

Racist or Racish

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I saw a recent debate involving a local comedian/come social commentator and various others talking about a variety of things including border protection policies. The usual sides were saying the usual things and then he said that we are all racist. On listening to him explain that statement he did have a good point.

To rephrase what he said in psychological terms. He stated that we all have a sense of our own identity, (which is true). That identity includes a cultural, racial and ethnic identity, (which is also true). He then stated that the increase in border protection policies by the current government is an expression of the community's need to have a sense of its own identity.

To follow on from his thesis I would first suggest a change in the term. That we are not all 'racist' but we are all 'racish' (race-ish) - as the term 'racist' is so emotive.

At least in this country (Australia) the government does not seem to have grasp this concept yet. It has not taken into account the psychological need of the population to have a sense that its identity is clear and stable.

In this country we have policies that allow and seek immigration from other countries and cultures in an organised fashion (ie non-refugee). It is possible that such policies combined with the refugees is threatening many Australians' sense of cultural and ethnic identity. Thus there has been a move towards the right by a large number in the community, as the polls suggest and we have ended up with a situation where there is a silent majority who wont generally speak out in public but will express such views in the privacy of the ballot box.

Perhaps there needs to be a view openly expressed that it is OK to be, understand and feel your ethnic and cultural identity and that you are not racist if you do so. In this country we have government funded promotions on television

and in the media in general showing Australians of different cultural and racial

groups working, playing and living together in harmony. A good message to promote. However, you never see any such promotions the other way around. Never have I seen a portrayal or promotion of my (or any other) cultural and

racial group being a discrete group of its own and having its own particular identity and sense of self. Working, playing and living together.

It would seem quite plausible to be able to portray discrete racial and ethnic groups as being groups in their own right. You can promote this and at the same time make the point that because one feels a part of a particular group that does not have to lead to the desire to go and lynch or attack other alternate ethnic groups. In fact one could have the identity of a particular group and want to get along harmoniously with other such groups.

You never see such an idea being voiced and I imagine if you did it would be quickly labelled as racist. But it isn't racist, it is a celebration of a particular group by a particular group of who they are (ie racish). I would also suggest that if you do not allow members of a community to be racish then they will quickly become racist. Hence the possibility of racist policies becoming ratified in the formal statutes of the community.

So perhaps we need anti-racist policies presented concomitantly and as openly with pro-racish policies. In this country the first part happens but the second part does not and thus the anti-racist policies will be in danger of becoming pro-racist policies. The voters may demand this because as we know humans will do almost anything to maintain a sense of their own identity.