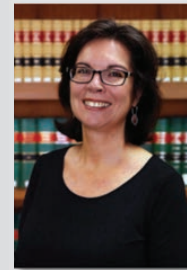


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Farida Fozdar is Associate Professor in Sociology, at The University of Western Australia, currently working on an ARC Fellowship exploring national, transnational and postnational identities. She has published widely including 3 books, 15 book chapters and over 45 journal articles, as well as reports for government and research consultancies. Her research focuses on race relations and migrant settlement, racism, citizenship, nationalism, religion, and issues to do with refugees and asylum seekers. Recent studies cover refugees and employment, belonging and exclusion among refugees and Muslims, Australian nationalism, mixed race, and Australians' perceptions of Asia.

Bowling Together: Is Social Cohesion in a Diverse Society Possible?

Playing with Putnam's concept of 'bowling alone' that suggests that communities are breaking down due to a range of factors, including ethnic diversity, this paper asks how Australians can advance social cohesion at the grassroots level, as well as how political leadership can support this goal. In discussing the idea of a national compact, it asks what is a nation and what is a compact, before considering how Australians' understandings of their nation as a civic as opposed to an ethnic collective can usefully progress social cohesion. Using quantitative and qualitative data generated from a 4 year research fellowship investigating national identity, it demonstrates how Australians think about themselves and how they see others, and how different research methods offer complementary tools for the study of such questions. It concludes with some suggestions based on 'contact theory' about the best ways to promote constructive discourses about diversity, positive engagement across difference, and more informed citizenship.

