

***SURVIVAL OF A NATION:
FROM ASSIMILATION TO REACTIONARY NATIONALISM***

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This thesis has not been submitted for a higher degree to any other university or institution anywhere, other than in this manuscript

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Thesis abstract

During the period from the end of World War II to the early 2000's Australia was forced to adapt to the migrant presence if it were to survive as a modern liberal democracy. Migrants were necessary to the economy and the building of the nation after World War II. Immigration was conceived as a mechanism of national survival. But immigrants needed to fit into Anglo-Australian culture, the existing template. Our society thus had two driving needs: a desire to increase population through migration, and a desire to preserve the existing society that had been derived from Great Britain. This thesis argues that one of the central themes of the story of immigration after the war has been the working out of a fundamental dialectic between the demands of the 'body' and that of the 'soul'. These produced, or were propelled by, different conceptions of survival. Evolving settlement policies became ways of resolving the emerging conflict between the numbers and background of migrants and the need to preserve an Anglo-Australian culture. Assimilation and integration were designed firmly to preserve the latter, but multiculturalism had shifted towards maintaining migrant culture and migrant survival within the larger society. But many thought that multiculturalism wasn't a solution, that it undermined Anglo-Australian culture. The pendulum then swung back the other way with John Howard's retreat from multiculturalism and the rise of nationalist reactionary sentiment surrounding Pauline Hanson,

Tampa and the Cronulla riots.

This thesis charts how Australia attempted to resolve this dialectic, to manage large-scale immigration and at the same time preserve the existing Anglo-Australian nation. The greater immigration influx brought a structural tension to Australian society, between maintaining that White Australian culture and incorporating migrants into society. The further settlement policy moved away from White Australia the greater the tensions in society became, witnessing the advent of Pauline Hanson and the Cronulla riots. It became an issue of how the nation might survive that process, and remain viable.

ABBREVIATIONS

ACMA	Australian Council on Multicultural Affairs
AEAC	Australian Ethnic Affairs Council
ANA	Australian Natives Association
CPD: HR	Commonwealth Parliamentary Debates: House of Representatives
CPD: S	Commonwealth Parliamentary Debates: Senate
IAC	Immigration Advisory Council
NACCME	National Advisory Committee on Multicultural Education
ACPEA	Australian Council on Population and Ethnic Affairs
APIC	Australian Population and Immigration Council

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