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INTERMARRIAGE IN AUSTRALIA: PATTERNS BY ANCESTRY, GENDER AND GENERATION

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Ancestry data from the 2001 Census allow us to explore intermarriage patterns among people of different ethnic backgrounds in Australia including: people born overseas (the first generation), their Australian-born children (the second generation), and their Australian-born grand children and so on (termed here the third generation plus). While rates of intermarriage vary sharply among the second generation, by the third generation most people are marrying outside their own ancestry groups. For example, second-generation people reporting Greek ancestry are very likely to marry others of a similar ancestry but the third generation are not. Most groups of Asian ancestry have not been in Australia long enough to produce a large third generation of marriageable age, but people reporting Indian and Chinese ancestry show a similar pattern to the Greeks: strong in-marriage in the second generation followed by strong out-marriage in the third-plus generation.

INTRODUCTION

Most previous studies of intermarriage in Australia have been based on information on the country of birth of brides and grooms available from marriage registration records.[1] These have examined intermarriage according to whether an overseas-born person married an Australian-born person or someone who was born in another overseas country. These studies have also focussed mainly on migrants of European origin. They show that intermarriage rates vary by country of origin, with people born in Western European countries such as Germany and the Netherlands being more likely to intermarry with native-born Australians than people born in Southern European countries such as Greece and Italy. Information on the birthplace of the mother of brides and grooms has also been used to examine intermarriage in the second generation.[2] This shows similar patterns by ethnic origin, and that at least two-thirds of all second generation Australians have married outside their ethnic group. Marriage registration statistics in the 1980s also showed that in-marriage was more common among migrants born in Vietnam, Turkey and Lebanon than among migrants born in most European countries.[3] There were also considerable differences in intermarriage with native-born Australians among more recent migrants from Asia by country of origin.[4]

In 1986, a question on people's ancestry was asked in the Australian population census for the first time. Jones, Jones and Luijkx, and Giorgas and Jones[5] have used these data to examine inter-ethnic marriage, looking mainly at the effects of generation, education, marriage cohort, ethnic residential segregation and group size on intermarriage. The focus was also on groups of European ancestries, particular in examining intermarriage in the second generation. It was not possible at the time to examine intermarriage in the second generation of Asian ancestries because most of the people concerned were still quite young in 1986 as most Asian migration to Australia occurred after 1970. Since 1986, the ancestry question has not been asked in the censuses until the 2001 census.

This paper uses the 2001 census data on ancestry to examine intermarriage patterns by ethnic origin, gender and

generation. The focus is on people of non-English-speaking origins. By 2001, many communities of Southern and Eastern European origins formed through immigration during the 1950s and 1960s had a significant third generation of adult age, while the second generation of Asian origins whose parents immigrated after 1970 were also entering adulthood. It is possible for the first time to compare intermarriage patterns in the first, second and third generations for many of these groups by their ancestry. Where the second generation shows a relatively high rate of in-group marriages, the paper also examines whether these Australian-born offspring of immigrants had married within the second generation or whether there was a propensity to marry a person of the same ethnic origin who was of the first generation. In previous studies of spouse migration to Australia, it has been suggested that some members of the second generation were sponsoring marriage partners for migration from their parents' homeland.[6]

DATA AND METHOD

The 2001 census asked the question, 'What is the person's ancestry?' A census guide handed out with the census form suggested that people should answer the question with the ancestry or ancestries that they most closely identified with, and that they could count their ancestry as far back as their great grandparents. If more than one ancestry was given, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) coded the first two on the list.

Intermarriage is examined by comparing the ancestry of spouses in couple families. The analysis is based on couples where both spouses were present in the household on census night.[7] A person is in an intermarriage if his/her partner is of a different ancestry. For men and women of each ancestry group, the proportion intermarried is calculated as:

$$\frac{\text{Number of partnered persons of ancestry } a \text{ whose partner is not of ancestry } a}{\text{Total number of partnered persons of ancestry } a}$$

This proportion has been referred to as the intermarriage ratio and, according to Price and Zubrzycki, it 'is most appropriate for measuring the extent of intermarriage amongst an ethnic group at any given moment in time'.[8] Couple families include couples who are married as well as couples in de facto relationships. The spouses are examined according to their first coded or sole ancestry response only. This might overestimate the extent of intermarriage if, in the 21.5 per cent of people who stated more than one ancestry in the census, it was their other ancestry response, not the first one coded, that was the same as their partner's first or only ancestry response.[9]

The combination of information on birthplace and parents' birthplace (whether born in Australia or overseas) makes it possible for people to be identified as first, second or third-plus generation Australians. The term *first generation* refers to Australian residents who are born overseas. *Second generation* refers to people who are born in Australia but have one or both parents who are overseas-born. The term *third-plus generation* refers to people who are born in Australia whose parents are also born in Australia. It is not possible to differentiate between the third and higher order generations; hence the term *third-plus generation* is used for this group.

The 2001 census did not collect information on the timing of marriage or the start of a de facto relationship. Therefore it was not possible to determine for couples where at least one partner was born

overseas whether they had married before or after arriving in Australia or whether their migration was related to their marriage. A high proportion of intra-ethnic marriage among the overseas-born first generation may be a reflection of a high propensity for family units to migrate (this would lead to a high proportion of first-generation couples with spouses of the same ancestry) as well as a low propensity for first-generation immigrants to marry outside their ethnic group. Intermarriage as measured in this paper is a better indicator of the social integration for the second and third-plus generations who are born in Australia.

ANCESTRY OF SPOUSES IN COUPLE FAMILIES

Of the four million couples enumerated in the 2001 census, 2.4 million or nearly 60 per cent were couples where both spouses were of the same ancestry (Table 1). Most were families where both partners reported Australian ancestry or the same Anglo-Celtic or European ancestry as their sole ancestry or the first one coded of their multiple ancestries. Seven per cent of all couple families were families in which both spouses were of the same non-European ancestry. People who identified their ancestry as Australian were mostly third or more generation Australians.[10]

In one-third of all couples, the spouses were of different ancestries. In most of these couples, the spouses were of different European ancestries or one spouse was of Australian ancestry and the other was of European ancestry. The most common combinations were English-Australian and English-Irish. Fewer than four per cent of all couple families were intermarriages between a person of Australian/European ancestry and a person of non-European ancestry. Families formed by intermarriage between people of different non-European ancestries were fewer than one per cent of all couple families.

INTERMARRIAGE BY ANCESTRY AND GENERATION

The 2001 census ancestry data show much variation in the intermarriage ratio by ancestry and generation (Table 2). In the first generation, people stating their ancestry as American had the highest

Table 1: Ancestry of spouses in married and de facto couples, 2001

First/only ancestry of spouses	Number of couples	Per cent of all couples
Australian/European ancestries	1,172,456	28.7
Australian/European ancestries with non-European ancestries	143,622	3.5
Combination of non-European ancestries	17,807	0.4
All couples with spouses of different ancestries	**1,333,885**	**32.7**
Couples with same Australian/European ancestry	2,122,823	52.0
Couples with same non-European ancestry	279,167	6.8
All couples with spouses of same ancestry	**2,401,990**	**58.8**
Ancestry of one or both spouses not stated	162,493	4.0
No matches or multiple matches	187,019	4.6
Total number of couples	**4,085,387**	**100.0**

Source: 2001 Census
Notes: Australian ancestries include Australian Aboriginal and other Australian peoples.
Non-European ancestries include people of the Americas excluding American.
No matches or multiple matches include couples with a spouse absent on census night and same sex couples.

Table 2: Per cent of partnered men and women with spouse of a different ancestry,[a] by ancestry and generation

Ancestry	1st generation		2nd generation		3rd generation		Total	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Australian	40	41	33	37	28	31	29	32
English	38	37	43	46	24	27	31	33
Irish	69	67	84	84	74	73	75	74
Scottish	69	64	91	89	85	80	79	74
Welsh	76	71	96	95	96	95	83	80
Macedonian	11	9	41	34	*	*	17	15
Greek	16	12	45	37	82	77	28	25
Serbian	32	23	75	70	94	89	40	34
Croatian	30	23	65	61	86	79	39	35
Italian	28	17	59	51	87	84	44	38
Maltese	39	32	72	68	83	80	53	49
Spanish	43	45	80	79	99	98	49	51
Polish	42	40	83	81	94	93	56	55
Hungarian	53	41	88	86	93	91	62	55
Russian	37	46	79	78	93	92	50	56
Dutch	68	61	91	91	95	94	76	74
French	69	67	92	92	98	98	77	75
German	68	64	91	91	81	79	79	77
Turkish	16	10	28	19	*	*	18	11
Lebanese	15	12	38	27	77	69	21	17
Armenian	28	19	50	41	*	*	29	22
Egyptian	31	20	71	64	*	*	35	26
Vietnamese	9	14	8	14	*	*	9	14
Khmer	11	17	*	*	*	*	11	17
Korean	8	19	17	20	*	*	8	19
Indian	18	19	50	55	87	78	20	21
Sinhalese	20	19	71	70	*	*	23	22
Chinese	10	20	39	48	85	86	16	23
Lao	22	28	*	*	*	*	22	29
Indonesian	33	57	52	66	*	*	34	57
Filipino	11	62	24	60	*	*	12	62
Japanese	24	65	79	89	*	*	27	66
Thai	32	85	*	93	*	*	33	85
South African	39	43	81	82	*	*	41	45
Other Sub-Saharan African	45	43	77	78	*	*	48	47
Maori	64	61	87	86	94	95	66	63
New Zealander	73	73	94	93	97	93	75	75
American	83	82	97	97	100	100	85	84

[a] Based on first coded or sole ancestry
* Fewer than 100 persons
Source: 2001 Census

intermarriage ratio at over 80 per cent. In contrast, men and women of Macedonian or Vietnamese ancestry and men of Korean ancestry had some of the lowest intermarriage ratios (eight to 14 per cent). As expected from the findings of earlier studies, the 2001 ancestry data also showed that the first generation of Western European ancestries, such as Dutch, German and French, had higher proportions intermarried than the first generation of Southern or Eastern European origins, such as Greek, Italian or Polish. The low proportions of men

and women with spouses of a different ancestry among the first generation of Middle Eastern, Asian and some of the Southern European ancestries partly reflect the migration of family units from these regions.

Among the overseas-born of Filipino, Japanese or Thai ancestry, a low proportion of men had spouses of a different ancestry, but this was not true of the women. Sixty-two per cent of Filipino women, 65 per cent of Japanese women and 85 per cent of Thai women had spouses of a different ancestry. Many Filipino women migrate to Australia to marry non-Filipino men[11] and an analysis of marriage statistics has shown that Thai and Japanese women have a higher rate of intermarriage with Australian-born men than do their male counterparts with Australian-born women.[12]

The second generation also showed large differences in intermarriage by ancestry. While over 90 per cent of the second generation reporting American, New Zealander, Welsh, Dutch, French or German ancestry had married outside their ancestry group, less than 20 per cent of the second generation of Vietnamese or Korean ancestry had intermarried.

As expected, for most ancestry groups, the likelihood of intermarriage increases from the first to the second generation and from the second to the third or more generation. The increase is quite striking for some ancestries. For example, while 10 to 20 per cent of the first generation of Greek ancestry had spouses of a different ancestry, 35 to 45 per cent of the second generation partnered a person of different ancestry, and the proportion intermarried among the third-plus generation increased further to about 80 per cent. Similarly for persons of Lebanese ancestry, the proportion marrying outside the ethnic group increased from 12 to 15 per cent in the first generation to over 25 per cent in the second generation to more than two-thirds in the third-plus generation. These patterns point to increasing social interaction between second and third generation Australians and people outside their ethnic group.

Groups reporting Eastern European ancestries, such as Polish, Hungarian and Russian, had a higher proportion of members with spouses of a different ancestry in the first generation compared to groups reporting Southern European or Middle Eastern ancestry. About 40 to 50 per cent of the first generation with Eastern European ancestries had spouses of a different ancestry. By the third-plus generation, more than 90 per cent had spouses of a different ancestry.

The two Asian ancestry groups with a sizeable number of married adults who are third or more generation — the Chinese and the Indians — also show the same sharp increase in ethnic intermarriage. While fewer than 20 per cent of the first generation had a spouse of a different ancestry, the proportion was 30 to 60 per cent in the second generation and more than 75 per cent in the third-plus generation.

Because of their recent immigration, other Asian ancestry groups do not yet have a third generation and even the second generation is mostly still young. For the small number of the second generation that has partnered, the likelihood of intermarriage varies considerably by origin. While the Vietnamese and Korean do not show an increase in intermarriage from the first to the second generation, most of the other Asian ancestry groups do. The increase was particularly large for the Sinhalese, from 20 per cent in the first generation to 70 per cent in the second generation.

Among the Asian ancestry groups, women are more likely than men to intermarry. However, the opposite pattern is observed in people of most Southern European or Middle Eastern origins. These differences have also been noted in earlier studies of intermarriage patterns based on marriage registration data. Among the European ancestry groups, the first generation of Russian ancestry shows a pattern that is similar to the Asian ancestry groups, with a higher proportion of women than men marrying outside the ethnic group. This is likely to be related to the recent migration of Russian women for marriage to Australian men.

Table 2 also shows that the proportion intermarried for people stating Australian ancestry in the census decreased from 40 per cent in the first generation to about 30 per cent in the third generation. Only one per cent of the people stating Australian ancestry were overseas-born (and they might be people born overseas but have parents who were Australian-born) and most (83 per cent) were third or more generation Australians. Most of the group reporting Australian ancestry who had intermarried had spouses who were of English, Scottish or Irish ancestry. There were also significant numbers with spouses of Italian or German ancestry.[13]

Are the second and third generations of non-English-speaking ancestries who have married outside their ethnic group intermarrying with the Anglo-Celtic Australian majority or with people of similar ethnicities? Table 3 shows the percentage with a spouse of Australian, English, Irish, Scottish or Welsh ancestry for partnered men and women in the second and third or more generations of some for the larger Southern and Eastern European, Asian and Middle Eastern ancestry groups.

A comparison of these ancestry groups from Tables 2 and 3 shows that the majority of the second or third generation who had intermarried had spouses who were of Anglo-Celtic or Australian ancestries. For example, while Table 2 shows that 59 per cent of men who were second generation of Italian ancestry had intermarried, Table 3 shows that 44 per cent of these men had married women of Australian, English, Irish, Scottish or Welsh ancestry. For most of the groups shown, there was a sharp increase from the second to the third generation in intermarriage with people of Anglo-Australian background. Between one-half and two-thirds of partnered men and women in the third generation in all the ancestry groups shown had spouses who were of Australian or English-speaking ancestries. Two-thirds of the third generation of Chinese origin and more than half of the third generation of Lebanese origin had intermarried with persons of Anglo-Australian background. This points to a high degree of social and

Table 3: Per cent of partnered men and women of the second or third generation of non-English-speaking ancestries with spouse of Australian or Anglo-Celtic ancestries[a]

Ancestry	2nd generation		3rd generation	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Greek	26	19	62	56
Serbian	50	41	74	63
Croatian	40	33	61	44
Italian	44	34	72	66
Maltese	48	42	59	57
Spanish	47	42	59	57
Polish	59	55	69	61
Hungarian	61	55	53	66
Russian	53	49	63	54
Lebanese	20	12	58	49
Indian	32	36	65	55
Chinese	27	35	69	66

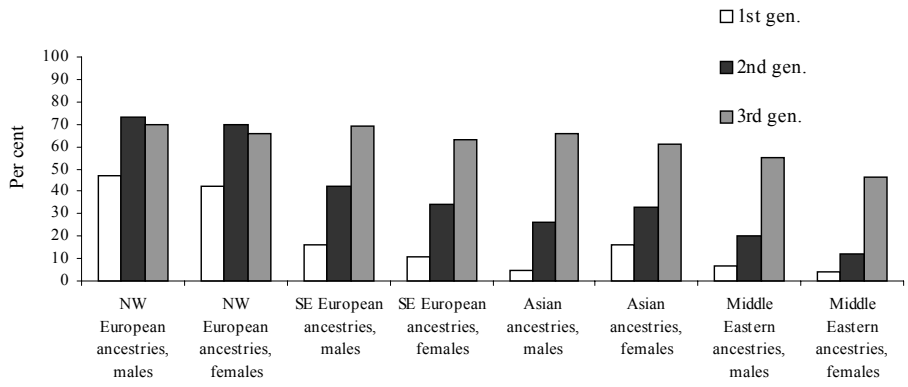
[a] Based on first coded or sole ancestry. Anglo-Celtic ancestries include English, Irish, Scottish and Welsh.
Source: 2001 Census

cultural integration of the third generation of non-English-speaking origins.

Figure 1 summarises the intermarriage patterns by generation of Australians of non-English-speaking ancestries in terms of broad regional groups with Australians of English-speaking ancestries. It shows that intermarriage with people of Anglo-Australian ancestries was highest for men and women of Northern and Western European background in the first two generations. However, by the third generation, there was not much difference between them and men and women of Southern and Eastern European ancestries. The second generation of Asian or Middle Eastern ancestries, who were mostly the children of migrants who had arrived in Australia after 1970, had lower proportions intermarried compared with the second generation of European ancestries. However, the third generation of Asian and Middle Eastern origins would be the grandchildren of migrants who had arrived much earlier. These groups had intermarriage ratios that were only slightly lower than those for the third generation of European ancestries. The third generation of Asian ancestries was predominantly of Chinese ancestry as the other Asian ancestry groups had only a small third generation, while the third generation of Middle Eastern ancestries was predominantly of Lebanese ancestry. The early waves of Lebanese migration to Australia were predominantly Christian,[14] which might explain the relatively high proportion intermarried in the third generation.

A study of intermarriage in the United States also shows increasing intermarriage with generation among men and women of Asian, Pacific Islander or Hispanic origin.[15] However, the increase in intermarriage from the second to the third generation of these groups in the US was much smaller than for Australia. Using data on race and ancestry for the years 1995 to 2000, the US study showed that 29 per cent of men and 40 per cent of women who were third generation of Asian or Pacific Islander origin and 31 per cent of those of Hispanic origin had spouses of a different race or ancestry. It appears that the third generation of Asian

Figure 1: Per cent of partnered men and women of non-English-speaking ancestries with spouse of English-speaking ancestry, by generation, 2001



ancestry in Australia have intermarried to a much greater extent than their counterparts in the US.

INTRA-ETHNIC MARRIAGES IN THE SECOND GENERATION

Table 2 shows that the second generation of some ancestry groups still tends to marry within the group. Within-group marriage is the choice of the majority of the second generation of Greek, Macedonian, Armenian, Lebanese, Turkish, Chinese, Korean or Vietnamese origin. It has been suggested that some members of the second generation have looked to the parents' homeland to find marriage partners.[16] A recent study indicates that second generation women of Middle Eastern origins may be particularly likely to sponsor marriage partners from the parents' country of origin.[17] With the census data on ancestry it is possible to examine whether the second generation who have married within the ethnic group have married someone who is overseas-born (first generation), or someone who is also of the second generation.

Table 4 shows the major ancestry groups where a significant proportion of the second generation had spouses of the same ancestry by whether the spouse was first or second generation. Within this set of ancestry groups second-generation people of Turkish origin were the most likely to marry someone of the same ancestry who was first generation. Nearly half of the women and 30 per cent of the

Table 4: Second generation partnered men and women with spouses of the same ancestry: whether spouse is first or second generation

Ancestry		Per cent with spouse who is:		Total with same ancestry spouse who are 1st or 2nd generation	Number of partnered people
		1st generation	2nd generation		
		Per cent	Per cent	Per cent	
Italian:	males	5	34	40	73,070
	females	15	33	48	76,663
Greek:	males	7	47	55	31,296
	females	18	44	62	33,496
Macedonian:	males	13	46	59	3,893
	females	28	37	66	4,822
Lebanese:	males	22	39	61	6,125
	females	42	31	73	7,794
Turkish:	males	30	42	72	1,274
	females	48	33	81	1,600
Chinese:	males	21	39	60	5,125
	females	16	35	51	5,743
Filipino:	males	7	69	76	608
	females	7	33	40	1,268
Indian:	males	18	32	50	1,243
	females	18	27	45	1,464
Vietnamese:	males	6	85	91	711
	females	18	67	86	898

Source: 2001 Census

men had married a person of the same ancestry who was born overseas. The second generation of Lebanese ancestry was the next most likely to have overseas-born spouses of the same ancestry. The proportion with a spouse who was also second generation was similar for both the Turkish and Lebanese second generation. In both groups this proportion was higher for men than women. This is in contrast to the proportion married to the first generation, which was higher for women than men. The data show that second-generation women of Lebanese or Turkish origin are more likely to partner with men from the first generation than from the second generation.

In contrast to second-generation people of Lebanese or Turkish ancestry, second-generation people of the other ancestry groups shown in Table 4 are more likely to partner with other second-generation people of their own ancestry group than with the first generation. Nearly half of the second generation of Greek ancestry had spouses who were also second generation of Greek ancestry while one-third of the second generation of Italian ancestry had spouses who were also second generation of Italian ancestry. Nearly all the Vietnamese second generation who were partnered in 2001 had spouses within the second generation.

It is also notable from Table 4 that intra-ethnic marriage is higher for females than males of Southern European and Middle Eastern ancestries but higher for males than females of Asian ancestries. This continues the pattern of gender differences in partnering observed in the first generation and points to enduring cultural and gender roles in the second generation in these ethnic groups.

CONCLUSION

The 2001 census data on ancestry has made it possible to examine patterns of intermarriage by ethnic origin for the first, second and third-plus generation of many ethnic groups of non-English-speaking origins. As expected, inter-ethnic marriage increases from the first to the second generation and from the second to the third or more generation. The increase was quite significant for some ancestry groups, with a rise of 20 to 30 percentage points in the proportion with a spouse of different ancestry from the first to the second generation and a similar increase from the second to the third generation. By the third generation, 80 per cent or more of men and women of Southern and Eastern European ancestries had spouses of a different ancestry.

Of particular interest is the finding that most second or third generation men and women who reported Southern and Eastern European, Middle Eastern or Asian ancestries, and who had intermarried, had spouses who were of Australian or English-speaking ancestries. By the third generation, the majority of those who had partnered had intermarried with Australians of English-speaking ancestries. This points to a high degree of social integration with Australian society by the third generation.

It was also possible to compare the intermarriage patterns of the second generation of earlier European migration with those of the second generation of more recent non-European migration. The comparison shows a lower proportion intermarried in the second generation of Asian or Middle Eastern ancestry compared with the second generation of European ancestry. In-marriage is still a common pattern for some groups, such as the Vietnamese, who have partnered mainly with second generation people

from their own ancestry group, and the Turks and Lebanese, who have sought spouses from the first as well as the second generation. Not many Asian or Middle Eastern ancestry groups had a third generation in 2001. Of those that did-the Chinese, Indians and Lebanese-70 per cent or more had married outside their ancestry group. They are likely to be the descendants of pre-1970 migrants to Australia and may not be representative of the descendants of more recent migrants from Asia and the Middle East. It will be many more years before the intermarriage patterns of the third generation of more recent migrants from these regions will be known. Considering that some of the Southern European groups that had a low intermarriage rate in the first generation now have a high proportion intermarried in the third generation, it is always possible that a similar pattern of increase in intermarriage will also happen in future for other groups of more recent migrant origin.

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