# Bystander antiprejudice on behalf of Muslim Australians: The role of ethnocentrism and conformity

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*Racism and discrimination against Muslim minorities is becoming increasingly prevalent in Australia and much of the Western world. The present study investigated whether ethnocentrism and conformity, which have long been associated with racism, are also significant correlates of willingness to engage in bystander antiracism on behalf of Muslim Australians. Participants were 154 non-Muslim Australians (50.6% female), aged between 18-85 years (M = 48 years). Participants were recruited from around Australia to complete an anonymous online survey via Qualtrics. Measures were a bystander question (regarding a hypothetical scenario), social conformity and ethnocentrism scales, and demographic information (age; education; gender; political preference). Correlations indicated that participants high in ethnocentrism and conformity and low in formal education were significantly less likely to take bystander action. However, a hierarchical regression equation revealed ethnocentrism to be the only significant predictor of bystander antiracism with 18% of the variance explained overall. Our study adds to the current literature by exploring, for the first time, the combined role of ethnocentrism and conformity in willingness to engage in bystander antiracism. This, we hope, can assist antiracism practitioners with their interventions; encouraging bystander action is one way of creating a more equitable Australia.*

Racism is a problem that is associated with poorer social, health, and economic outcomes for targets and societies more generally (Paradies, 2006). Racism has been defined as any belief, attitude, emotion, or action that maintains or exacerbates inequalities between racial, ethnic, or religious groups in society (Walton, Priest, & Paradies, 2013). Racism can have detrimental effects at individual, institutional and cultural levels (Jones, 1997). For example, at the individual level, racism can result in poorer mental and physical health outcomes (Jankowski, Sandage, & Hill, 2013). At the community level, racism can cause divisions within society; further contributing to an 'us and them' mentality. These sorts of divisions threaten community cohesion and harmony and instead promote violence, aggression and hostility between groups (Salleh-hoddin & Pedersen, 2012). Particularly since 9/11, Muslim people have increasingly been the targets of discrimination in Australia and other Western nations (Poynting & Mason, 2006).

There is debate over whether negativity towards Muslim Australians can be considered a form of racism, with some preferring terms such as 'Islamophobia' or 'anti-Islam' (Poynting & Mason, 2007). However, some researchers argue that much of anti-Muslim discrimination goes beyond a criticism of the religion and instead involves a racialisation process that involves cultural, linguistic, and racial elements (Grosfoguel, 2012; Poynting & Mason, 2007). It is argued that this racialisation process makes the distinction between racism and anti-Islamic racism not practical or necessary when applied to everyday life (Gulson & Webb, 2013; Moosavi, 2014; Sayyid, 2011). For the purposes of our study, we use the term racism.

Racism against Muslim people can lead to a sense of disenfranchisement and separation from the mainstream community, increased rates of psychopathology and poorer health outcomes (Judd & Vandenberg, 2014). At the institutional level, Muslims can experience discrimination when trying to find work due to mistrust of their work ethic and ability to fit in

based on stereotypes about their group (Lovat et al., 2013; Syed & Pio, 2009). Thus racism against Muslim people is a significant problem in Australia, not only for the individuals targeted, but for increasing tensions in the community.

As such, racism is an important social issue that needs to be addressed. Preliminary research into examining the effectiveness of antiracism initiatives and ways we can reduce racism in the community has been promising (eg. Pedersen, Walker, & Wise, 2005). However, one potentially useful way of reducing racism that has received limited research attention is bystander antiracism.

*Bystander Antiracism*

A bystander is a witness to a situation of interest but is not directly involved as target or perpetrator (Darley & Latane, 1968; Nelson, Dunn, & Paradies, 2011). Nelson et al. (2011) defined bystander antiracism as "action taken by a person or persons (not directly involved as a target or perpetrator) to speak out about or seek to engage others in responding (either directly or indirectly, immediately or at a later time) against interpersonal or systematic racism" (p.265). Early studies examining bystander action or inaction in emergency situations (eg. Darley & Latane, 1968) spurred widespread research on why people choose to act or not act in crisis circumstances. However, less research has been done on what factors influence people to act in non-emergency situations that are still of social importance. These sorts of events are referred to as 'everyday racism' and relate to everyday, normalised racist talk that is recurrent and "infused into familiar practices, such as jokes and everyday exclusions" (Essed, 1991, p. 3). Bystanders are well positioned to contest everyday forms of racism which are encountered frequently by minority groups (Beagan, 2003).

There are a number of factors influencing whether bystanders take action against everyday racist scenarios. Some of these include empathetic concern (Eisenberg & Miller, 1987; Pedersen & Thomas, 2013), perceived offensiveness of the comment (Dickter & Newton, 2013), collective guilt (Eisenberg & Miller, 1987; Pedersen & Thomas, 2013), fear (Neto & Pedersen, 2013), and powerlessness (Ashbaugh & Radomsky, 2009). Some studies find that socio-demographics also relate to bystander action. When there are relationships, people who engage in bystander antiprejudice are more likely to be older (Amato, 1985; Neto & Pedersen, 2013), female (Neto & Pedersen, 2013; Redmond, Pedersen, & Paradies, 2014), and have more formal education (Pedersen & Hartley, 2012; Russell, Pennay, Webster, & Paradies, 2013).

As Nelson et al. (2011) argue, even though it operates at individual levels, encouraging bystander action can have wider social benefits in that it works to destabilise the normalised instances of racism that marginalised people experience in everyday settings. This can prompt people to question the validity of these taken-for-granted instances of racism and perhaps propel witnesses and perpetrators to reduce their support and perpetuation of everyday racism in the community.

Bystander antiracism also shifts the burden of antiracism from targets to witnesses (Nelson et al., 2011). For example, a US study compared perpetrator reactions to confrontations about racial or gender bias from a confederate from the target group in question (Black people or women) and a confederate from a non-target group (White people and men). It was found that prejudiced individuals felt more guilt at their behaviour when questioned by a member of the non-target group than members of the target group (Czopp & Monteith, 2003). When confronted by a non-target group member, the confrontation was more likely to be taken seriously by the perpetrator and decreased their likelihood of acting on racial or gender stereotypes in a later experiment compared to confrontations by target group members (Czopp, Monteith, & Mark, 2006; Czopp & Monteith, 2003). Some of these findings may be because when a white person was confronted by a fellow white person, their stereotypical responses became a violation of in-group antiracist norms, whilst when confronted by an out-group member, the person may not feel they are violating their in-group norms by perpetuating stereotypes

(Jasinskaja-Lahti, Mähönen, & Liebkind, 2011).

This is relevant to research on consensus effects, which has found that people's attitudes can change in relation to what they think others believe. By referring to the beliefs of those similar to their own, people reinforce the self-perceived correctness of their viewpoint (Watt & Larkin, 2010). Pedersen, Griffiths and Watt (2008) found a strong positive relationship between perceived consensus and racism towards Aboriginal Australians and asylum seekers. Changing one's views based on consensus beliefs can be considered a type of conformity. Individuals differ in their propensity to conform to other people's opinions. However, no research has been done that has examined trait social conformity as a predictor of bystander antiracism.

*Conformity*

Conformity is one of the most well-known phenomena in the field of psychology. Foundational experiments by Milgram (1963), Asch (1951, 1955) and others show that pressure to conform to both authority and majority opinion has a powerful influence on people's behaviour. As defined by Cialdini and Goldstein (2004), conformity refers to the phenomenon of when an individual changes their behaviour in order to be in line with the responses of others.

Allport (1954) was the first to propose that conformity was linked with prejudice claiming that it made up at least 50% of what predicted prejudice. Subsequent research found that prejudice is highly related to prevailing social norms in that location (Crandall & Stangor, 2008). In another example, Sechrist and Young (2011) found that individual prejudice levels can be manipulated by providing consensus information. If a person thinks that most of their peers are prejudiced against an out-group, they too are likely to become more prejudiced. This effect also works in reverse; if they think that most of their peers are less prejudiced than them, they will subsequently report less prejudice. In the Swiss context, Falomir-Pichastor, Chatard, Selimbegovic, Konan, and Mugny (2013) found that there was conformity to anti-discrimination norms for individuals with a low sense of in-group threat from foreigners. Therefore, the effect of social conformity on prejudice is related to the degree that prejudice is culturally normative in the sample's population.

This was supported by the finding of Duckitt (2001) that conformity was negatively related to prejudice towards out-groups in a New Zealand sample where being non-prejudiced was normative. However, Duckitt, Wagner, du Plessis, and Birum (2002) similarly found that in an American undergraduate sample, conformity indirectly predicted outgroup prejudice through a moderate positive relationship with right-wing authoritarianism. This was despite conformity having a negative relationship with outgroup prejudice directly (Duckitt et al., 2002).

Explicit racism is not normatively acceptable in Australians society (Dunn & Nelson, 2011). Thus, theoretically, people high in conformity may be more likely to engage in bystander antiracism if one is looking at a 'national' norm. However, some bystander research suggests that this relationship works in the other direction. People who have a higher tendency to conform socially may be less likely to want to do something that would make them stand out from the crowd or create conflict, as engaging in bystander antiracism would entail. As Cialdini and Goldstein (2004) argue, the goal of affiliation or maintaining social relations is a key motivator of conforming behaviour. This is supported by Stewart, Pedersen and Paradies (2014) finding that a desire to preserve interpersonal relationships was a significant obstacle to willingness to engage in bystander antiracism in a high risk scenario. Therefore, conformity is likely to be a significant negative predictor of bystander antiracism. This potential relationship of conformity with bystander antiracism has not been explored previously.

*Ethnocentrism*

Another potentially important personality variable which may be predictive of antiracism is ethnocentrism. Personality has long been considered an important component of prejudice (Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswik, Levinson, & Sanford, 1950; Allport, 1954). For example, Adorno et al. (1950) proposed the idea

of the authoritarian personality, based on the finding that people who were prejudiced against one group often were prejudiced against other groups as well. As stated by Allport (1954) "One of the facts of which we are most certain is that people who reject one out-group will tend to reject other out-groups" (p. 68). This idea of generalised prejudice or racism is one of the founding components of the concept of ethnocentrism.

The terms 'ethnocentric' and 'ethnocentrism' have a long history in social psychology with the first use of the word 'ethnocentric' being used by McGee (1900). The exact meaning of ethnocentrism has varied over the years, with some researchers considering ethnocentrism to be the combination of in-group positivity and out-group negativity (e.g., Adorno et al., 1950). However, in a recent reconceptualisation and refinement of the concept, Bizumic, Duckitt, Popadic, Dru, and Krauss (2009) defined ethnocentrism as ethnic group self-centredness and argued that it is conceptually distinct from mere out-group negativity and in-group positivity. This is the definition that is used for this paper.

What distinguishes ethnocentrism from just general out-group negativity is that it involves devotion to the in-group (i.e., nationalism) relative to out-groups (Bizumic & Duckitt, 2012). This is an important distinction, as someone could be negative to out-groups but also be negative to their in-group as well. This is supported by the finding that although ethnocentrism has a moderate positive relationship with outgroup negativity, the relationship is not strong enough to suggest that they are the same concept (Bizumic et al., 2009). Similarly, someone could feel very positive towards their in-group but also be positive about out-groups as well. Rather, ethnocentrism is the sense that one's ethnic group is more important (and better) than other ethnic groups. This is consistent with Tajfel and Turner's (1979) Social Identity Theory, which posits that people are motivated to achieve positive differentiation of their groups through emphasising their group's superiority over other groups.

Bizumic et al. (2009; 2012) proposed that ethnocentrism has a hierarchical structure that consists of two major subtypes: intergroup and intragroup ethnocentrism. The intergroup ethnocentrism subscale measures the degree to which the in-group is more important than out-groups and includes four lower order components. These are preference (for one's own ethnic group over others), superiority (belief that one's own ethnic group is better than others), purity (support for maintaining the 'purity' of one's ethnic group), and exploitativeness (support for gain of one's own ethnic group at the expense of other ethnic groups) (Bizumic et al., 2009; Bizumic & Duckitt, 2012). The intragroup ethnocentrism scale involves the idea that the in-group as a whole is more important than separate individual group members and is made up of devotion (strong attachment and loyalty to one's ethnic group) and group cohesion (prioritisation of group harmony over individual rights). Bizumic et al. (2009; 2012) found support for their hierarchical model of ethnocentrism in a wide variety of countries including New Zealand, USA, Serbia and France. However, in all cases participants were undergraduate students. To our knowledge, no study has examined the factor structure of the Bizumic et al.'s (2009) full ethnocentrism scale in a community sample or an Australian context. Consequently, the present study hopes to contribute to the literature through examining whether the Bizumic ethnocentrism scale demonstrates the same factor structure as previous research in a sample from the general Australian population.

We are aware of only one study on bystander antiracism that has examined ethnocentrism. Abbott and Cameron (2014) found that, among 855 British adolescents aged 11–13 years, intergroup contact fostered bystander behavioural intentions by reducing ethnocentrism (i.e. enhancing openness to other groups).

*The Present Study*

The overall objective of the present study was to investigate attitudes towards Muslim Australians; a group which has been the target of much prejudice and discrimination (Poynting & Mason, 2006). As noted by

Prilleltensky and Gonick (1996), taking action with respect to oppressed groups is imperative from both a moral as well as a pragmatic view.

The first aim of the present study was to test Bizumic et al.'s (2009) ethnocentrism scale in the general Australian population. Although the six-factor structure of this scale has been tested internationally (Bizumic et al., 2009; Bizumic & Duckitt, 2012), all of the samples have been undergraduate students, none of whom resided in Australia. However, we tentatively predict that the same factor function will be found with our Australian data (Prediction 1).

The second and most important aim was to explore whether individual differences in ethnocentrism and conformity are related to intention to stand up against everyday racism against Muslim people. No previous studies have explored these possible relationships in conjunction with each other. As intergroup ethnocentrism has a significant positive relationship with prejudice (Bizumic et al., 2009), it is hypothesised that intergroup ethnocentrism will have a significant negative relationship with bystander antiracism. Furthermore, as the goal of maintaining social relations has been found to be an obstacle to engaging in bystander antiracism (Stewart et al., 2014), and as this is a major motivator of conforming behaviour (Cialdini & Goldstein, 2004), it is predicted that conformity will have a significant negative relationship with action intention (Prediction 2).

A final aim was to establish which variable (conformity or ethnocentrism) predicts bystander action by way of a multiple regression. As there is no research to guide us in this regard, we make no prediction.

The independent variables included in the present study were intergroup ethnocentrism (preference, superiority, exploitativeness and purity) and intragroup ethnocentrism (group cohesion and devotion), conformity, age, gender, political preference, and education level. The outcome variable is likelihood of saying something in response to a prejudiced comment (bystander action intention).

## Method

*Participants*

154 (50.6% female) eligible participants were randomly selected from the general Australian population using the Qualtrics Australian participant database (Qualtrics, 2014). Emails were randomly sent out to all eligible individuals until the required number of participants responded. A quota was set to ensure an approximately even number of male and female participants were selected. There were no other quotas set. Participants were aged between 18 and 85 years (M = 48.26, SD = 15.78). All participants had to be over 18 and non-Muslim. Participants were from a range of education backgrounds. 13.6% of the sample did not finish secondary school, 20.8% had completed year 12, 37.7% had completed or were completing vocational training or an undergraduate diploma, whilst 27.9% had completed or were completing a Bachelor degree or higher. The vast majority of participants reported being Caucasian (79.2%), whilst a smaller minority reported being Asian (7.1%), Indian (4.5%) or other (8.4%). 51.3% of participants were Christian, 35.7% had no religion, 3.9% were Buddhist, 3.2% Hindu, and 5.8% had other religions. This is roughly representative of the general Australian population (ABS, 2011). Participants were sampled relatively evenly across the political spectrum with 26% of the sample stating they were left-wing, 21.4% right wing, 33.8% were centre and 18.8% didn't care. Qualtrics was paid $1000 for recruiting participants.

*Materials*

*Demographics.* Participants were asked six questions to determine their age in years, gender (1 = Male, 2 = Female), political preference (1 = strongly left, 5 = strongly right, 6 = don't care), education level (1= did not complete secondary school, 6 = higher degree, e.g., Masters, PhD), ethnic/cultural background (e.g., Middle Eastern) and religious views (e.g., Christian).

*Conformity.* Conformity was measured using Duckitt et al.'s (2002) Social Conformity Scale. These authors found that reliability was satisfactory (a = .77). The social conformity scale consists of 14 personality trait adjectives related to conformity (7 reverse-scored). Participants were asked to rate on a sliding scale

from 0-100 the degree to which each personality trait adjective (e.g., conforming, unorthodox) was characteristic of their personality or behaviour.

*Ethnocentrism.* Ethnocentrism was measured using Bizumic et al.'s (2009) ethnocentrism scale. The ethnocentrism scale consists of six subscales (alpha levels in brackets): preference (a = .73), superiority (a = .81), purity (a =.89), exploitativeness (a =.84), group cohesion (a =.79), and devotion (a =.85) (Bizumic et al., 2009). The scale contains 58 items and participants were asked to rate how much they agree with the items on a 7-point Likert scale (1- Strongly Disagree to 7- Strongly Agree). The subscales have been found to have good reliability across different countries, with the alpha levels reported above from a New Zealand sample. The overall scale has a high alpha level (a = .91), but had low mean inter-item correlation (a = .16). This low inter-item correlation was attributed to the multi-dimensional nature of the ethnocentrism construct.

*Hypothetical Scenario.* One hypothetical scenario of racism towards Muslim people was adapted from Redmond, Pedersen and Paradies (2014). The scenario depicted a scene in which an acquaintance states that he did not hire a Muslim at a workplace because there was no way he was "giving a job to one of those fanatics" (see Appendix I for full scenario).

*Agreement/Disagreement with the perpetrator.* Participants were asked to select whether they were more supportive of their acquaintance's point of view or an alternative view. This question was asked in order to split participants into groups based on whether they agreed or disagreed with the racist comment. They then rated the strength of their agreement or disagreement on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from (1- Strongly agree to 7- Strongly Disagree). Strength of disagreement was used to double-check that participants had selected the appropriate box of whether they agreed or disagreed.

*Intention to engage in bystander antiracism.* In order to determine whether bystander action intention, participants were asked to rate on a 7 point Likert scale "How likely you are to speak up in this scenario, either in support of your acquaintance's view or an alternative view?" (1- Extremely unlikely to 7= extremely likely).

*Design*

The research design had three phases. The first stage was to undertake a factor analysis of the six ethnocentrism scales (group cohesion, devotion, exploitativeness, preference, superiority, purity) to determine whether they factor into separate factors. The second stage produced a correlation matrix with all the relevant variables. The third stage included the predictor variables (ethnocentrism and conformity) in a regression with action intention as the outcome variable which also controlled for socio-demographic information (i.e., age, political views, gender, and education level). The accepted minimum subject to independent variable ratio of 5:1 was used to estimate sample size; thus, our sample is sufficient.

*Procedure*

After both approval from the Murdoch University Human Research Ethics Committee (using embedded consent) and piloting of the questionnaire, participants throughout Australia were contacted via email by the Qualtrics administrator in July 2014. The email included an outline of the study as contained in the information blurb and a hyperlink to the survey. Upon clicking the link, participants were first shown the information blurb which provided study and ethics information. They were then asked if they would like to proceed with the survey. Procedure with the survey was taken as consent. The order of the questions asked were: Socio-demographics, conformity, ethnocentrism, and then the scenario and bystander antiracism questions.

## Results

*Testing Bizumic et al.'s (2009) Ethnocentrism Scale (Aim 1)*

SPSS20 was used in all of the following analyses. The preference, superiority, purity, exploitativeness and devotion scales all had excellent reliabilities and had similar standard deviations. The group cohesion scale showed good reliability; however, it had a more restricted standard deviation then the other

five scales.

*Factor analysis.* An exploratory factor analysis using principal axis factoring was conducted to determine the underlying factor structure of the six ethnocentrism subscales. A direct oblimin rotation was used as theoretically all scales are expected to be correlated. The assumptions were not significantly violated, with one exception; the group cohesion subscale had a low diagonal value of .31 on the anti-image matrices. Group cohesion also had a low initial communality of .13. As a result, group cohesion was removed and the analysis re-run with the five remaining subscales using principal axis factoring and a direct oblimin rotation.

The factor analysis was repeated with the five remaining subscales (after removing group cohesion). One factor was extracted with an eigenvalue of 3.56 which explained 71.2% of the variance. An examination of the scree plot clearly and unambiguously showed that only one factor should be extracted. All subscales had initial communalities above .3, and factor loadings of .66 or greater. These results indicate that a single factor of ethnocentrism underlies variance in each of the subscales. Consequently, the mean score of participants for all items in five (preference, superiority, exploitativeness, purity and devotion) of the six original subscales scales was computed and taken as giving an indication of overall ethnocentrism score (re-labelled from this point on as 'FiveScale Ethnocentrism').

*Relationship between bystander action intention and independent variables (Aim 2)*

Participants were grouped according to whether they supported the perpetrator's view or an alternative view. Initially, 26 participants were identified as supporting the perpetrator's point of view (racist group) and 128 supported an alternative view (non-racist group). Seven cases were omitted as their answers to the grouping variable and the manipulation check (strength of agreement with the perpetrator) conflicted. This left 23 participants and 124 participants in the racist and non-racist group respectively. Those who selected 'don't care' for political preference (n = 28) and those who selected 'centre' (n = 52) were recoded as being "neither left/right wing" as we were primarily interested in participants who had a left/right political orientation. Only the non-racist group was selected for the following analyses. No violations were serious enough to transform the data. However, all analyses were bootstrapped to minimise the effect of minor violations on the data.

*Descriptives and correlations.* The ethnocentrism scale had excellent reliability ($\alpha = .96$). The conformity scale had satisfactory reliability ($\alpha = .77$). Table 1 shows the means, standard deviations, and correlations of bystander action, ethnocentrism, conformity and the four socio-demographic variables (i.e., age, political preference, and education). Bias-corrected confidence intervals are reported in brackets. Three outliers were deleted and the residuals recalculated.

As Table 1 shows, there was a significant small to moderate negative correlations between FiveScale ethnocentrism score and action intention (Prediction 1). This means that those higher in ethnocentrism were less likely to act than those low in ethnocentrism. There was also a small negative correlation between conformity and action intention; however, as the BCa upper limit confidence interval was close to zero at -.01, this relationship should be interpreted with caution. Of the socio-demographic variables (i.e., age, gender, education level, or political preference), only education was a significant correlate of action intention.

*Regression.* A standard multiple regression analysis was conducted with the variables that were significantly correlated with action intention after the outliers were removed. The only significant socio-demographic variable, education, was entered at step 1. The personality variables of ethnocentrism and conformity were entered at step 2. At step 1, education accounted for a significant 4% of the variance in action intention, $F(1, 119) = 4.48$, $p = .04$. At step 2, the addition of ethnocentrism and conformity to the model significantly predicted an additional 14% of the variance in action intention, bringing the total shared variance to 18%, $F(3, 117) = 8.56$, $p < .001$. However, at step 2, ethnocentrism was the only unique

significant predictor of action intention, predicting 11.8% of the total unique variance, $t$ (116) = - 4.11, $p < .001$. With education only predicting a non-significant 1.08% of unique variance, $t$ (116) = 1.24, $p = .22$, and conformity only a non-significant 1% of unique variance, $t$ (116) = - 1.2, $p = .23$, in action intention respectively. The multiple regression equation is shown in Table 2.

## Discussion

The present study has two main aims. The first was to see whether the ethnocentrism scale measured two different ethnocentrism factors (inter-group and intra-group), it did not. The second aim was to investigate what correlated with bystander action in support of Muslim Australians. We found that bystander action was negatively correlated with both conformity and ethnocentrism; however, a hierarchical regression analysis indicated the only significant unique predictor was ethnocentrism. We turn first to the factoring of the ethnocentrism items.

*Bizumic et al.'s (2009) Ethnocentrism Factor Structure (Prediction 1)*

The first aim was to test the factor structure of Bizumic et al.'s (2009) ethnocentrism scale in an Australian community sample. An exploratory factor analysis revealed that devotion was measuring the same underlying factor as intergroup ethnocentrism; it did not fit with group cohesion in line with previous research. Therefore, an ethnocentrism scale was created using five of the six subscales (preference, superiority, purity, exploitativeness and devotion) with group cohesion excluded due to its low communality with the other scales. These results are surprising as the factor structure supporting the grouping of devotion and group cohesion together into a intragroup ethnocentrism subscale has been supported through studies across a number of nations (Bizumic et al., 2009; Bizumic & Duckitt, 2012). However, all these previous tests were done by the original creators of the measure on students (Bizumic et al., 2009; Bizumic & Duckitt, 2012). The current findings suggest that the ethnocentrism scale may operate differently in community samples within the Australian context. It is worth noting that other scales where other sub-factors were expected presented a uni-factorial solution (eg. Griffiths & Pedersen, 2009). This latter study was a community sample as well – it may be that university students respond differently to the general public.

*Ethnocentrism, Conformity, and Bystander Action Intention (Prediction 2)*

The primary aim of the present study was to explore whether the individual difference variables of ethnocentrism and conformity were significantly related to willingness to engage in bystander antiracism on behalf of Muslim Australians. As hypothesised, the more ethnocentric an individual was, the less likely they were to express an intention to act in the racist scenario against Muslim Australians supporting Prediction 2. Even when participants who overtly agreed with the racist comment were filtered out, the more ethnocentric the participant was, the less likely they were to engage in bystander antiracism. This supports past research, as ethnocentrism is a concept which is highly related to prejudice (Akrami, Ekehammar, & Bergh, 2011; Allport, 1954; Bizumic et al., 2009; Bizumic & Duckitt, 2012). Nevertheless, the fact that overtly racist participants had already been filtered out suggests that Bizumic et al.'s (2009) ethnocentrism scale may be useful for studying more subtle forms of racism.

As hypothesised in Prediction 2, conformity displayed a significant (albeit weak) negative correlation with action intention, indicating that participants scoring higher in conformity were less likely to engage in bystander antiracism compared to those low in conformity. This lends some support to the idea that acts of racism decrease the willingness of individuals high in trait conformity to engage in bystander antiracism even in a broader societal context that discourages prejudice, such as Australia. This is in line with Cialdini and Goldstein's (2004) theory that a major reason people engage in conforming behaviour is a desire to preserve interpersonal relationships. This is also a major reason that people attribute their lack of willingness to engage in bystander

Table 1

*Correlations between ethnocentrism, conformity, demographics, and action intention with three outliers removed.*

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Mean | SD |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 Action Intention | - | **-.40*** [-.55, -.22] | **-.19*** [-.32, -.01] | -.11 [-.32, .12] | **.19*** [.01, .35] | .00 [-.18, .20] | -.09 [-.24, .07] | 5.23 [5.05, 5.42] | 1.09 [.97, 1.21] |
| 2 Ethnocentrism | | - | **.19*** [.01, .36] | .01 [-.17, .17] | **-.19*** [-.35, -.02] | **-.21*** [-.38, -.01] | .11 [-.07, .29] | 3.02 [2.84, 3.20] | .91 [.81, 1.00] |
| 3 Conformity | | | - | .14 [-.03, .30] | -.16 [-.33, .01] | .02 [ -.15, .20] | .27** [.05, .46] | 55.82 [53.90, 57.65] | 12.05 [10.54, 13.27] |
| 4 Age | | | | - | **-.21*** [-.36, -.05] | **-.24**** [-.39, -.06] | .12 [-.09, .34] | 47.73 [44.77, 50.82] | 16.12 [14.72,17.50] |
| 5 Education | | | | | - | -.05 [-.23, .12] | -.07 [-.25, .13] | 3.45 [ 3.18, 3.72] | 1.57 [1.45, 1.67] |
| 6 Gender | | | | | | - | .06 [-.14, .24] | 1.54 [1.45, 1.62] | .50 [ .49, .50] |
| 7 Political Preference | | | | | | | - | 2.86 [2.70, 3.02] | .90 [.79, 1.00] |

Note: $N$ = 121. 95% bias-corrected confidence intervals reported in brackets.
*p < .05, **p<.01, ***p < .001



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Table 2
*Hierarchical Multiple Regression Equation for Predicting Intention to Engage in Bystander Antiracism on Behalf of Muslim Australians with three outliers removed.*

| Variables | B | $\beta$ | $sr^2$ | $R^2$ change | $R^2$ | Adj. $R^2$ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Step 1 | | | | .04* | .04* | .03* |
| Constant | 4.77** [4.31, 5.21] | | | | | |
| Education | .13* [0.03, 0.26] | .19* | .04 | | | |
| Step 2 | | | | | | |
| Constant | 6.78** [5.61, 8.03] | | | 0.14*** | .18*** | 0.16*** |
| Education | .07 [-0.04, 0.20] | .11 | .01 | | | |
| Ethnocentrism | - .43** [- 0.65, - 0.18] | -.36 | .12 | | | |
| Conformity | - .01 [- 0.03, 0.01] | -.10 | .01 | | | |

Note: $N$ = 121. 95% bias-corrected confidence intervals reported in brackets.
*p < .05, **p<.01, ***p < .001

antiracism (Stewart et al., 2014). Additionally, Sechrist and Young's (2011) finding that people's prejudice levels can be manipulated by providing consensus information may also be a reason why more conforming individuals are less inclined to engage in bystander antiracism. Upon exposure to racist views of one or more individuals, a high-conforming individual may be inhibited from action whilst less conforming individuals are not. Future research should explore this possibility.

Education was the only socio-demographic variable that had a significant relationship with bystander action intention. It displayed a weak positive correlation: More educated participants were significantly more likely than less educated participants to engage in bystander antiracism. This supports previous research that more educated individuals are less likely to be prejudiced (Pedersen & Hartley, 2012) and are more likely to engage in bystander antiracism (Russell et al., 2013). Unlike some previous studies (Amato, 1985; Neto & Pedersen, 2013; Redmond et al., 2014; Russell et al., 2013), there were no significant correlation of age, gender or political preference found with bystander action intention. However, this links with previous research which found that socio-demographics do not always correlate with prejudice. The most prevalent correlations in order of frequency are political orientation, education, age and gender (Pedersen & Griffiths, 2012).

*Strengths, Limitations, and Future Research*

A major strength of the present study was the use of a representative Australian community sample. This increases the likelihood that our findings can generalise to the broad Australian population. Our study was the first to examine how both ethnocentrism and conformity relate to bystander anti-racism. However, this study was limited in a number of ways.

First, as this study looked at action intention rather than actual behaviour, social desirability may have affected results. Studies that look at actual engagement in bystander antiracism is lower than behavioural intentions would suggest (Nelson et al., 2011; Swim, Hyers, Cohen, Fitzgerald, & Bylsma, 2003). Additionally, as conformity is highly related to social desirability (Crandall, Eshleman, & O'Brien, 2002), it may be that

trait conformity may have a differential impact depending on whether action intention is measured for a hypothetical scenario vs. actual behaviour in a real life scenario. For example, when asked specifically in a survey whether they would say something against a racist scenario, it is clear that the socially desirable response is to respond when compared to a real life scenario. In a real life scenario, there are more competing norms on behaviour that may particularly affect the response of highly conforming individuals. For example, the desire to not stand out, make a scene, cause conflict, and the need to preserve interpersonal relationships may mean that in a real life scenario, more conforming individuals may be less likely to be active bystanders when faced with racism than less conforming individuals (Crandall et al., 2002). However, it should be noted that there is evidence of an overlap with action *intention* (Stewart et al., 2014) and *actual action* (Dickter & Newton, 2013).

Future research could explore the differential effects of conformity in real life (or laboratory settings) vs. hypothetical bystander antiracism scenarios to gain a better understanding of the effect of conformity on bystander antiracism.

A second limitation was that the sheer size of the ethnocentrism scale limited the number of variables that could be examined. It also meant that only one bystander scenario could be used to keep the survey to a reasonable length. Using more than one bystander scenario may have reduced the likelihood of spurious results as it would have allowed comparison of the predictor variables across different situations.

With respect to future research, it may be useful to compare the ability of ethnocentrism to predict bystander action intention in relation to a specific type of racism (e.g., Islamaphobia). This is especially important due to the close relationship between ethnocentrism and racism. It would be useful to examine whether ethnocentrism predicts unique variance in bystander action intention that cannot be explained by the individual's level of specific racism against a particular outgroup.

From a practical viewpoint, interventions aimed at reducing ethnocentric beliefs may be effective in increasing willingness to engage in bystander antiracism. As noted in the introduction, prejudice/racism is conceptually different to ethnocentrism which involves more than simply negativity towards an outgroup. Thus, antiracist practitioners could benefit from fully discussing who is in the ingroup and who is in the outgroup – and why. In particular, they could fully discuss the concepts in the ethnocentrism scale – both intergroup and intragroup. They could also discuss the whole issue of conformity; how difficult it is to speak out and when it is appropriate, and inappropriate, to speak out. Finally, spreading social norms of confronting racism may increase the propensity of more conforming individuals to act positively in racist scenarios.

In conclusion, the present study demonstrated that two variables that are associated with racism (ethnocentrism and conformity) were also related to bystander action intention. Furthermore, it revealed that ethnocentrism is a significant predictor of bystander antiracism against Muslims in the Australian community and that it is more predictive than demographic variables or conformity in determining action intention in a representative community sample.

Encouraging bystander antiracism may destabilise racist norms in society so they become less acceptable than what they are now. This idea is supported by the substantial effect of consensus beliefs on altering the expression of prejudiced attitudes (Sechrist & Young, 2011; Watt & Larkin, 2010). Encouraging bystander antiracism is one tool that can be used to create a more equitable and safe future for persecuted minority groups such as Muslim Australians. As noted by Prilleltensky and Gonick (1996), oppression can be political and psychological. This is the case here – and both issues need dealing with.

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**Appendix I**
**Bystander Scenario**
In this section we would like you to consider the following scenario and think about what you would do in response. Please answer with what you believe you ACTUALLY WOULD DO in this situation, NOT with what you believe you SHOULD do.

You are at a party chatting one-on-one with an acquaintance. At one point the conversation turns to issues regarding Muslim people living in Australia. Your acquaintance says, "One of those Muslims applied to work for me the other day. There is no way I am giving a job to one of those fanatics!" Your acquaintance is very worked up and displays a very negative view of Muslim people in general.

Please mark the box most appropriate to you.
Would you be more supportive of:
Your acquaintance's views, OR (1)
An alternative view? (2)

How likely you are to speak up in this scenario, either in support of your acquaintance's view or an alternative view?
Extremely Unlikely (1)
Very Unlikely (2)
Somewhat Unlikely (3)
Neither Likely or Unlikely (4)
Somewhat Likely (5)
Very Likely (6)
Extremely Likely (7)

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Laura McWhae has just completed her Honours year and has a strong interest in both social and community psychology and child developmental psychology. Yin Paradies conducts interdisciplinary research on the health, social and economic effects of racism as well as anti-racism theory, policy and practice. Anne Pedersen works as a community psychologist and researches the topic of prejudice and antiprejudice.

**Funding**
Funding for this research was provided through an Australian Research Council Linkage Grant (LP110200495).

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