, yeah well I don't really belong anywhere else so I guess I have to say I’m Australian. Yeah, I really don't identify with the stereotypical Australian sort of personality (Female, Anglo-Celtic Group Lismore).

I primarily identify myself as an Australian. I have English, Irish, Scottish and Indigenous heritage, which makes life a little bit interesting (Male, Anglo-Celtic Lismore).

Participants with European heritage shared a similar a lack of clarity of their national identity expression and some disassociation of Australian national identity resulted.

I don't really have a strong sense of being Australian, but I don't have a strong sense of not being either. I mean my family background is strangely enough European, in that my forbearers came out from Italy in the 1830s - 1840s, we built the overland telegraph. But the bulk of my ancestors are in fact Irish and Scottish (Male, Anglo-Celtic Group Coffs Harbour).

I guess I identify as Australian, but I'm half Dutch as well. I grew up in [place name] area, so that's very multicultural. So I don't exactly know what being an Australian is supposed to mean (Female, Anglo-Celtic Group Lismore).

Anglo-Celtic participants also spoke of having a cultural ‘fantasy’, and being envious of non-Anglo-Australians who appeared to them to be enriched through clarity in their ethnic-cultural identities and knowing its associated belonging.

It’s like a fantasy…I just think it would have been so simple [to be a part of a strong culture] (Female, Anglo-Celtic Group Lismore).

Not feeling like you belong to a particular culture like I don’t, this is a sense of…where do I belong then? I often looked at people who have a really strong cultural identity and I’m sometimes envious of that because I don't have that (Female, Anglo-Celtic Group Lismore).

The Chinese cultural group demonstrated clarity and consistency of bicultural and national identification by aligning each with their respective context and situation. Identity clarity and consistency was also supported by individual demographic and ethnic (Table 1), and in identity-belongingness data (Table 2). The Chinese group
related ethnic-cultural and national identities in context and associated relationship with belongingness that was consistent with the cultural and political belonging findings of Brettell (2006).

... genetically I belong to the Chinese ethnic group... but then technically when you show a passport at customs that says you are Australian. So that is another kind of belonging. Technically you belong to the Australian nation right, nationality, and then socially it's the same. We think we are accepted by a social group where you belong to that group. So it depends on the situation and therefore I do not feel Australian right and as equally as I belong to China, but I socially try to be Australian (Male, Chinese Group Lismore).

So in some situations I feel I'm very Australian, some situations I'm very Chinese, sometimes 50/50. Sometimes depending on the situation... Because I really like some parts of Australian culture I really like and some Chinese culture I like, (Female, Chinese group Lismore).

Clarity between Chinese and Australian national identity was also shown in ethnically mixed families. Yeah, because my husband is Chinese in Australia [laughs] yeah. My daughter was born in Lismore, so we have two Australian - my family is one Chinese, one Australian and one Chinese in Australia [laughs]. I think I'm Chinese but when I talk to my daughter I always tell to my daughter I'm Chinese but you're Australian. We're different. We come from the same family but we're different (Female, Chinese Group Lismore).

However, assimilation with Australian national identity was perceived as different without being married to an Australian.

For me, at least [I am] 95 percent Chinese. Even I'm here for more than 10 years but I don't have a strong feeling of Australia. They have Australian husbands so they have strong feeling of a difference, but I don't because my husband is Chinese. Most of the time at home we talk in Chinese (Female, Chinese Group, Lismore).

Multiple identities and complexity

Similar to Deaux et al. (1995), Anglo-Celtic and Chinese participants shared comparable quantities, types and sub-types of social identities by gender (Table 3), except for male vocational identities. The variation was based on academic participant in the Chinese group who explained strong feelings of belongingness through peer relationships. Another though shared the depth of professional identity belongingness. Primacy of importance in belongingness of highly educated transnational knowledge workers through sharing a professional identity with peers supports findings of Colic-Peisker (2010).

I have been working here for more than 20 years as an academic and I think in the academic field …people respect your background, what you have done in your teaching research and they want to learn from you or want to exchange with you. So if you are an academic in the university… the group will work together without considering your ethnic background (Male 1, Lismore Chinese Cultural Group).

So their experience of the last 35 years of computing was also there, and so I completely got it- it was our shared experiences. I had such a strong sense of that being my tribe (Female, Anglo-Celtic Group Coffs Harbour).

Bi-cultural identification of Chinese participants was found as being low complexity/high overlap with each identity having its own inclusive relationships.

Bicultural Chinese Australian identities were nominated by two Chinese participants at Level 1 importance, with more at levels 2 and 3 (Table 1), however focus group discourse above distinguished the salience of Chinese and Australian identities as being clearly activated in different contexts and situations. This supports the hypothesis of Brewer et al. (2013). More complex identities/high overlap identities were demonstrated in identities of Chinese teacher, and Chinese cultural promoter. Both are technically high in convergence and low in overlap due to their specific ethnic nature needed for their role, making them complex according to the SIC model.

The Anglo-Celtic group’s discourse did not provide the same clarity as the Chinese group regarding high or low levels of social identity complexity and overlap between national and other identities. Rather there were memories and stories of ancestry and heritage that brought emotional attachment however there was little evidence of active involvement or commitment.
I identify myself as Australian, family having been here since the early 1800s, but I've more recently learnt about my ancestry, which is very Scottish. So I'm kind of - it's really interesting, because all of the records are there, so it's fascinating stuff. So I guess I identify with that a little bit, but generally definitely Australian (Female, Anglo-Celtic Group Coffs Harbour).

**Cross-cultural relevance of belongingness and description of experience**

The Chinese and Anglo-Celtic cultural groups shared a common understanding of the concept a sense of belonging with the Anglo-Celtic Group. A Chinese language equivalent to the western term of a ‘sense of belonging’ was offered by the Chinese group.

Guīshǔgǎn
A sense of belonging… ‘the feeling in ones heart about sharing similar values, language, and social experiences, and feeling accepted and valued by others’.

Chinese participants strongly related the importance of family as being their primary source of belongingness.

People always ask us where do you belong, Malaysia hasn't been home but more in the family sense - my family are there, my upbringing I grew up there. My friends are there, I belong to the people who love me, who care for me, who accepts me, yes… (Male, Chinese Group Coffs Harbour)

Because my family now is in Australia so I see my husband and my child. So I believe that in the longer term I will see Australia will be my home yes. (Female, Chinese Group Coffs Harbour).

Also the greater number of relationship types listed by females over males across both cultural groups (Table 4) is consistent with studies showing women value close relationship identities when related to belongingness more than men (Baumeister & Sommer, 1997).

**Mutuality of acceptance**

Acceptance was the most important attribute of belongingness in both cultural groups.

I think it's like an acceptance of who I am, yes my identity and then the surrounding or the community that accept who I am that I can speak the same language, eat the same food. We have similar background that feeling. Yes being accepted to be part of the group (Female, 1 Chinese Group Coffs Harbour).

There's something about, whether it's the individuals or whether it's the place that either accepts, draws me in or pushes me away. (Female 3, Anglo-Celtic Lismore).

A summary of participant attributes of belongingness by frequency of response in both cultural focus groups is shown in Figure 1 below.

**Not belonging**
Belongingness was dependent upon continuation and maintenance of mutuality of acceptance in the social system. When discrimination interrupted that acceptance, participants of loss of belongingness, even with the rights of Australian citizenship or long-term residency.

Yes very, very uncomfortable and you see signs in bridges and driveways saying Asian go home. Now being an Asian you are actually telling me to go home. I have contributed equally to the [Australian] society. So I felt insulted… I felt that well do I belong here? (Male, Chinese Group Coffs Harbour).

Continuum of belonging

Both Anglo-Celtics and Chinese groups made a clear distinction between the meaning of just ‘belonging’ and a ‘sense of belonging’. Many expressed that belonging was experienced along a continuum between saying simply that they belonged at one end and emotionally felt a sense of belonging at the other.

Most places [that] I belong, I don't feel a sense of belonging (Female, Anglo-Celtic Group Lismore).

I mean you can belong to a local group or society. You can belong to a social group, but the sense of belonging is much deeper than that I think. It’s an innate thing within you and its either there or not…I don't think it's a choice in me (Male, Anglo-Celtic Group Lismore).

I think it is a continuum of that. A sense of belonging to me sometimes means that well it could be superficial, a little bit superficial. Belonging that means you know that you are that (Male, Chinese group Coffs Harbour).

General discussion

This study aimed to explore if Australian national identity held primacy of importance in underpinning perceived belongingness of Anglo-Celtic and Chinese cultural groups resident in regional Australia. Chinese ethnic and bicultural identities were found to share a high level of primacy of importance related to belongingness. The Chinese group were found to actively seek acceptance in Australian society through promotion of their culture, and also through proclamations of bicultural identification. Contextual and situational clarity was found to support low complexity and high overlap of bicultural identities of the Chinese group. Citizenship, marriage to an Australian, and Australian-born-children, appeared to strengthen assimilation with Australian national identification. Family of choice (e.g., husband, mother) and family of origin (e.g., son, sister) identities were found as the most important identities relating to belongingness for both cultural groups. Mutuality of acceptance within a social identity was found to secure an intrinsic sense of belonging in both cultures. The expectation that Australian national identity held primacy of importance for belongingness of Anglo-Celtics was not supported. Anglo-Celtics expressed a degree of disassociation from Australian national identity and unexplored emotional connections to non-Australian cultural heritage and ancestries. The suggestion that national identity was a common and unifying social identity in a multicultural setting was not supported between the Anglo-Celtic and Chinese cultural groups in this study.

The finding that Australian national identity did not hold primacy of importance of belongingness of Anglo-Celtics, is consistent with prior research that demonstrated a lower level of importance of a ‘white’ Anglo-Celtic majority in the UK, where family identities were similarly found to hold primacy (Beddington, 2013; Marsh et al., 2007). It was also consistent with findings that ethnic majority New Zealanders felt lower levels of belongingness when compared with minority indigenous Maoris (Bell, 2009), however in this study it was not due to their comparison with Indigenous Aboriginals. Reconciliation of the alignment of heritage and ancestral cultures with Australian national identity appeared to hamper clarity Anglo-Celtic group expressions of a national identity. Findings were inconsistent with other findings in respect to an Anglo majority sample in the UK, who experienced high levels of belonging to a British national identity (Skey, 2010).

The discrepancy of results between these studies may also be attributed to the methodologies, priming, and range of identities considered. In the case of Marsh et al. (2007) our study was methodologically similar to the extent that national identity was one of a large range of social identities ranked for belongingness and therefore not specifically primed. Skey (2010) on the other hand only investigated the association of British national identity and belongingness, and as such national identity was exclusively primed in the mind of respondents.
Priming has been shown to prompt identity associated specific beliefs and emotions that are exclusive to the identity (Kuo & Margalit, 2012).

The lack of primacy of importance of Australian national identity in association with belongingness for Anglo-Celtics did not corroborate Anant’s hypothesis that assimilation, and personal involvement translated to strong feelings of belongingness. As an ethnic majority, Anglo-Celtics could be considered fully assimilated, integral and personally involved within an Australian social system, yet Anglo-Celtic participants (male and female) were somewhat disassociated from expressing a clear national identity. Many spoke fondly of their English, Scottish, Irish or European heritage and ancestral connections. Anglo-Celtic participants also expressed envy towards others (minorities) who appeared to have clarity of their identity and belongingness via their ethnic and cultural heritage. This finding was consistent with previous research demonstrating that ethnic majority Australians largely ignored consideration of an intrinsic ethnic identity (Brewer et al., 2013). The majority did not consider Australian an ethnic identity, rather ‘ethnic’ was considered by them as an antonym for Anglo-Celtic (Price, 1991).

This disconnection of a psychological relationship between Australian national identity and belongingness for the Anglo-Celtic participants is explained in part by Anant’s hypothesis that self-categorization of an identity (such as Australian national identity) did not automatically mean a consequence of belongingness. As a majority member, there is no overt psychological projection of acceptance, valuation or recognition from surrounding society, as being Australian is part of everyday living. Distinction and meaning of Australian national identity and associated belongingness perhaps only becomes acute in awareness when under threat (Breakwell, 1986) or in celebration of historic Australian events. It should be noted that Anant himself was an Indian living in Canada, and is likely to have been influenced by his own assimilation experiences into Canadian society at the time.

The finding that Chinese identities held primacy of importance among identities associated to belongingness was consistent with research that showed ethnic and cultural identity to be of primary importance, and dominant in minority group self-construal in a multicultural environment (Brewer et al., 2013; Chahtin et al., 2009). The Chinese group consistently identified primacy of importance of Chinese national, Chinese-Australian or Chinese cultural ‘promoter’ identities. A Chinese cultural ‘promoter’ identity was readily translated as Chinese ethnic identity by the group, and proposed as a positive way to gain majority acceptance and earn a legitimate place in Australian society. Chinese promoted their culture at every opportunity available to them through professional roles, personal presence, language teaching and use, food, and active involvement in community events. Similarly, proclamation of bicultural identities by the Chinese was an active symbol of positive acculturation through personal involvement. These findings were consistent with studies of cultural minority groups who demonstrated a balanced commitment to their ethnic identity supported pride and acceptance of Australian national identity and predicted increased belongingness (Nesdale & Mak, 2000; Rooney et al., 2012).

Chinese group expressions of greater economic and social parity opportunities offered in Australia were consistent with previous research among Indians living in Canada (Anant, 1969). Similar to the Canadian example, Chinese participants felt the nature of Australian society gave them freedom of choice [to belong] and experience mutuality of acceptance within the social system. Only occasional demonstrations of public or private discrimination interrupted feelings of positive belongingness in Australia. These findings also support Obst and White (2007) where choice of identity was shown to increase feelings of belongingness.

Mutuality of acceptance found as the primary attribute underpinning an intrinsic sense of belonging was consistent with theory and previous research of the attributes of the experience of belongingness (Hagerty & Patusky, 1995; Levett-Jones et al., 2009). Both Anglo-Celtic and Chinese discourse demonstrated that mutuality of acceptance was common and most frequently experienced in family of choice and family of origin identities, and also in Chinese cultural identity.

**Conclusion, limitations and future research**

The suggestion that national identity was a common identity underpinning belongingness for the majority and minorities in a multicultural nation was not supported in this study. Both Anglo-Celtic and Chinese group belongingness was satisfied primarily through family memberships, and through Chinese cultural identity, [and in this particular group], vocational identity. Australian national identity did not hold primacy in importance in relation to belongingness of either an Anglo-Celtic or Chinese cultural groups in this study.

In Australia’s Anglo-Celtic dominated environment, the lack of primacy of importance of national identity for both Anglo-Celtic and Chinese groups makes sense. In the case of the Anglo-Celtic’s, there would be few (if any) daily context-situation triggers of salience in comparison to other identities held, as an Anglo-based social world is a norm. Unresolved issues of identity relating to ancestry and heritage appeared to cause some degree of
disassociation from a national identity. Perceived external threats to perceived personal safety, values, confronting underlying beliefs or way of life, or symbolic Australian celebrations may elevate national identity salience and therefore its primacy of importance in comparison to other social identity memberships. Bicultural identity represented through a commitment to dual citizenship offered unification and shared majority conferred rights to minorities, however primacy of belongingness was found for all among family identities, and the cultural identities of the Chinese group.

Findings represent only a small group of an ethnic majority and minority cultural groups in a regional setting, however the qualitative nature of the study aimed to explore participant insights as a foundation to identify areas of further research of Australian national identity. Chinese represent the third largest immigrant group in Australia (ABS, 2011), however they are one of many minority groups, and different views could be expected from others. The Chinese group in this study were all 1st generation and it could be expected that 2nd or 3rd generations may strengthen Australian national identity associated belongingness through birth and education. Also, self-identification has been shown to change over time (Kuo & Margalit, 2012), so how people identified in respect to importance of identities on the dimension of belongingness on the focus group day may vary if repeated at a later time. Future research needs to investigate larger majority samples, and compare other migrant and Indigenous groups with particularly focus upon the mutuality of acceptance of national and cultural identity in relation to belongingness.
References


