Explorations into White Australia's Sense of Superiority over Chinese

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Abstract

Although China has risen to be the second largest world economy, and played a vital role in the biggest economic boom Australia had experience since the 1850s gold rush, White Australia's feeling of superiority over Chinese lingers. This article explores how and why this prejudice manifest itself in contemporary Australia by examining the social, cultural, and historical background of Australian racism. I will also examine the elements of contemporary Chinese culture that may have contributed to this sentiment. Finally, factors for reducing White Australia's racial discrimination over the Chinese are discussed.

Keywords: *White Australia, racism, racial discrimination, racial superiority, Chinese inferiority, cultural superiority, ethnocentrism*

1. Introduction

A literature review reveals that most studies and news coverage about Australia's ethnic issues about Chinese people and culture looked into racial discrimination, but few focused on the feeling of Australian superiority over the Chinese (Belot, 2015; Berman and The Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission, 2008; Booth, Leigh and Varganova, 2011; Cal, 2012; Coorey and Walker, 2014; K.M. Dunn, 2003; Kelley, 2011; Loosemore and Chau, 2002; Mak and Nesdale, 2001; Miller, 2011; Teo, 2012; I. Walker, 2001). One empirical study (S. Li, 2013) raised an alarm bell. It involved a group of 13 Australian high school teachers of Anglo-Celtic background who took part in an in-country language and culture program in China for three weeks in 2011. Of their 11 reflective diaries required as part of their assessments and given consent for research purposes, only two admitted the existence of benevolence to some extent, in particular in an established friendship, nine expressed a feeling of superiority over Chinese people, with

one saying "on the whole the Chinese give the impression of being rude and noisy", and another announced that "the Chinese are a rude race" (p. 38). As current and prospective Chinese language teachers in Australian schools, the impact of these teachers' attitudes about Chinese people and culture on the young generations of Australians whom they will be educating cannot be underestimated. It could be judgmental to claim this is typical of all Australians, but the reasons behind their attitudes towards the Chinese need to be identified, described, and explained. Prior to examining the feeling of Australia's superiority over the Chinese, it is necessary to first distinguish the difference between racial superiority and racial discrimination.

Racial superiority is the ideological root of racial discrimination, while the latter is an enactment of the former, together they form the two integral parts of racism. The latter often draws most public attention and can be unveiled and judged by law. Examples of racism include assault, verbal abuse, and lower pay rates or employment benefits. Racial superiority is an attitude, characterised by contempt or condescension, which draws little attention from researchers and public media in light of its veiled nature and the legal difficulties in proving that an offence has been committed. This feeling of racial superiority may manifest itself, for example, by looking at a Chinese person in a contemptuous manner; being condescending or talking down to them as if they are of different intellectual level; or not showing them the same courtesies accorded to other White Australian. Due to the nature of racial superiority, unveiled and legal if not enacted into racial discrimination, this kind of attitude can be equally humiliating spiritually and on a much larger scale. As racial superiority in Australia is traceable back to the White Australia Policy, White Australia's superiority should be a proper term for racial superiority in the Australian context.

Despite little research and few news reports on White Australia's superiority, it is reasonable to assume that the number of people who hold such attitude without manifesting them is conceivably larger than those who have enacted it. A telephone survey in 2003 provided such empirical support. The telephone survey of 5056 residents from different ethnic groups in the states of Queensland and NSW revealed that 83 per cent of respondents admitted racism is a problem in Australia. Twelve per cent of Australians admitted candidly that they were racist (K.M. Dunn, 2003). Evidently, from crime figures, most of these self-confessed racists have not committed an offence, or perhaps these have not been reported. They may not have had an opportunity or lack the courage to commit a crime. Thus it can be concluded that White Australia's superiority is more widespread than racial discrimination. Of course, White Australia's superiority does not specifically target Chinese people. However, as one of the two largest victims of racial discrimination in Australian history (the other group being

indigenous Australians) and the largest Australian minorities accounting for 4.3 per cent of its overall population (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2013), the Chinese ethnic group is the main target of White Australia's superiority. The following example provides a view to the subtlety of White Australia's superiority occurring in daily life. On the 8th September, 2010 *Cairns Post*, a newspaper article titled "In CHINA Syndrome – Our Newest Market But Are We Letting Them Down?" reported a series of public lectures organised for tourism practitioners about the understanding of Chinese tourists' behaviours. In these lectures, an Australian expert with an Anglo-Celtic name, in giving some Chinese cultural tips, stressed that pushing in was a normal habit in China, as it was the only way people could get served; he added that this should be respected. Superiority was carefully veiled in his accommodating attitude. In sum, White Australia's superiority is veiled and could be more widespread than realised.

Compared to White Australia's superiority, racial discrimination, the enacted White Australia's superiority, continues to linger, though the policy of multiculturalism has been established and Australians in general appear to behave in a friendly and polite manner. News coverage and studies suggest that the Australian melting pot is not as successful as thought. On 11th October 1988, the *Herald Sun*'s article "Union's plea: racism not all right on site" revealed that Asian workers were forced to eat in separate locations and work longer hours, and "cheated" out of legal rights to employment benefits and compensation, fair rates of pay, and safe working conditions. Of those workers, most were Chinese. In 2007, a large-scale field experiment to measure labour market discrimination in Australia found clear evidence of discrimination against Chinese and Middle Easterners. The researchers randomly submitted over 4000 fictional applications for entry-level jobs, varying only the name as an indicator of ethnicity. They found that Chinese and Middle Easterners submitted at least 50 per cent more applications in order to receive the same number of call-backs as Anglo candidates (Booth *et al.*, 2011). Most recently, the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) government was found guilty of racial discrimination for rejecting the internship application of a 51-year-old Chinese migrant with a master's degree in neurology and 17 years of professional experience (Belot, 2015). Such cases of discrimination against ethnic minorities, Chinese particularly, at work places were disclosed in other reports (see e.g. Berman and The Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission, 2008; Healy, 2010; I. Walker, 2001).

Racial discrimination may also express itself as resentment towards the new rich. The *Sydney Morning Herald* (Cal, 2012) reported that on a Sydney train on 23rd April 2012, two Chinese international students were robbed and assaulted by a group of teenagers believing they had money. On 18th August

2014 on an Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) TV program, Clive Palmer, Australian mining magnate and the leader of the Palmer United Party in the Australian Federal Government, labelled his Chinese business partners "mongrels" and "bastards" over a dispute about his election campaign funds, though he soon diverted it to the Chinese Communist Party Government (Coorey and Walker, 2014). All these studies and reports indicate that White Australia's superiority, which drives racial discrimination, is clear and present in an unveiled form.

To counter White Australia's superiority and racial discrimination, the Australian Government has not responded adequately. In 2011, the Australian Government continued to ignore a call made on 30th June 2011 from the Chinese-Australian community to apologise for discrimination inflicted on their forebears some one hundred years ago (Kelley, 2011; Miller, 2011). This was in the wake of the Chinese in New Zealand in 2002, Canada in 2006 and California in 2009 receiving apologies and reparations for discriminatory policies, and also following Kevin Rudd's apology to the Australian Aboriginal people in February 2008. The Government's cold-shoulder towards the Chinese minority may be due to financial and political considerations, and is not indicative of the Government's sense of superiority over Chinese. This does nevertheless indicate that the Australian Government has not made the utmost effort to wipe out racial superiority and racial discrimination.

Having elaborated on the current situation of White Australia's superiority and its enacted form, racial discrimination, we now turn to the exploration of its root causes. White Australia's superiority may have many roots, politically, economically, socially, culturally, and even in language. This article focuses on its social and cultural sources. To expose the reasons that lie behind the veiled White Australia's superiority over Chinese, constructivism, the anthropologist view of culture, and racism will first be addressed in order to establish a theoretical basis; then Australia's history of racial discrimination will be revisited to examine its social and cultural roots; followed by the reflection of relevant elements of contemporary Chinese culture that may nurture this sentiment. Finally, factors to reduce White Australia's superiority are discussed.

2. Theoretical Framework

The socio-cultural constructivist view is adopted for examining the social and cultural roots of White Australia's superiority. Constructivism holds that individuals and social activity bear the socially and culturally situated nature, and is the outset of cognitive processes (Cobb, 1996). In Vygotsky's (1979) words, the individual dimension of consciousness is derivative and secondary to its social and cultural dimension. According to constructivism,

White Australia's superiority was only able to develop in its specific social and cultural settings. Without this unique social and cultural background, White Australia's superiority would not have existed. Therefore, examining the social and cultural elements that bred this mentality holds the key to understanding it.

Margaret Mead's (1942/1943) anthropological view of culture echoes the constructivist view on White Australia's superiority from a cultural perspective. Margaret Mead states that "(w)e are our culture" (p. 21) and argues that it is "not blood, but upbringing which determines all of … [our] way of behaving" (p. 20). In this sense, culture is the attribute of the community or country in which we grew up, so that whatever we may be in the future and whichever community or country we may end up in, we are still of our own culture. This view of culture underscores the uniqueness of people who are brought up in particular communities, and this distinguishes them from other communities or countries. The anthropological view of culture further indicates the importance of external environments in developing human behaviour.

To discuss the development of human behaviour, we cannot avoid the topic of nature versus nurture that centres on the relative contributions of genetic inheritance and external factors to human development. A review of the research literature shows that although the field of behavioural genetics has demonstrated the importance of heritability to intelligence and personality, external factors play an important part in these psychological traits and the shaping of one's behaviour (J. Dunn and Plomin, 1990; Hergenhahn, 2005; Steen, 1996). This conclusion furthers the anthropological view of culture that one's behaviour is nurtured by environmental factors or shaped by the community in which one is brought up.

Constructivism and the anthropological view of culture squarely repudiate the rationale of racism that the white race is more civilised. It is necessary to briefly review what are the arguments that justified racism and refute them. The late eighteenth century's industrial revolution equipped western European countries with clearly advanced technologies and economies. With the power of science seeming to confer legitimacy, the idea of race appeared a credible way of thinking about people and the differences between the white, and the black and coloured races (Stocking, 1968/1982). Theodore Roosevelt, America's 26th President (1901-1909) once proclaimed that if a "lower" race had impressive industrial and military capacity, this would mean that they were civilised: "We should then simply be dealing with another civilised nation of non-Aryan blood" (cited from D. Walker, 1999, p. 47). The correlation between cause and effect for evolution between advanced technology and a superior, civilised race seemed to have been well established. Racism became the pretext for colonisation in the 19th century –

to bring the benefits of civilisation to "savage natives", and in World War II to purify the gene pool. With the former constantly meeting with local national liberation movements and the latter resulting in huge tolls in human lives and assets, racism created human disasters rather than a peaceful and civilised world. In the meantime, racism has been seriously challenged by the rising Asian countries. In the late 19th century, Japan became an industrial country. In the 60s and 70s of the last century, the four Little Asian Tigers (Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan, and Hong Kong) created an economic miracle. In 2008, China became the second largest economy in the world after only thirty years' reform. According to the latest Bloomberg Rankings on innovation (2014), out of the top ten innovative countries in total scores, four countries or regions are from Asia, namely, South Korea, Japan, Singapore, and Taiwan, with South Korea ranking the first. In its sub-rankings of High-tech Density, China, Taiwan, South Korea, and Japan, came 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 8th, respectively. The rise of Asia technologically and economically has proved racism theoretically groundless. Therefore, technology and economic development are not related to race at all, and race has nothing to do with civilisation.

With the theoretical support of constructivism and the anthropological view of culture, and knowledge about the cause of racism bankruptcy, we are now in a better position to explore how White Australia's superiority was developed in its social and cultural setting.

3. Social and Cultural Roots of Racial Discrimination in Australia

Australia is seen as a vulnerable, under-populated nation. Located in the Pacific Ocean, closest to Asia, and at the centre of great strategic risk of conflict between West and East, Australia is a so-called outpost of Europe. With the influx of Chinese migrant labourers during the gold rush in the 1850s, the result of China being invaded by Britain in 1848 and forced to open its door to Western powers, suspicion, fear and enmity has grown among many Australians. "Chinese were regarded as frugal and would eke out a livelihood in circumstances few Europeans would endure, which it was feared would pose a threat to the working conditions and wages of Australians" (D. Walker, 1999, p. 36). It is against this background that systematic discrimination against Chinese, regarded as lesser human beings, continued for nearly 120 years until 1973 when the White Australia Policy was abolished.

In 1855, the first *Chinese Exclusion Act* was passed in Victoria, stipulating that a ship with ten gross tonnage capacity could only permit one Chinese passenger; this was later increased to five hundred gross tonnage capacity permitting one person. Resentment among white labourers in the New South Wales gold mines gave rise to the Lambing Flat Riots in 1861 when Chinese workers were driven out of the mines by European settlers.

Soon after, parliaments in other states and territories, including New South Wales, Queensland, and the Northern Territory, passed similar acts to the *Chinese Exclusion Act*. This occurred in the 1870s and 1880s when social Darwinism prevailed in Australia providing it a world view which gave race the primacy of place (Broome, 1994). These acts applied a head tax to Chinese entering Australia as well as regulated the number of Chinese passengers a ship was allowed to carry. These acts led to the passage of the *Immigration Restriction Act of 1901*, also called the White Australia Policy. Although the White Australia Policy was said to restrict non-white immigration to Australia with a dictation test, it mainly targeted Chinese ethnic groups. There was great concern regarding the abundance of the natural resources of Australia and a determination to prevent these resources from being shared with the Chinese in light of the size of the Chinese population in Australia (Li, 1895). Even after World War II, under economic imperatives, population-hungry Australia still only opened its gate to European settlers under an ethnocentric slogan, "Populate or Perish"; the aim being to fill Australia with Europeans or else risk having it overrun by Asians (Strahan, 1996). In the 1960s, when the Australian Government had to choose between a rising Asia, the objectionable image of discrimination in the world, and lack of population for social and economic survival and development, restrictions on people based on their origin began to be repealed. It was not until 1973 when the White Australia Policy was finally abolished.

From the mid-19th century up to 1973, hatred and fear of the Chinese became the social and cultural atmosphere of the times and Chinese immigrants suffered varying degrees of hostility and denigration. Most of the known vices were attributed to Chinese, often portrayed as gamblers, drug addicts, and moral degenerates with disease. For example, in the novel *White or Yellow* (2011) written by William Lane, a writer and a powerful figure in the Australian Labour movement in the late 1880s and early 1890s, Chinese men were portrayed as typically complex, sensual and calculating. Their internalised world was one of debasement and moral pollution, where lusts were nourished by fantasies of racial domination and fuelled by never-to-be-forgotten humiliations at the hands of Europeans. When William saw a white girl ruined by opium, seen living with Chinese in a cramped, foul smelling room in an opium den near Brisbane's Queen Street, he was so outraged as to destroy every opium den he could find, and drive out the Chinese. This novel deliberately ignore the fact that it was the British who brought opium to China, forcing the Qing Dynasty to open its doors for trade. This triggered a series of wars over the Qing Dynasty by the Western powers that caused the Chinese to flee to Australia and other countries.

Under the impact of racial discrimination policies, in particular the White Australian Policy, not only did the Chinese suffer a huge numerical loss due

to discriminative laws, they were also forcibly separated from their families. By the end of the 1930s, the Chinese-born, who once formed the largest of the non-European groups, had declined by more than 56 per cent (Palfreeman, 1967). The administration of the White Australia Policy, due to the tyrannies of petty officialdom, exercised power in a capricious manner (Markus, 2004). The following example may help better understand the situation Chinese people were subjected to. According to *The Sydney World Newspaper* on 21st September 1932 a young Queensland woman married a Chinese man in Townsville and went with him to China where she was treated badly by her husband and his family. After having a baby, the woman was forced to work in the rice fields like a "coolie" and it was said that she lived under conditions that "an Australian would scorn to allot to a diseased dog" and that her child was taken away by her husband's Chinese wife. Eventually, the woman was rescued from China. Yet the surviving documents, personal letters and photos suggested a different scenario. The woman loved her husband, and her husband had a deep affection for her. The only unpleasantness she experienced was the jealousy of her husband's Chinese wife towards her new-born baby. She spoke publicly about her experiences in an attempt to counter what the press were saying about her and her family and implored the Australian Government to allow her husband to return to reunite with her and their child in Australia. However, Government officials and the press dismissed the genuineness of her feelings and desires, and did not make allowances for her plight of not having her husband around to support the family (Sleeman, 1933).

Establishment of diplomatic relations between Australia and China in December 1972 brought an end to the White Australia Policy in the following year, and ushered in dramatic changes to bilateral relations in economy, science, education and culture; yet White Australia's superiority lingers. In the late 1990s, by advocating an end to multiculturalism and a revival of Anglo-Celtic cultural traditions, Pauline Hanson was elected to the Australian Federal Parliament. In 1998, her One Nation Party won nearly one quarter of the votes in the Queensland state election. Pauline Hanson's popularity, though just for a few years, shows that racial supremacy was still evident in some, in particular the lower and middle classes, who were unhappy with multiculturalism where Asians were perceived as exploiting the wealth of Australians. "The Pauline Hanson outburst of the 1990s shows that the racism so malignant in the 19th Century Australia still festers in some" (Ewins, 2006, p. 356).

4. Nurtured by Contemporary Chinese Culture

Contemporary Chinese culture is a mixture of conflicting ideologies drawn from Communism, traditional Chinese culture, and Western values (Guo, 2012), which may be a hindrance than help in countering White Australia's

superiority. This section will explain why contemporary Chinese culture may have contributed to the nurturing of White Australia's superiority. First, we need to look at what are the major characteristics of contemporary Chinese culture.

Perhaps, the most recent catchword in China, "having money, being wilful" (*youqian, renxing* in Chinese) best represents contemporary Chinese culture which is a result of authority by men with the conflicting ideologies of communism, traditional Chinese culture and Western values. On one hand, the main tenets of communism such as class struggle and egalitarianism practised in the first 30 years of the Mao era was covertly abandoned and replaced by once-denounced traditional Confucian harmony and hierarchy in the latter 30 years of reform. And the Party publicly advocates the capitalist "to get rich is glorious" while, in the meantime, censoring Western values of democracy and liberty. As a result, people are left with no faith but the intention to make money. On the other hand, despite being a self-proclaimed legal society, the Chinese Communist Party put its interests above the law and the people. Party officials and associates willfully bend the rules to pursue corrupted gains. They indulged in illegal business practices and production of counterfeit and shoddy merchandise, paying little regard to health or environmental regulations, resulting in contaminated food and polluted environments.

With no faith and a "money talks" philosophy contemporary China has descended into a broad and deep moral crisis. People care for nothing but their personal wellbeing. Lack of trust and care is pervasive in the society. People dare not help an elderly person who has fallen in the street for fear of being extorted. Some people spit, litter on the street, jump the queue, talk loudly in public places… (Guo, 2004: "The moral crisis in China: Part I – Seven areas that showcase China's moral crisis", 2012: "The moral crisis in China: Part II – Traditional Chinese culture", 2012: "The moral crisis in China: Part III – How the Communist Party destroyed the Chinese spirit", Si, 2010; Xu, 2014; Yeung, 2011; Zha, 1995).

Moral crisis tarnishes the once splendid Chinese culture and feeds White Australia's sense of superiority. Not only do Anglo-Celtic Australians develop superiority after their visits to China, as described above, but those who has little contact with Chinese may also develop a sense of superiority by interacting with Chinese tourists or observe their impolite behaviours such as the aforementioned cultural tip about Chinese pushing in the *Cairns Post*. Sadly, it may eventuate that as contact with the Chinese increases, White Australia's sense of superiority also worsen. The Lowy Institute Poll in 2014 may be a reflection of this mentality with Australians' favourable feelings towards Chinese reported as being 7 per cent lower than their feelings towards the Japanese (Oliver, 2014).

The fact that some individual Chinese look up to Westerners or white people and worship things Western may further heighten White Australia's sense of superiority. The mentality of some Chinese who look down upon their own but look up to Westerners stealthily made a comeback after the reform. The following four examples may give a good understanding of this mentality. In 1999, an incident stirred up public sentiment; an overseas Chinese reported that on the 18th August at the Baijia supermarket in Shanghai, Chinese customers with bags were refused entry while Westerners were seen sauntering in with bags. When the Chinese went to complain, the manager responded: "That is because Chinese are of poor moral fibre, whereas foreigners are of better moral fibre" (Gu, 1999, p. 88). This ignited public anger. One said that was reminiscent of the notorious placard in the old semi-colonised China, hung up by the gate of Huangpu Park, which said "No Admittance to Chinese and Dogs". On the 14th May 2012, when a Russian cellist refused to withdraw his bare feet placed on the front seatback, and insulted a women passenger in Chinese, a train police officer who later arrived on the scene reportedly told the woman, "Forget it. He is an artist" (Xinhua, 2012). On 17th February 2012, according to Central China Radio, Chinese police found the lost bike of a Japanese man within 24 hours in Wuhan. The *Southern Metropolis Daily* reported that on 4th January 2014, the police helped find the lost bag of a Canadian left in a cab in Guangzhou within 20 minutes. These occurrences caused lamentation among Chinese netizens who wished they could receive the same treatment. The comments made later by the Japanese traveller who lost his bicycle may give some insight of this mentality:

> A situation I came across many times, in particular in small cities. When I bought things in a small shop, perhaps due to my appearance and also my effort to use Chinese language to ask: "I want this", the shop owner's attitudes were very bad and impatient, sometimes, might urge me: "leave quickly if do not buy". Then I switched to Japanese. When they found I was a foreigner, their attitudes changed dramatically, not only being warm and also asking me where I came from and went to, and showed me directions. Perhaps my identity of foreigner did help a lot. So later on I started to use Japanese to say hello first.
>
>   Although in Japan, we are very nice to foreigners, but also nice to each other. However, Chinese are extraordinarily nicer to foreigners and I wish Chinese would be nicer to each other. (Z. Li, 2012)

In fact, idolising Westerners happens in China as well as in Australia. It is not unusual to see whites receive better service than Chinese at shops and restaurants run by Chinese.

Besides looking up to Westerners, other actions such as worshiping Australian goods, Chinese women marrying white men and Chinese girls making their faces look more Western may also nourish White Australia's

superiority. In October 2007, an online survey of 2563 respondents conducted by the *Chinese Youth Daily* in conjunction with Sina, one of the largest Chinese media companies, showed that 59.2 per cent of Chinese youth had an inclination to worship things Western (Xiao and Zhou, 2012). Things seem to have become worse in recent years due to ceaseless food contamination scandals. Chinese prefer to buy Australian-made goods such as milk powder, fruits, and wine. In addition, mixed marriages of Chinese females marrying Australian-born men accounted for as much as 15 per cent of the total number of Chinese women married in Australia over the last five years (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2014) (though this percentage included Australian-born Chinese), according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics. Some Chinese girls are also opting for plastic surgery to make them look more Western ("Plastic surgery so drastic they can't get past airport security! How Chinese women are flying to South Korea for a more 'Western' face," 2014). These cultural trends may further nurture White Australia's superiority.

Last but not least, the Chinese thinking of "saving face" (*mianzi*) in Australia may also indulge White Australia's superiority. A low level of explicit racial discrimination was found in Mak and Nesdale's (2001) self-reported survey of 372 ethnic Chinese migrants in Australia, because "some Chinese respondents may find it embarrassing to admit to being a target of racial discrimination…. Indeed, humiliating experiences … are often associated with shame and guilt among the Chinese" (p. 2643). Mak and Chan (1995) believe it is a typical Chinese way of dealing with these incidents, that is to try to keep them within the family. The Chinese thinking of "saving face" prevent them from taking up the challenge and actively engaging themselves in challenging White Australia's superiority.

In sum, the elements of contemporary Chinese culture, featuring moral crisis, looking up to Westerners, worshiping things Western, Chinese females marrying Australian men, and also some Chinese females craving for Western appearances, may play an important role in nurturing White Australia's sense of superiority.

5. Discussion

White Australia's superiority over Chinese was developed through its unique social and cultural background in history and is further nurtured by some elements of contemporary Chinese culture. Is it possible to eradicate it? Perhaps yes, but will it be an easy undertaking? In this section, strategies aimed at reducing White Australia's superiority will be discussed, in terms of education, communication, and development of China.

Education will help tackle its social, cultural, and language roots. Education refers to school and university education including Chinese language

and culture studies. Through education, people would become more cultured, leading to a change in habits and behaviour, in turn becoming more civilised. It is noted that ignorance has been a common cause of conflict throughout the history of mankind (UNESCO, 1951). Perhaps, with proper school and university education, Pauline Hanson would have found a skilled job and would not have found herself so racist. Through education, people can acknowledge the distinctiveness of other cultures and be made aware that culture is an active process. Societies have always been open to external influences and ideas and are in constant change. Since you cannot find two Indians who tell a story alike (Stocking, 1996), internal diversity of culture may be noted through education. Differences could be the outcome of habitual practice.

With the rise of China, the importance of education about China and the Chinese has gained the Australian Government's attention. By 2010, among 39 universities in Australia, 29 offered units or courses in Chinese language and 21 offered a unit or course in Chinese culture or society (S. Li, 2010). However, in 2008, the number of Chinese language students in Australian schools accounted for only 28 per cent of the number of students learning Japanese or Italian. At Year 12 nationally, only a scant 0.3 per cent of non-Chinese-background students take Chinese language. The small number of students learning Chinese language in Australian schools epitomises the dire situation of the dearth of white Australians who understand China and who can speak Chinese. This needs the Government's urgent attention.

Likewise, cultural exchange can help tackle its social and cultural roots. Cultural exchange can bring about changes in attitudes between peoples and their states. "It is indeed one of the common fallacies of the age to believe that international understanding is brought about automatically, as a result of the play of impersonal forces" (Zimmern, 1929, p. 55). Efforts in cultural exchange could be made in the forms of education, tourism, literature, arts, and diplomacy. These would exert an imperceptible influence on the other country, and may help win people's hearts and minds. Student exchange through studying overseas offer the best platform for cultural understanding. Tourists are also commonly seen as potential ambassadors for culture. Their apparently casual encounters with locals help enhance mutual cultural understanding, which in the local mind is a mere concept or idea. The importance of literature too, in creating a positive image of a country and its people must also not be underestimated. In fact, cultural exchange between the Chinese and Australian peoples has been growing steadily in the last few decades, and culminated between 2010 and 2012, when the Reciprocal Years of Culture between Australia and the People's Republic of China took place for the first time to become the largest ever international cultural promotion. It marked an unprecedented level of cultural exchange between the two

countries in art, literature, exhibitions, concert tours and among everyday tourists, and in particular in the educational exchange of students and scholars.

The sustained economic development and political reform of China may play an important part in tackling the economic and political roots of White Australia's superiority. Although China's economic and political situation are not the focus of this article, their roles should not be underestimated in developing mutual respect. Chinese people catching up with Australians in terms of living standards, and human rights can help diminish this mentality. Zimmern warns that "good knowledge of different cultures may not necessarily lead to warmer feelings of friendship and respect" (1929, p. 55). This may indicate that the economic and political powers of a country and its people plays a very important role in gaining respect or eradicating superiority of other countries and peoples. Perhaps it is superiority in human nature that is reflected in social dimensions. Although China has risen to become the second largest world economy, due to its large population and poor social welfare systems, the average Chinese living conditions remain far lower than those of Australians. China is also not a democratic society and the Chinese are not able to enjoy universal human rights, such as the right to vote, freedom of speech, and transparent legislative and just judiciary systems. In summary, China's sustained economic development and political reform may help the Chinese enjoy similar living standards and human rights as Australians, which may play an important role in developing good manners, establishing mutual respect and diminishing White Australia's superiority.

6. Conclusion

Although China has risen to become the second largest world economy, with a vital role in the biggest economic boom in Australia since the 1850s gold rush (Smyth, 2014, p. 38), White Australia's superiority over Chinese lingers. This article first presented the empirical evidence of racial superiority and racial discrimination against Chinese in Australia. Then, a theoretical framework of constructivism and an anthropological view of culture was established to explore its social and cultural roots. And with the theoretical support, the social and cultural background of Australian racial discrimination against Chinese was examined through the prism of history. Following that, the article looked at the social and cultural elements of contemporary China that may further nurture White Australia's superiority, such as the moral crisis within China, idolisation of Westerners, and worshiping Western goods. Finally, factors to diminish White Australia's superiority were discussed in terms of education, cultural exchange, and China's development. In conclusion, it can be said that the road to Australian respect for the Chinese will not be a short one.

Note

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