Anglo-Celtic Australians' Perspectives of Multiculturalism

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Anthropology - Honours Thesis

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Table of Contents

Preface

In Australia, the term multiculturalism has been used to denote government policy rather than the description of a country as multicultural. The aim of this paper is to examine some previously unexamined perceptions that Anglo-Australians of the baby-boomer and preceding generation have of multiculturalism and immigration policy. My objective is to discover how some people have responded to the politics of changing culture and society in an era of rapid global change.

I approach the study from three perspectives. In Chapter 1, I examine the literature to explore how academics have perceived and analysed nationalist discourse and multiculturalism in Australia. In that review, I include a discussion of the effect that rapid global change has had on how nation-states are understood. My second focus is on the historical discourses that have influenced the way people think about multiculturalism and immigration. Chapter 2 considers the impact of official discourses and Chapter 3 examines the popular discourses. My third and primary focus is on how a particular cohort of Anglo-Australians in Sydney experiences the presence of immigrants of perceived different cultural backgrounds. In Chapter 1, I discuss how this cohort has been mostly ignored in theoretical and empirical studies of multiculturalism. In Chapter 4, I discuss the data from my study of those Anglo-Australians that I interviewed.

By taking a three dimensional approach, I was able to examine if new data was to be found in the voices that were missing in the debates surrounding multiculturalism and immigration policy. The people I studied lived in areas isolated from cultural difference and were not publicly vocal in the debate. I conclude from my study that these people drew meaning from both local and national contexts. In the local context, their experience was often a folkloric one and they did not think much about multiculturalism and immigration. This was a view they had of multiculturalism that celebrated cultural diversity. This view contrasted with the one they had of other parts of Sydney. This view was mostly constructed from information that they encountered in the media. It resulted in what other writers identify as white Australian nationalist discourse. I argue that the anxiety they demonstrated when they called for greater assimilation of immigrants was derived from fears associated with different value systems.

In my conclusion, I also discuss how I situate my study as an example of *anthropology at home* as a valid means of anthropological scholarship.

Chapter 1 Theoretical perspectives and a new ethnographic view

In Australia, the term multiculturalism has been used to denote government policy rather than the description of a country as multicultural[1]. My focus will be on Australian born people of Anglo-Celtic, Anglo-Saxon, or British or English background to explore the meanings that they associate with this policy. I will refer to them as Anglo-Australians. I use the term Anglo-Australian in the same context as Jamrozik *et al.* to describe 'people of the Australian cultural mainstream' (1995, pp. 12-3)[2]. This chapter will review the theoretical aspects of the literature regarding these people's responses towards this policy and the closely related issue of immigration. I will do this in two parts. The first will discuss the linkage a number of writers have made between the processes of globalisation and the introduction of multiculturalism in Australia. The second part will examine some theoretical approaches to Anglo-Australian responses to government policy. I will then suggest a view that is missing from these accounts and propose my approach to studying the effects of multiculturalism.

The Australian experience of multiculturalism in a globalising world

Globalisation can mean many things depending on the level of analysis. Comaroff remarks on 'the accelerated processes of globalization now working their way across the planet, processes marked at once by the material and cultural compression of the world, by a growing awareness of its oneness, and by the diverse… interdependence that bind its inhabitants' (1996, p. 167). These processes of human exchange take place in an advanced technological world of rapidly increasing mobility and communication. In this world, all national democracies are increasingly coming under threat as the processes of globalisation break down the fabric of existing national institutions and belief systems culturally, socially, economically and politically. 'Hannerz observes in this respect, [that] nations "have only a limited part in the global cultural flow…. Much of the traffic in culture… is transnational rather than international. It ignores, subverts, and devalues rather than celebrates national boundaries"' (Hannerz cited in Comaroff 1996, p. 172). It

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[1] I discuss this definition further in Chapter 2.

[2] See Jamrozik *et al.* for a discussion of the term Anglo-Australian and its usage.

is in this context that a number of authors attribute globalisation with having an irreversible impact on Australian cultural and social life.

Ghassan Hage argues that Australian multiculturalism has changed ideologically since its introduction. It was conceived in the 1970s as a policy that acknowledged the existing demographic of Australia as a predominantly Anglo-Celtic country, which contained many ethnic groups. One goal of the policy at that time was to address structural inequality in the welfare system. Another was to govern different ethnic groups in such a way as to enable them to retain their culture whilst maintaining a dominant Anglo-Australian culture. From 1983, the emphasis began to change under the Hawke government, to prescribe how the national identity of the country *should* be perceived as a multicultural country that embraced cultural diversity in an increasingly globalising world. The earlier form of policy had been accepted by most of the population because the dominant culture remained intact. Economic conditions were good with full employment and the state was mostly able to manage the effects of globalisation. The Hawke government's change of policy was embraced predominantly by cosmopolitan middle-class people who had a more global conception of nationality. The policy changes also coincided with a downturn in economic conditions and an increase in immigration from Asian countries. In effect, global conditions experienced locally and government policy coincided to threaten Anglo-Australian's perception of national identity. This combination of seemingly uncontrollable social factors resulted in many Australians reasserting a constructed identity drawn from the past (2003, pp. 60-2).

Castles and Miller note that international migration is not a new phenomenon. It can be linked to commodity and capital movement throughout human history. What has changed is that human mobility has increased rapidly since 1945 with the result that post-modern cities appear very different now compared to what they were in the past (Castles 1993, pp. 47-8; 1999, p. 31; Castles & Miller 1993, p. 4). Castles and Miller argue that majority populations in all countries are going to have to live with a new kind of cultural pluralism that is likely to increase rather than decrease in the future (1993, pp. 271, 3). Castles *et al.* have globalisation in mind when they argue that we need to consider the 'meaning of Australian identity… in the context of a rapidly changing society' (Castles *et al.* 1992, p. 101). Successive Australian governments have had to redefine multiculturalism to accommodate not only different forms of migration but also 'major economic and social changes' (Castles 1993, pp. 47-8; 1999, p. 31). As a result, strong racist reactions have reemerged from economic restructure, rapid cultural change and a breakdown of political institutions. People are blaming immigrants rather than the transnational causes of

globalisation for the changes that they see as threatening (Castles 1993, pp. 56-7; Castles & Miller 1993, p. 13). Jamrozik *et al.* argue that some Anglo-Australians have been unable to accept Australia's place in the Asia-Pacific region and that government policies have contributed to their uncertainty and confusion (1995, p. xi).

Ien Ang identifies economic change as a central cause of change in Australia. She observes that the globalisation of the world economy has meant we have had to align with the Asian region. This has been the government's response to being excluded from other regional economic institutions such as NAFTA and the European Union. At the same time, Australia has been under international pressure to accept refugees. These influences have combined to cause 'a slow but inevitable erosion of Australia's sovereign capacity to retain a sense of racial/spatial singularity and separateness, as the world changed quickly and irrevocably (Ang 1999, pp. 196-7; 2003, p. 62).

Analysis of Anglo-Australian responses to multiculturalism and immigration policy

Many of the authors below analyse Anglo-Australian identity through a discourse of whiteness. I take a broad view of *whiteness* to include any discourse that includes in its argument, an Australian dominant culture that is identified by itself or by others in such terms[3]. The category of *whiteness* in Australian society has widened from only British descent, to include immigrants from other European regions and their descendents. These people have morphed from the *pale* to the *white* in the imagination of Australian society and have subsequently adopted the national identity of white Australians. However, despite this expansion, white Australians continue to signal 'superiority, cultural compatibility and privilege', excluding in the imagination those considered 'beyond the pale: the Chinese in the nineteenth century and 'Asians' in the twentieth' (Larbalestier 1999, p. 150).

Hage argues that under Australia's multicultural policy, ethnics have been constructed as objects that can be controlled, or 'governed' (1998, pp. 16-7). He argues that both supporters and critics of multiculturalism are concerned with maintaining spatial control of Australia. Ethnic groups are objectified based on Anglo-Australian connections to fantasies of a past White Australia. The only real difference between the supporters and

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[3] In chapter 2, I examine Australia's encounter with whiteness with regard to the White Australia policy.

critics of multiculturalism is how the objectification of ethnic groups is used. Those who support multiculturalism do so to enable them to manage the presence of ethnic groups through policies that render them passive. Other cultures are positioned in a way that is *tolerated*, and this appears as an inclusionary practice. Critics of multiculturalism, on the other hand, objectify ethnic groups as undesirable so as to make them unwelcome in the country (Hage 1998, pp. 16-8, 90-1, 186). Hage claims that people who articulate the 'experience of multiculturalism as a loss of national reality… [are in] a permanent state of crisis and the gap between fantasy and social reality widens' (1998, p. 23). He argues that Anglo-Australians are *worrying* about the effects of multiculturalism and changing immigration policy by holding on to fantasies of the past.

Ang argues that Hanson's political activity is a reminder of the 'the anxieties and prejudices of White Australia [which] have not fully disappeared from the Australian cultural landscape' (Ang 2003, p. 51)[4]. Ang suggests that the 'politics of fear' expressed in statements like 'I [Hanson] don't want to be Asianised', is a reflection of anxiety felt by many Anglo-Australians (Ang 1999, p. 197). It comes from a realisation or rejection of the notion that *Asia* is represented as an 'inescapable destiny for Australia… [One which] requires an enormous adjustment in the national sense of self' (Ang 1999, p. 197).

For some, the presentation of Australia as part of Asia is traumatic since it requires a shift from a previous attachment to a homogenous national identity, to a heterogeneous global outlook. Ang argues that whilst today's cultural anxiety has a continuity with past perspectives, it is expressed more as a concern for the spatial control of territory rather than with racism, which has become morally unacceptable (Ang 2003, pp. 52-3). Ang argues that Australia cannot continue to live in fear and suggests that 'white Australia [needs] to come to terms with its future. In this future, the alignment of race and space… will have to be disarticulated' (Ang 1999, p. 200). She notes, '[for] all the panic, fear and anxiety, large pockets of Australian society are already acquiring, through daily interaction and ordinary interconnections, the multi-colours of honey' (Ang 1999, p. 201).

Writing before Australia's experience of Hansonism, Castles *et al.* argue that the dominant view of Australia as a nation was its acceptance of being a multicultural society. They argue that this dominant image is not capable of sustaining the ideological functions of nationalism. Such an observation highlights the contradiction between

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[4] I discuss the Hanson phenomenon further in Chapter 3 and the White Australia policy in Chapter 2.

nationalism's imagining of a nation as a shared culture, and multiculturalism's acceptance of cultural difference. However, despite this dominant view, there is a New Right ideology 'advocating a revival of nationalism as a way of resolving our social and economic woes' (1992, p. 116). Castles *et al.* identify Geoffrey Blainey with this New Right[5]. Blainey is typical, they claim, of people offering nothing more than a return to a form of nationalism based on assimilation, an option no longer viable in a country that has changed culturally as a result of the processes of globalisation (1992, pp. 116, 28). Castles *et al.* conclude that it is not possible to return to the old forms of national identity that nationalism implies.

Stephen Castles argues that the changes wrought by globalisation mean there is a need for 'new forms of citizenship and democracy… to combat the power of uncontrolled markets and huge transnational corporations' (1999, p. 31). He notes that a 'consequence of globalisation is that the major decisions that affect our lives are no longer made at the national level' (1999, p. 40; see also Castles & Miller 1993, p. 274). For Australia to engage in better democratic participation, it is necessary for the Australian government to have stronger representation on international organisations (1999, pp. 39-41). Castles also notes that nationalism has caused nation-states to equate citizenship with 'membership of a dominant ethnic group' (1993, p. 274). Castles and Miller argue however, that there is a strong case supporting a planned approach to immigration in order to maintain peace between immigrants and local people. Castles, with Miller, appears to be taking a balanced democratic approach by suggesting international cooperation and non-discriminatory immigration restrictions can be linked to represent the interests of citizens on both a global and local scale (1993, pp. 262-3). Castles and Miller argue that a weakening of nationalism may signal the possibility of returning to the original principles of the institution of citizenship. That is, citizenship should represent only a mediation of the 'relationship between people and the government' and not 'membership of a dominant ethnic group' (Castles & Miller 1993, pp. 274-5).

Jamrozik *et al.*(1995, p. 2) approach the question of cultural diversity through an analysis of class arguing that cultures are mediated by class structure[6]. They argue that there are two kinds of social reality. One that is formed by the experience of everyday life. The

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[5] I also discuss Geoffrey Blainey further in Chapter 3.

[6] See also de Lepervanche, M. M. 1984, *Indians in a white Australia: an account of race, class and Indian immigration to eastern Australia*, George Allen & Unwin, Sydney.

other is observed; therefore, it is mediated by people who represent the dominant power structure. The two are rarely identical and both are constructed from within the class position of the subject. Jamrozik *et al*. make the distinction that the higher classes or social strata have only transient contact with immigrants at work and in the street. Immigrants are not their neighbours. On the other hand, working-class communities are more likely to experience cultural difference, and this transforms their social reality. The higher classes resist cultural transformation because they do not encounter the everyday lived experience of cultural diversity. In this context, resistance to other races expressed in terms of superiority and inferiority may be seen in class terms. Jamrozik *et al*. argue that the dominant middle and upper classes control how the core social institutions operate. This includes institutions such as the media, language, law and government. Because of this domination, Australian institutions remain monoculture in nature, and the suburbs that these classes occupy remain culturally unchanged. In this context, multiculturalism represents a threat to the hegemony of Anglo heritage. Jamrozik *et al*. argue that the core institutions need to open up to allow other cultures to enrich them for the benefit of all. They suggest that if multiculturalism were to be completely embraced, it would mean the abandonment of the notion of a *typical Australian* as vague as this is. In view of this, we cannot ignore the diminishing vocal minority who seek to preserve Australia's white heritage and resist its dilution (1995, pp. 7-11, 108-11, 15-16, 208, 22-24).

Ross Poole argues that if the government is to continue to have the moral capacity to do its work of representing its citizens, it will have to subordinate the 'multicultural agenda' to 'the national one' (1999, p. 142). He argues that the political will of a nation is not just laws and institutions but also the cultural practices of the people. Political will is necessary for the formation of a nation-state, and the expression of culture is necessary to sustain that will. (Poole 1999, p. 35). Poole acknowledges however that a high degree of cultural homogeneity is not required to maintain a nation-state. He observes that all national identities contain diversity (1999, pp. 35-7). Poole argues on the other hand that it is important to understand the connection between culture and identity.

> The pervasive social culture into which we are born is one of the most significant determinants of our identity… Normally, we do not choose to acquire a culture, nor can we choose to give it up… Culture in this sense is embodied in our sense of who we are and in the social practices within which we exist. (1999, p. 118).

He argues that it is not possible for any nation-state to remain neutral on the subject of different cultures because a state's legitimacy depends on the fact that it is '[representing] a community defined by its culture' (1999, p. 122). This also means that it is not viable to achieve complete cultural equality in a society defined by the nation-state (1999, p. 122).

Whilst acknowledging that cultures are not fixed entities, it is possible to identify a cultural tradition that most people will adhere to. Those who do not identify in this way find themselves alienated from the dominant culture. Poole identifies a central contradiction in multiculturalism when he asks if it is possible to have 'an understanding of multiculturalism which recognises the significance of this alienation, as well as the need for a dominant public culture?' (1999, p. 124)

Behind Poole's 'argument stands the assumption that states have the right to set the terms of immigration' (1999, p. 127). However, in a country like Australia, it should not be necessary to significantly restrict immigration to protect an existing national identity because Australia is unlikely to be 'swamped by newly emerging majorities' (1999, p. 129).

Bruce Kapferer notes a distinction between Australian nationalist ideology, which is egalitarian nationalism, and Sinhalese Buddhist nationalism, which he describes as hierarchical. This distinction of different kinds of nationalisms is important. Kapferer is suggesting that nationalism 'gains its considerable force as a construction of reality only by engaging "particular orientations to the world" or "ontologies," the ground upon which people build "their notions of the obvious, or the taken-for granted, and of incontestable common sense"' (discussed in Foster 1991, p. 254). Kapferer argues that 'in the ideology of Australian identity [there is] a strong sense that society, the nation, is integral to the person before socialization… [therefore] the state… does not create the person' (Kapferer, B. 1988, p. 200).

Kapferer emphasises 'a dialectical opposition between the notions of Nation and State' (2000, p. 270). He distinguishes between the Nation as a culturally cohesive collective of individuals, and the State as the institutional establishments that govern these people. Kapferer associates myth or fantasy with rituals such as those surrounding the story of ANZAC. He emphasises the different forces at work in the discourse between the State and the Nation arguing that the State of Australia has historically dominated the individual will of the people - the Nation. Kapferer argues that the debate over Australia's immigration policy could 'be better understood through the rationalist logic of egalitarian individualism and the dialectics of Nation and State…' (2000, p. 271). He observes that the nationalism of modern nation-states, 'evoke ethnic sentiment and a spirit of racism [and this phenomenon] is contained in the egalitarian roots of much modern society…' (Kapferer, B. 1988, p. 207). Australian nationalism expresses a shared and equal *we-ness* that is set against *them*. To see this apparent contradiction of egalitarianism and racism at work, Kapferer explains how Australians under the fantasy of occupying an *empty*

country, proceeded to welcome immigrants of a suitable type to fill the space so as to protect the country from Asian invasion. This explanation hints at the complex historical discourses that led to and sustained the White Australia policy (2000, p. 271).

Jupp argues that immigration policy that is formulated under popular democratic politics has to deal with the reasons and circumstances under which people will be accepted into a society. As such, it must take into account perceptions and prejudices as much as it does information (Jupp & Kabala 1993, p. 243). Because of this, 'the politics of immigration cannot be effectively isolated from the politics of race and national identity' (1993, p. 244). Jupp identifies that immigration research and policy in the past has focused on migrant settlement issues that are of a social and economic nature. The public debate regarding policies however, has focused on something quite different, the issues related to ethnic and racial origins. This has occurred despite the fact that it is unwise for politicians to advocate policies which appear to threaten established social conditions and the ethnic character of society (1993, pp. 245-6). In his analysis of immigration policy theory, Jupp argues that nine questions should be addressed by policy. I mention here two that are particularly relevant to immigration debate from the perspective of Anglo-Australians who have reservations about policy from an ethnic or race perspective. First, which 'sections of the population (organised or latent) have a concrete interest in the outcome of immigration policy?' and then what 'social tensions are likely to arise from a continuing immigrant intake? What mechanisms and policies should be devised for coping with tensions which might threaten social harmony?' (1993, p. 254)

Different views and perspectives

Above I have presented a multidisciplinary analysis of the subject which is far from comprehensive. I trust however, that it is a fair representation of the work that has been done in this field. I have included a philosophical approach in the work of Poole. I have also included the sociological and political approaches of Jupp, Castles and his associates, and Jamrozik *et al*. All of these disciplinary approaches fail to include the voice of Anglo-Australians from an ethnographic perspective although they acknowledge their presence. Some of the anthropologists and cultural studies authors included above, such as Ang and Hage, were writing in the heat of the Hanson era when public debate focused on extremes of nationalist discourse. This may have caused their analysis of Anglo-Australian domination to focus on the discourse of *whiteness*. Kapferer on the other hand brings the State back into the analysis by examining the relationship between the State and the Nation. Both of these approaches include an analysis of elitist discourse but tend

to obfuscate the complex identities and meanings that might emerge in specific local contexts. In response to Hage, Friedman argued that 'it may be that the xenophobia of the powerless is not an expression of loss of national control but a loss of control over local sociality, a feeling of homelessness' (2000, p. 269). I would argue that we need to better understand what is happening at the local level. We need to add the local voice to those of the elites. Most analysis to date appears to be based on sparse ethnographic data which comes from localities where significant inter-cultural contact exists. However, no ethnographic data appears to exist of people who live in a relatively isolated local space with little contact between cultures. The latter I would contend, represent an immeasurably large but admittedly shrinking part of urban Australia.

My study

My study attempts to bring into view a particular cohort of people who by the very fact of their particularity provide only a limited national perspective. However, this voice is missing from the debate. These people do not live in a spatial context of cultural tension. However, they do have conflicting feelings, or at least feelings of ambivalence toward multiculturalism and immigration policy. Like all Australians, these people have been presented with a cacophony of voices regarding their cultural heritage as the following chapters show. John Howard portrayed *One Australia* as a uniquely Australian culture to be preserved (Castles *et al.* 1992, pp. 170-3; Inglis 1991, p. 24; Jamrozik *et al.* 1995, p. 102; Jupp 1991, p. 146). Then Paul Keating positioned Australia as *part of Asia* (Castles *et al.* 1992, pp. 209-10), followed by Pauline Hanson presenting Australia as *One Nation* expressing her anxiety over the loss of a homogenous national identity (Ang 2003, p. 59). And now Howard has us thinking with a fortress mentality (Ang 2003, pp. 64-5). These contradictory points of view present Anglo-Australians with anything but a cohesive shared past and culture. However, many people persist in holding on to such a notion. Under these circumstances, the many contradictory voices do little other than create tension or confusion in what these people believe, feel and experience.

The purpose of my study is to find out what people of a particular demographic feel about their experience of immigrants of different cultural backgrounds. Six people born in Australia who identify themselves as Anglo-Australian were interviewed in their homes using a semi-structured interview methodology. They were all asked to contribute their thoughts on their perception of public policy on multiculturalism, and how non-Anglo-Celtic people are accommodated in Australia.

Participant backgrounds

Six interviewees participated, three male and three female. They were drawn from the Northern Beaches area of Sydney which has a disproportionate number of Anglo-Australians compared to other areas. Half were from Pittwater and the other half were from the Warringah council areas. Census data indicates 91.1 and 83.8 per cent respectively of those populations identify themselves as having English, Australian or Irish ancestry. In all of New South Wales, 76.4 per cent identify with that ancestry. For comparison, the Canterbury and Fairfield local government areas in Sydney showed 24.5 and 26.9 per cent of their populations identify themselves as having either Chinese or Greek ancestry, with Australian as the next highest at 11.9 per cent in each case. English and Irish were even lower (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2002).

At the time of the interviews, each participant was aged between 45 and 63 years of age. They all had a life partner, mostly Australian born. One of them is married to a New Zealand born person and another to an American. Four of them have either two or three adult children. I believe the other two had adult children as well.

Most were born in, and lived most of their lives in Sydney. One was born in a rural area, moving to Sydney when she was a teenager and has lived on the Northern Beaches ever since. Another was brought up in various suburbs around Sydney, went to the UK for some time as a young adult, and returned to the North Shore with a young family. In retirement she moved to the Northern Beaches. Several spent many years living around the Northern suburbs with only brief stays in other capital cities. One participant has lived on the Northern Beaches all of his life.

All of the participants were born in Australia and trace their heritage back several to many generations. Mary[7] traced her family back to immigrants around 1836. Susan's parents were Australian born of British, New Zealand and Irish descent. Cathy has Australian parents of British background. John has a 'somewhat Celtic background'. Peter knew who the British convicts were that he came from and 'is proud to be a sixth generation Australian'. Paul was also a sixth generation Australian of mostly Scottish and Anglo-Irish descent.

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[7] I use pseudonyms in this report to ensure the anonymity of individual participants.

Each of the participants was of middle to upper-middle class background. They all worked in professional or semi-professional occupations during their careers[8]. Four of them retired during the past several years.

Most of those interviewed travelled a small amount to other parts of the world, either with work or privately. None appear to have spent any significant time living in a non-Anglo community. Interestingly, Paul took in a Vietnamese refugee couple for six to eight months in the late 1970s and helped them get a job.

In Chapter 4, I analyse the ethnographic data that I collected from this study. But before considering that, I examine in the next two chapters the historical influences that have shaped the Australian national imagination.

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[8] I mention their occupations in Chapter 4 in the context of their experiences of changes in the workplace.

Chapter 2 Influences of government policy on national imagination

This chapter examines the historical trajectory of immigration policies and multiculturalism in Australia. I will also discuss the impact government discourses surrounding these policies have had on the national imagination.

State institutions play a significant part in the way nations are imagined. Judith Kapferer suggests it is the state's role to define the common good, and they do this by establishing absolute values that are codified as *public morality* informed by 'cultural constructions of 'common decency'' (Kapferer, J. 1996, p. 18). The Australian government's role in formulating and articulating multiculturalism and immigration policy incorporates such a public morality. This has influenced how the nation and Anglo-Australian[9] people in particular, respond to ethnic groups living in Australia. Government influence extends back long before multiculturalism, to a time when notions of white national identity informed policy making.

The concept of a *white Australia* has been discussed throughout Australia's history and continues to form the basis for a homogenous core identity. This identity has been constructed as 'a means of constituting the historical and social space of a 'white' Australian culture and its subjects' (Larbalestier 1999, p. 146).

White Australia policies – from colonialism to assimilation

Colonial era from settlement until federation

Opposition to Chinese diggers in New South Wales and Victoria, and Pacific Islander *kanaka* cane field labourers in Queensland, dates back to the 1850s (de Lepervanche 1984, p. 51; DIMIA 2003a). Asians were discriminated against by laws passed in the 1850s and 1861. However, there was a brief period during the 1860s when these laws were repealed, and a large number of Asian workers arrived. White workers felt their interests were being threatened by these workers. By the 1880s, most of the colonies had

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[9] I use the term Anglo-Australian to refer to Australian born people of Anglo-Celtic background as described in Chapter 1.

reintroduced discriminatory legislation (de Lepervanche 1984, p. 51). The dominant culture in Australia made the designation of *white* a defining national characteristic. By regulating against all Asiatic people, governments helped shape public opinion (Stratton 1999, pp. 174-5). Examples of colonial government intervention were: Victorian legislation in 1855 to restrict Chinese people; similar legislation in South Australia in 1857; the 1861 New South Wales, *Chinese Immigration Act*; the 1877 Queensland, *Chinese Immigration Restriction Act*. In 1887, all of the colonies increased the poll tax on Chinese immigrants to £100, a significant amount of money at the time. In 1897, New South Wales passed the *Coloured Races Restriction and Regulation Bill*. In 1888, New South Wales extended earlier anti-Chinese legislation to embrace all coloured races from the continents of Asia, Africa and islands of the Pacific and Indian Oceans. In 1897, New South Wales and Western Australia introduced a *dictation test (Natal test)* with the intention of excluding non-English speaking and non-educated immigrants (de Lepervanche 1984, pp. 51-2; Jayasuriya *et al.* 2003, pp. 201-2; Stratton 1999, pp. 174-5).

Hage argues that colonial immigration policy was built upon a logic that assumed British people were naturally superior to non-white races (2003, p. 53). De Lepervanche similarly suggests that by 1901, the 'Whites depicted non-Europeans as cunning, murderous, depraved, lascivious, inferior creatures unfit for the white man's country' (1984, p. 55). Hage also argues that White colonial paranoia expresses a pathological fear born of a feeling of being threatened. (2003, p. 49). This fear comes from feelings of being isolated from Britain combined with a belief that Australia was surrounded by 'hostile and uncivilised otherness' (2003, p. 52). This logic continued to inform government policy well into the twentieth century and still persists with some Australians today.

From federation until the Second World War

The racist discrimination exhibited towards non-European workers that started in the colonial goldmines and cane fields expanded later into all parts of the Australian labour movement including the Australian Labor Party. With the support of worker organisations, successive Australian federal governments continued to discriminate on the basis of race (Castles *et al.* 1992, pp. 7-8).

In 1901, the Commonwealth of Australia introduced the *Immigration Restriction Act* and the *Pacific Island Labourers Act* to exclude non-Europeans (DIMIA 2003a; Jayasuriya *et al.* 2003, p. 202). The legislators were so keen to implement a *White Australia policy* that the Immigration Act was the first item on the agenda of the new parliament, and passed

almost unanimously (Kane 1997, p. 544). The purpose of the *Immigration Restriction Act* was to keep Australia white covertly by excluding people designated as coloured. It continued the colonial practice of testing the literacy level of intending immigrants by requiring them to undertake a dictation test. At this time, culture was closely associated with race, and using the racial marker of colour was thought to be an effective means for creating a 'culturally homogenous nation' (Stratton 1999, p. 175).

The *White Australia policy* was implemented in a way that suggested degrees of whiteness. British and Irish immigrants were the first preference followed by Northern Europeans, specifically German and French, then Scandinavian (Stratton 1999, p. 175). However, the concept of a white Australia remained linked with British descent in the public imagination. Curtin, speaking after war broke out with Japan, said ' this country shall remain forever the home of the descendants of those people who came here in peace in order to establish in the South Seas an outpost of the British race' (cited in DIMIA 2003a).

The period between federation and the Second World War turned Australia's desire to be white into a lived reality. In 1891, it was estimated that Australia was '87 percent Anglo-Celtic and 6 percent north European… By 1947… the Anglo-Celtic component had increased to 90 per cent, the northern European was unchanged…' (Markus citing Price in Hage 2003, p. 54)

Post-war period of assimilation

Government policy continued to exclude non-whites after the Second World War. By 1966, an estimated 99.7 per cent of the population (excluding Aboriginal people) was considered white (Kane 1997, p. 545). This was accomplished despite a desire to 'populate or perish' after 1945. Feelings of insecurity were high after the war because Japanese forces had come close to Australian territory. The government responded by implementing an immigration policy that was designed to build up the population and economy. It was believed this would provide a satisfactory level of resistance to future threat from the north (Hage 2003, p. 54; Kane 1997, p. 549; Kapferer, J. 1996, p. 12; Poole 1999, p. 116).

When Calwell became the first Minister for Immigration in 1945, he announced the Government's objective was to increase the population by two per cent per annum of which one per cent would come from immigration (Stratton 1999, p. 175; Zubrzycki 1991, p. 119). In parliament, Calwell said "It would be better for us to have in Australia

20 to 30 million people of 100 per cent white extraction than to continue the narrow policy of having a population of 7,000,000 who are 98 per cent British" (quoted in Zubrzycki 1991, p. 119). He continued the White Australia policy but expanded the base from which immigrants were drawn. By abandoning the notion of racial purity embodied in *British race*, Calwell was able to expand the category of white to include Eastern and Southern Europeans. He later included refugees from Eastern and Central European countries as well. By 1949, the term white had been extended to include all Europeans (Jones, G. W. 2003, p. 114).

Expanding the scope of immigration was legitimated on the premise that Australia's white cultural identity would persist since non-British persons would assimilate into the *Australian way of life*. However, expanding immigration also had the effect of creating a subclass, with European refugees ranked as second-class citizens (Kane 1997, p. 549; Martin 1978, pp. 207-8; Stratton 1999, pp. 176-7; Zubrzycki 1991, pp. 119-20). In 1951, in an attempt to refine the implementation of assimilation, the Department of Immigration ruled that prospective migrants 'had to be of 75 per cent 'European blood'' (Stratton 1999, p. 178). This ruling was implemented because it was believed migrants would find it difficult to assimilate if they looked too different (1999, p. 178).

Post-war assimilation was a form of nationalism that distanced itself from biologically determined categories of racism by suggesting that persons from uncivilised races were capable of becoming civilised. Assimilation was seen as a viable solution. This concept is important because it led to the construction of a uniquely *Australian Way of Life*. Both Labor and Liberal governments of the late 1940s and 1950s associated this *way of life* with government-sponsored programs, which involved the participation of migrants. The Snowy Mountains Scheme was the most notable of the programs that used large numbers of immigrant workers (Castles *et al.* 1992, p. 110).

Programs to increase Australia's population through immigration were successful. In 1945 the population was approximately 7.5 million. At the 2001 census, the population reached nearly 19 million with 72.6 per cent identifying themselves as Australian-born and 21.9 percent as overseas-born. Of those born overseas, only 5.5 per cent were born in the United Kingdom (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2002). Success in building Australia's population has not been without its problems. Poole argues that whilst the original intent of immigration programs was to secure 'a culturally homogenous society, Australia has become one of the most heterogeneous societies in the advanced world' (Poole 1999, p. 116).

In the period leading up to the 1960s, there was growing international resistance to racial constructions of society, and the White Australia policy was coming under pressure as a racist ideology (Hage 2003, p. 54). The road to non-discriminatory policies however, was a long one. The Liberal party that held government during the 1950s did not remove the words *White Australia* from their party platform until 1960. The Labor Party and the Country Party did not take this step until 1965 (de Lepervanche 1984, p. 73; Jayasuriya *et al.* 2003, pp. 207-8). In 1957, non-European residents were allowed for the first time to apply for citizenship after fifteen years residence. For Europeans however, it was only five years. Restrictions were relaxed further when the *Migration Act of 1958* replaced the dictation test with an entry permit system that required applicants to be 75 percent European in appearance (DIMIA 2003a; Jayasuriya *et al.* 2003, p. 206).

Removal of the White Australia policy was completed in 1973 through policy and legislative changes implemented by the Labor Whitlam government with bipartisan support. The Citizenship Act was amended to permit 'all migrants to become eligible for citizenship after 3 years of permanent residence' (Jayasuriya *et al.* 2003, p. 208). At the same time, Australian officials ceased using 'race as a factor in the selection of migrants', and 'international agreements relating to immigration and race' were ratified (DIMIA 2003a).

The Australian government was starting to recognise by the late 1960s that the assimilation policy was failing. It is not my intention to discuss the reasons for its failure here but rather examine the policy responses to that failure. The government responded in 1964 by abandoning assimilation and replacing it with a policy of integration (Hage 2003, p. 57; Jayasuriya *et al.* 2003, pp. 207-8). The Anglo-Australian population were content with this approach because there was no significant change in the mix of immigrants being accepted (Castles *et al.* 1992, p. 57).

The era of multiculturalism, 1970s onwards

In Australia, the term multiculturalism has been used to denote a government policy introduced to support the notion of 'an ideology [that] calls for a celebration of cultural diversity as a continuing feature of Australian society' (Castles et al. 1992). The term *multicultural* was first used in Canada during the late 1950s and from the late 1960s, it became a political term there, and later a policy. Australia followed Canada's lead in making multiculturalism a government policy (Poole 1999, pp. 114-5; Stratton & Ang 1998, p. 138).

Australia's concept of multiculturalism is different to that of the United States. The United States has a society that can be described as multicultural, but it does not implement government policies to manage cultural diversity. By contrast, Australia implemented multiculturalism as policy 'based on the explicit assumption that cultural diversity is a good thing for the nation and needs to be actively promoted' (Stratton & Ang 1998, p. 138). The intention is to promote the positive elements of all cultures as equally useful without allowing any culture to become or remain dominant (Kapferer, J. 1996, p. 13). The fact that cultural diversity is supported by government policy is important to how multiculturalism is perceived in Australia. The Australian government manages this policy and in so doing attempts to change the existing national identity and culture (Hage 1998, p. 236).

The early years of multiculturalism

In 1972, the Whitlam Labor government replaced the conservative Liberal government. Al Grassby, the first Minister for Immigration in that government, was a colourful character who was easily remembered by every participant in my research interviews[10]. He gave a speech in 1973 entitled *A Multi-Cultural Society for the Future*, which provided the ideological foundation of what later emerged as multiculturalism. Grassby identified a theory originating from the United States of 'Permanent ethnic pluralism', which accommodated the recognition of cultural pluralism as a permanent feature (Stratton 1999, p. 166).

By the mid-1970s, the Whitlam Labor government had put in motion a process that seemed unavoidable. In 1975, the *Racial Discrimination Act* made 'it unlawful to discriminate on the grounds of race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origins' (Jayasuriya *et al.* 2003, p. 209; Stratton 1999, p. 179). The changes that the Whitlam government introduced however, had little impact on the number of non-Europeans arriving in Australia at the time because the immigration intake had also been reduced (Castles *et al.* 1992, p. 60; DIMIA 2003a).

The conservative Fraser government came into office in 1975 and increased the number of immigrants from non-European countries (DIMIA 2003a). In 1978, the government commissioned a review of immigration policy which resulted in the Galbally report titled *Evaluation of Post-Arrival Programs and Services*. The report established cultural

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[10] I discuss how my study participants remember Grassby in Chapter 4.

identity and equality as the settlement needs of migrants and made proposals that centred on the delivery of welfare funding to immigrant groups. This appealed to Labor Party ideology. It was also acceptable to the conservative government because the proposals limited welfare to helping migrants towards self-reliance. Because of bi-partisan support for multiculturalism, there was little public debate or resistance to the measures being introduced (Jayasuriya *et al.* 2003, p. 210; Jupp 1991, pp. 140-2; Stratton 1999, p. 178).

Stratton argues that the intention of the 1978 Galbally report was to continue to assimilate migrants into Australian society. Multiculturalism shifted liberal thinking by replacing the White Australia policy's management of racial diversity with the management of cultural diversity, and as such white hegemony continued (Stratton 1999, pp. 179, 82-83).

Multiculturalism moves on

Labor returned to government in 1983 with Bob Hawke as Prime Minister. By then the principles introduced by the Galbally report were well established. Within the Labor Party however, there were factions that wanted multiculturalism to move from the Liberal government's emphasis on 'culture and self-help towards a Labor emphasis on social issues' (Jupp 1991, p. 143). In 1986, the government made multiculturalism a direct concern of the Prime Minister and cabinet by creating the Office of Multicultural Affairs (OMA) within the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet rather than the Department of Immigration (DIMIA 2003b).

In 1988, an advisory committee on immigration produced their findings in what became known as the *Fitzgerald Report*. The report emphasised taking an economic rationalist approach, suggesting that more focus needed to be placed on getting skilled migrants. It also criticised the implementation of multiculturalism. This criticism was directed at the hostility, doubt and confusion that had emerged in the public mind during the 1980s regarding changes to immigration policy (Jayasuriya *et al.* 2003, p. 211; Jupp 1991, pp. 144-5). It went on to suggest that many Australians still held on to the ideals of assimilation.

At the same time as multiculturalism was being implemented, an apparently more confronting change was taking place. Starting in 1978, more Indochinese refugees were permitted into Australia than had ever been encountered before. Asian immigration had increased from 15 per cent per annum in 1976-77, to 39 per cent in 1987-88. Between 1978 and 1981 over 69,000 Asians had entered Australia. This resulted in 'public opinion

on refugee entry [being] at best divided and in all probability for the most part hostile'
(Castles *et al.* 1992, pp. 70-1, 170).

In 1988, *The National Agenda for a Multicultural Australia* was released as a statement
of government policy on multiculturalism (DIMIA 2003b). The agenda identified three
characteristics:

- cultural identity, the right of all Australians, within carefully defined limits, to
  express and share their individual cultural heritage, including their language and
  religion;
- social justice: the right of all Australians to equality of treatment and opportunity,
  and the removal of barriers of race, ethnicity, culture, religion, language, gender
  or place of birth;
- economic efficiency: the need to maintain, develop, and utilize effectively the
  skills and talents of all Australians, regardless of background (Jupp 1991, p. 151).

The first two characteristics restated previous policy. The third characteristic was new
and reflected the recommendation of the Fitzgerald report to shift the emphasis away
from welfare to an economic rationalist approach (Zubrzycki 1991, pp. 134-5). The
agenda also established limits that were intended to avoid problems arising from
conflicting value systems. These limits applied to all Australians, and included: an
obligation towards a 'unifying commitment to Australia', acceptance of the 'basic
structures and principles of Australian society' (for example law, democracy and so on),
and a reciprocal obligation 'to accept the right of others to express their views and values'
(Jupp 1991, pp. 151-2). The emphasis had shifted away from cultural diversity as an end
in itself to a pragmatic economic and civic harmony model.

Productive Diversity was a discourse that had emerged from the economic rationalist
ideology of the Labor government since 1983 (Hage 1998, p. 128). Paul Keating who
replaced Bob Hawke as Prime Minister in December 1991 continued this discourse. In a
speech that he gave in October 1992, Keating identified multiculturalism as a 'potentially
huge national economic asset' to be taken advantage of (Keating cited in Hage 1998, p.
129). To this end, the Labor governments between 1983 and 1996 adopted a pro-Asian
posture, which attempted to locate Australia as being *in* Asia; an idea Keating actively
promoted. Keating is quoted as saying, 'although it is sometimes argued that Australia's
democratic traditions presented an obstacle to closer association with our Asian
neighbours, there was growing political liberalisation in the region and, for this reason
'we're not an aberration but a natural fit'' (Sydney Morning Herald cited in Castles *et al.*
1992, pp. 209-10). This discourse required Australians to see Asia in a new political light
(Hage 1998, p. 142).

Castles *et al.* contrast the shifting images that Australian governments have produced regarding immigration between 1955 and 1988. In 1955, a stenographer from Yorkshire was publicised as the millionth migrant since the Second World War. According to the Department of Immigration, she was selected as a 'person from the United Kingdom… to emphasize the policy under which approximately half the intake are British migrants' (cited in Castles *et al.* 1992, pp. 169-70). The symbolism associated with the image of this person was 'to allay public fear of… Asian immigration' (1992, p. 170). In 1988, this symbolic image was completely reversed as the person selected to represent the two-millionth migrant was a 'presentable, articulate Asian, and a woman' (1992, p. 170).

In 1996, the Liberal coalition government of John Howard dismantled the Office of Multicultural Affairs (OMA) absorbing it into the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs (DIMIA) (DIMIA 2003b). They also dismantled the Bureau of Immigration, Multicultural and Population Research (BIMPR) and cut-back the Migration Program (Jayasuriya *et al.* 2003, p. 213). In 1997, the National Multicultural Advisory Council (NMAC) was appointed to review multicultural policy for the following decade (DIMIA 2003b). In 1999, the government released a *New Agenda for Multicultural Australia* based on the report of the council (DIMIA 2003a).

In 2000, the government created the *Council for Multicultural Australia* (CMA) to help them implement the *New Agenda* and 'raise awareness and understanding of Australian multiculturalism' (DIMIA 2003b, 2003a). In 2003, they released their current policy in a statement titled *Multicultural Australia: United in Diversity*, which updated and reaffirmed the *New Agenda*. The government's future directions included community harmony, access and equity, and a *Productive Diversity Program* (DIMIA 2003b). I would suggest that the *New Agenda*, and what followed it, did little more than confirm previous policy.

From 1999 to 2001, new *Border Protection Acts* were introduced, and existing migration legislation amended to tighten restrictions against refugees. In 2001, the Australian government refused entry to refugees who had been rescued by the Norwegian freighter, MV *Tampa* (Jayasuriya *et al.* 2003, pp. 213-4). These actions contrast poorly with the 1996 *Parliamentary Statement on Racial Tolerance* that reaffirms the government's support of racial respect and non-discrimination (DIMIA 2003b). Ang interprets Howard's border protection legislation as an attempt to preserve the 'Australian way of life' by keeping 'the space of the nation for 'us', against undesirable others' (2003, pp. 63-5).

It is unlikely that the Australian government would intentionally make any overt statement that would link racial discrimination with their actions regarding refugees. However, these actions could be perceived that way. DIMIA continues to provide grants under a program named the *Living in Harmony Initiative* with a view to '[taking] a stand against racism, prejudice and intolerance… [and] put into practice the best of traditional Australian values – justice, equality, fairness and friendship' (DIMIA 2004). However, the way in which refugees are being treated appears as injustice, inequality, unfair and certainly unfriendly.

These contradictory governmental processes started before the Howard government. I would suggest they started around 1991, but gathered momentum in 1999. In 1991, Gerry Hand, the Labor Minister for Immigration introduced mandatory detention for asylum seekers. The Port Hedland Detention Centre was opened the same year (Jayasuriya *et al.* 2003, p. 212). Since then, both parties in government have built upon the rhetoric of multiculturalism, refining the Fitzgerald report's recommendations. Simultaneously they have made policy decisions that treat refugees as second-class world-citizens. It is hardly surprising that some Australians may be confused when asked to consider their own position towards multiculturalism, immigration, refugees and other ethnic groups.

In the next chapter, I will examine non-government influences that have helped shape popular images of Australia.

Chapter 3   Current and historical influences - popular images

This chapter examines the popular discourses and the webs of meaning that inform the construction of Australian identity, nationalism and multiculturalism (cf. Kapferer, J. 1996, p. 33). I start with a discussion of what is different about the notion of cultural identity in Australia in comparison to other countries. This is followed with a historical account of the popular images that were constructed up until the last quarter of the twentieth century. I then discuss the popular images that have contributed to public debate in the recent era of multiculturalism and changing immigration patterns. I conclude the chapter by examining the institutions and technologies of cultural transmission that have helped shape Australia's national identity.

The specificity of Australian national identity

Both Australia and the USA are pluralist societies in that they are comprised of people of many different cultural backgrounds. Australia has embraced the notion of multiculturalism as government policy. They have also attempted to make it a national ideology that values cultural heterogeneity. By contrast, the USA has not embraced multiculturalism as policy, preferring instead to hold on to an imagined homogenous identity. These different approaches are a result of the different ways that the two nations historically constructed their national identities. Australia's identity emerged from *cultural* connections to its earlier settler past. USA's national identity however, was explicitly constructed using political *ideological* means (1998, p. 137).

From the beginning, Americans imagined a new and unique national identity, breaking links with their European origins. As a result, Americans do not associate cultural distinctiveness with their national identity. It is possible for Americans to have two identities, an ideological national one and a cultural/ethnic one. Hyphenated cultural-national identities such as African-American become possible such that being American does not require the adoption of any specific cultural identity (1998, pp. 141, 4, 6). Americans therefore have no need to accommodate ethnicity within their notion of national belonging.

Australians however, do embody ethnicity and cultural identity within national identity. Australia formed its national identity over time, without any distinct break from British culture such as a war of independence (Stratton & Ang 1998, p. 147). Australia's national

identity was formed through processes of cultural dominance and practices of racial exclusion, which I describe below.

Historical images of Australian identity

Early British colonialists in Australia found themselves geographically removed from their *mother country* in what they claimed was unoccupied land (Ang 1999, p. 191). But rather than adopting an inclusionary perspective towards other nations in the region, early settlers constructed a fantasy that Australia was a country to be occupied only by the white race. They created a colonial society that transferred an imagined British culture into the spatial identity of the new colony. This resulted in a feeling that they were a nation constantly under threat from invasion by Asian countries. Consequently, racial and spatial anxiety drove early Australians to maintain a strong connection with Britain whilst keeping Asia at arms length (1999, pp. 192-3; Ang 2003, pp. 54-6; Stratton & Ang 1998, p. 140).

As early as the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, colonial elites such as Joseph Banks, Sir John Young, and Wakefield were pushing to bring cheap Asian labour into Australia. In the 1830s, pastoralists west of the Blue Mountains in New South Wales brought in indentured labourers from Asia. This ended in 1854 when Henry Parkes recommended to the Legislative Council that this practice should stop because of an expected stream of workers from Britain (de Lepervanche 1984, pp. 37, 47). In 1853, the first Chinese workers arrived in Victoria to work the gold mines. They reached a peak in 1858-59 when they represented a sixth of the adult male population. In 1888, public and union pressure forced the Victorian government to refuse entry to Chinese passengers on the *Afghan* who were carrying fraudulent papers. Responding to public perception that the non-white population had grown disproportionately, the colonial governments passed acts which discriminated against the entry of further coloureds, in particular the Chinese[11] (de Lepervanche 1984, pp. 51-2; Jayasuriya *et al.* 2003, p. 201; Jones, G. W. 2003, pp. 201-2). The population of Australia grew dramatically between 1861 and Federation. However, because of racial discrimination it was was ninety six per cent white (Jones, G. W. 2003, p. 111). Through the eyes of Australia's first Prime Minister, Barton, these people saw themselves as part of 'the zenith of the British Empire and of the belief that the British, as a self-proclaimed superior race, were born to rule' (2003, p. 112).

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[11] I discuss this legislation in Chapter 2.

To the elites amongst the early settlers, Australia was just another part of the empire (Hage 1998, p. 193). Later Australians were torn between holding on to their British heritage and an emerging desire to develop a distinct Australian identity (Stratton & Ang 1998, p. 140). In 1893, Henry Parkes said, 'We are all one family, all one blood, all one faith' (cited in Cochrane 1995, pp. 2, 6). He was expressing a widely accepted view that embodied,

> three inter-related notions of race solidarity... – at the widest level was the idea of Caucasian kinship which underpinned the principle of 'White Australia'; next was the… concept of Anglo-Saxonism which advocates of homogeneity used interchangeably with 'Britishness'; and lastly there was the idea of the emerging Australian… (Cochrane 1995, p. 2).

In the late nineteenth century, nationalists sought a unique identity, an *Anglo-Australian* race based on a British heritage (Stratton & Ang 1998, p. 148). The image of the Australian type that emerged from then until 1945 was one of the working 'battler' who valued the ideals of 'mateship' and a 'fair go' (Castles *et al.* 1992, p. 8). This image however, ignored the inequality evident in the nineteenth century which featured class struggle. Labour organizations flourished in the boom economy that followed the Gold Rush, and well into the twentieth century. During this period, the capitalist-class demanded that immigrant workers be made available to boost their profits. The working-class resisted, fearing dilution of their employment opportunities. An example of resistance occurred at 'Kalgoorlie in 1934 [when] several people were killed in 'anti-dago' riots' as employers attempted to employ cheap labour and strike-breakers (1992, p. 8). In 1879, trade unions voted to 'condemn any importation of Chinese workers' (de Lepervanche 1984, p. 51), and the Australian Workers Union would not admit coloured labourers as members without Executive resolution until 1972. By 1919, discrimination was entering into industrial awards with Queensland placing restrictions on where coloured canecutters may be employed (de Lepervanche 1984, p. 69).

The notion of a dominant white race under threat informed how Australians conceived of their unified but exclusionary national identity well into the twentieth century. Second World War responses to the Pearl harbour bombing and the Japanese occupation of Singapore and Malaysia were couched in racist terms. General Sir Thomas Blamey is quoted as saying: 'Fighting Japs is not like fighting normal human beings. We are not dealing with humans as we know them. We are dealing with something primitive' (cited in Jones, G. W. 2003, p. 114).

Australia's preference for insularity and homogeneity resulted in 'a determined commitment to provincialism and anti-cosmopolitanism' (Ang 2003, p. 58). This is why

Australians created a mythology around the image of the bushman hero, even though Australia has nearly always been a mostly urbanised country (Ang 2003, pp. 58-9 citing Walker). The symbolic portrayal of the bush and people living on the land has been a cohesive force as a source for both populist and governmental values (Castles *et al.* 1992, p. 9).

Following the Second World War, government policy changed to accommodate non-British European immigrants through a process of assimilation into the notion of whiteness[12]. The governments of the late 1940s and 1950s were successful in selling the idea of an expanded conceptualisation of white Australia with little public debate evident (Hage 2003, p. 56). Hage attributes the silence to an 'agreement between quality newspapers, business and politicians not to activate [the subject] either politically or as a subject of debate' (2003, pp. 63-4).

Images in an era of multiculturalism and changed immigration patterns

Stratton and Ang argue that the introduction of multiculturalism as policy should be seen as a change in thinking about Australian national culture. A change away from a dominant culture which is racist and exclusionary to one that welcomes ethnic minority cultures as non-threatening (1998, pp. 154, 6). This construction of national identity however, is a political ideal that has encountered some opposition and a great deal of debate.

The discourse of enrichment

A frequent claim made by people with a cosmopolitan disposition is that cultural diversity enriches our lives. The New South Wales Premier, Bob Carr 'had a good discussion with a Somali-born taxi driver recently about his experience with meditation and crystals. I was just struck by the comfortable cosmopolitan air that he was able to bring to the task' (Carr cited in Hage 1998, p. 118). This statement exhibits an enrichment discourse whilst maintaining white Australia's dominance of immigrant cultures. Folkloric cultural practices such as food, music and dance are enjoyed by Anglo-Australians as objects but not as equal contributions in diversity. Hage demonstrates a contradiction that arises as a result. He gives the example of a bank manager who moved to Marrickville to enjoy the areas cultural diversity. This person contradicted his own reason for moving by

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[12] I discuss this policy more in Chapter 2.

complaining that migrants had ruined the architecture of the area (1998, pp. 117-23, 28, 39).

Rituals, traditions and icons under challenge

Bruce Kapferer explains what is at risk when rituals and tradition are threatened. He argues that '[nationalism] makes culture into an object and a thing of worship' (1988, p. 209). In one sense, objects of culture are constructions, an invention. However, meaning is also derived from tradition and myth.

> They are chosen because of what they distil ontologically; that is they make sense and condense a logic of ideas which may also be integral to the people who make the selection although hidden from their relative consciousness (1988, p. 211).

Rituals and traditions of national culture are an expression of what it means to be Australian. They are constructed within the historical context of Australia's predominantly white British-European mix. In recent times, these traditions have been challenged by the assertion of an ideology of cultural diversity. I explore here some important Australian symbols of culture that stand in a contradictory position to multicultural policy.

Anzac Day is a ritual that puts 'the living members of the national community in touch with the dead, merging both into a community that, rendered as immemorial and immortal, acquires a reality apart from its ritual performance' (Foster 1991, pp. 242-3). Kapferer says of that performance that it 'is ingrained with an egalitarian and Christian ontology that is deeply part of the historical world out of which it was formed' (1988, p. 211). The Anzac tradition remains today an intrinsic part of Australian national identity. It serves as a metaphor for an identity that is situated in opposition to others (1988, pp. 212, 5).

Another icon of tradition that has been challenged by multiculturalism is Australia's national anthem. Judith Kapferer argues that '[the] sacralizing of any nation is well illustrated by its national anthem' (1996, p. 14). In 1984, Australia replaced the British anthem *God Save the Queen* with *Advance, Australia Fair*. The other main contender for the anthem was *Waltzing Matilda*, which stirred up images of a bush oriented past, of a jolly swagman, an Australian vagabond hero. Australia's British heritage was brushed aside by replacing the British anthem with an Australian one that did not emphasise past tradition. Indeed, the lyrics of the new anthem were modified to remove reference to 'Britannia rules the waves', part of Australia's imperial past (1996, p. 15).

A surviving icon of Australian belonging is the Australian flag. However, it too has come under scrutiny. It still contains the Union Jack in the corner, which symbolises Australia's connection to its British past (Kapferer, B. 1988, p. 209). Little progress has been made to reach agreement for a new design, despite the fact that there have been many attempts to have it replaced by 'Australians of non-British descent or those with republican inclinations, who find the Union Jack's inclusion in the banner offensive' (Kapferer, J. 1996, p. 16).

The Bicentennial celebrations in 1988 attempted to focus on Australia's newly defined multicultural national identity under a slogan of 'Living Together' (Castles *et al.* 1992, p. 132). This attempt however, 'saw ideological state apparatuses at full stretch in attempting to incorporate the ethnic identities of all citizens within the totalizing framework of a dominant Australian identity' (Kapferer, J. 1996, pp. 165-6). The Bicentennial Authority set itself the objective of creating a celebration that would 'recognize the multicultural nature of modern Australia' (cited in Castles *et al.* 1992, p. 5). The public image actually created by the Authority was one that embraced *multicultural* in accord with the folkloric meaning of the term: 'song and dance, food and folklore' (Castles *et al.* 1992, p. 6). Nothing in the celebration spoke of living together in diversity in any sense of a national ideology. The Bicentennial Authority did everything they could to accommodate diverse interests. So much so, that it would be difficult to determine just what national identity the nation was celebrating for its Bicentennial.

The concept of an *Australian way of life* is also challenged by cultural diversity. The Fitzgerald committee advising on immigration policies in 1988, asked some Australians what they thought was the kind of Australia they wanted. The responses they gave illuminate some common myths of Australian national character. They responded with,

> … freedom … equality … space … easy-going … larrikin behaviour … uncomplicated habits … peaceful history … social harmony … democratic … individualistic … loyal … egalitarian … intolerant of oppression …secular … fearful of division… and unrest (Fitzgerald report cited by Kapferer, J. 1996, p. 255 and summarised by myself).

Judith Kapferer argues that these descriptions hide real tensions and hostilities and represent more 'the appearance of social harmony, [than] its substance' (1996, p. 256). I would add though that these descriptions are also positive ideals that the respondents potentially saw as being at risk.

Australia has become increasingly obsessed by its national image overseas. When bidding for the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games, much was made in the media of how Australia found it necessary to shape its image overseas as that of a multicultural society (Hage

1998, pp. 148-9). That message was received by Australians as well as people in other countries. Australians take a great deal of pride in the image of themselves as an egalitarian sporting nation, and the Olympic Games is an important international sporting event. Cultural diversity tends to weaken any national identity that remains a competitive feature of international sport. As an example of how important nationalism is to sport, consider how national pride was offended when Australian trumpeter, James Morrison inadvertently played an old Spanish republic anthem at the Davis Cup between Spanish and Australian finalists in November 2003. The Spaniards in the crowed booed, and Spanish dignitaries spoke of their 'absolute indignation at the offence' (Hinds 2003).

New Right ideology and popular discourses

It is hardly surprising that Australia has endured turbulent public debate regarding multiculturalism and immigration. Australia has relatively more overseas-born residents than any other country in the western world, including Canada and the United States (Jones, G. W. 2003, p. 122). Australia's changing demographic is important in the debate about immigration policy because the historical notion of a white Australia defending itself against threatening others has been completely reversed.

Whilst immigration was significantly expanded after the Second World War, it was done to populate the country with Europeans who would be assimilated into the culture of white Australia. This was done with a view to keeping Asians out. Australians did not substantially feel the effect of any policy change until 1976 when Vietnamese refugees began to arrive in large numbers (Ang 1999, pp. 194-6; Jayasuriya *et al.* 2003, p. 209). The number of people in Australia of Asian birthplace rose from 167,000 in 1971 to 665,000 in 1991 (Jones, G. W. 2003, p. 120). White Australian perceptions were challenged further when the Hawke and Keating Labor governments of the 1980s-90s promoted a closer engagement with the Asian region for predominantly economic reasons (1999, pp. 194-6).

Intellectual resistance - Blainey

Australian historian Geoffrey Blainey, gained widespread notoriety in 1984 after the press publicised his criticism of Australian immigration policy. He has however, denied being a member of the New Right (Castles *et al.* 1992, p. 132). Notwithstanding his denial, he was branded as racist by some people because they believed he wanted Australia to return to the days of the White Australia policy. Blainey articulated a re-emerged anti-Asian consciousness for which he believed he had popular support

(Kapferer, B. 1988, pp. 183-4). But Blainey drew on more than just racism. He was motivated by a 'logic of egalitarianism' that was 'harnessed in the service of the construction of nationalist identity' (1988, p. 185). This logic embodied the idea of mateship, which the Anzac tradition holds as a natural state of society. Nationalism based on the unity of mateship is dependent on similarity. This logic implies social harmony would be at risk if social difference is introduced that challenges Australian mateship. Blainey uses this logic when he argues 'that Chinese, as the symbolic Asians of Australian history, were radically different from the others and that the difference they embodied was the general cause of the strife' (cited in Kapferer, B. 1988, p. 190). Blainey was appealing for a return to a simpler time when it was possible for the country to 'rally the nation around a cohesive national pride' (Castles *et al.* 1992, p. 129).

Political discourses of outcry - Hanson

> By the Keating era [of the early 1990s] a new kind of nationalism was being promoted which celebrated ethnic diversity, favoured a republic, emphasised Australia's role as a part of Asia, and tended to denigrate parochial Australian values and living patterns… (Jones, G. W. 2003, p. 116).

Keating proposed an extension of the reach of Australian egalitarianism, tolerance, and democracy to include peoples of over 150 ethnic background (Kane 1997, p. 561). He was also attempting to reshape the meaning that Australians had of these values. Some conservative elements of Anglo-Australian society reacted to this change by calling for a return to Australian traditionalism.

A new wave of anti-Asian sentiment was sparked in 1996 by Pauline Hanson as an independent in Federal Parliament. The following year she formed the One Nation party (Jayasuriya *et al.* 2003, p. 213; Jones, G. W. 2003, p. 117). In her maiden speech in parliament she said,

> I believe we are in danger of being swamped by Asians… They have their own culture and religion, form ghettos and do not assimilate. Of course, I will be called racist but, if I can invite whom I want into my home, then I should have the right to have a say in who comes into my country (cited in Ang 1999, p. 189).

She was lamenting a loss of Anglo dominance. Both Hage and Ang argue that Hanson claims to have a right to say who comes into Australia and she does this by resurrecting racist feelings (Ang 1999, p. 190; Hage 1998, p. 186). In this discourse, Hanson expresses a concern that Asians do not assimilate into 'the Australian way of life'. Ang describes this as anxiety, which she associates with past colonial concerns with race and space. She suggests we need to focus on this spatial/racial logic, which says Australia was settled as

a white country for white people, to understand the New Right conservatism that we are experiencing (1999, p. 191; Ang 2003, p. 53).

Much of what Hanson said was about Australia's policy towards race, and not necessarily an expression of her own feelings. She drew popular support from the rural poor still living in the bush and used valorised images of Australia as a provincial country. It is by supporting such images that she emphasises her opposition to multiculturalism. She articulates her opposition by standing for the notion of *one nation* which expresses her anxiety over the loss of a homogenous national identity (Ang 2003, p. 59). Hanson sees the current decline as an aberration rather than as something that cannot be reversed. She articulates a desire to regain dominance through a discourse of *the mainstream*, a term that she uses in her speeches and writing to denote a natural 'discourse of a majority that is not being taken into consideration' (Hage 1998, pp. 225-6).

John Howard became Prime Minister in 1996, the same year that Hanson delivered her maiden speech to parliament (Jayasuriya *et al.* 2003, p. 213). He welcomed the arrival of Hanson and One Nation as 'a new era of free speech' (Jones, G. W. 2003, p. 118). In 1988, Howard, as the leader of the opposition in parliament, signaled the end of bipartisan agreement by publicly criticising immigration policy and calling for a reduction in the Asian intake (Jayasuriya *et al.* 2003, p. 212). He coined the term *One Australia*, to emphasise that cultural diversity should observe respect for Australia's institutions and values. He reserved the right for Australia to determine its immigration policy in a way that would preserve social harmony (Castles *et al.* 1992, p. 172; Inglis 1991, p. 24; Jupp 1991, pp. 144, 6). Howard's successor, Hewson, elaborated on this in *Australians Speak: Australia 2000*, arguing that Australia wanted to be 'a united country again' (cited in Jamrozik *et al.* 1995, p. 102). Jones argues that when Howard became Prime Minister, he recognised the discomfort that some Australians were experiencing because of the Keating era of denigration of traditional values and living patterns (2003, p. 115). The observations about Howard's early responses to multiculturalism would lead us to believe that the current government opposes multiculturalism. However, there are contradictory governmental processes that have emerged during the 1990s and remain with us today. The Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs (DIMIA) still actively promotes multiculturalism, as is evident in the department's name[13]. I would argue that

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[13] I discuss this contradiction further in the context of government strategies regarding refugees in Chapter 2.

the government's contradictory position on immigration and multiculturalism has left the Australian public with no clear vision regarding immigrant groups.

Migrant labour force

Immigrants in the workforce have a long history in Australia. Above, I discuss early colonial opposition to non-white workers. I also discuss elsewhere how, the government brought immigrants into the country to boost the workforce for the purposes of economic restructuring after the Second World War[14].

The encouragement of labour migration to meet short term economic interests has been a policy of many countries over several centuries (Castles *et al.* 1992, pp. 8, 11). Up until the 1970s, migrant labour in Australia usually received unskilled work and were considered by many to be 'factory fodder' (Castles 1993, p. 50). Since the 1970s the situation has become more complex with many migrants coming to occupy skilled, and in some cases middle class occupations (1993, pp. 50-1). Today, skill rather than race is important to many industries in Australia. This change has been supported by government economic policies that favour leveraging immigration and diversity to meet labour needs. The employment of large numbers of Indian IT professionals and East Asian business people in recent years are examples of this change (Ang 2003, pp. 64-5).

The Hawke Labor government elected in 1983 started a process that changed the image of workers in Australia. They were confronted with the trivialisation of the heroic person – the Aussie battler. It is inevitable that some Anglo-Australians have seen the reversal of their dominance in employment and social mobility in negative terms. The Fitzgerald committee's report in 1988 alluded to a division in public opinion on this subject. Governments and business interests generally want immigrants with specific skills. Individual workers however, argue that it makes no sense to bring people in when jobs are scarce (Kapferer, J. 1996, p. 256). The latter response is often expressed in racial terms reminiscent of the opposition that coloured workers encountered in the past (1998, p. 212).

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[14] I discuss the governments' role in each of these circumstances in Chapter 2.

On being swamped

A frequent theme in popular discourse about immigration has been a concern for space, and the capacity that Australia has for accommodating future population growth whilst preserving national identity.

Ang (2003, p. 65) links this concern with a desire to preserve the culture of the Australian way of life. Sydney's lifestyle has traditionally been associated with families living in houses erected on large suburban blocks of land. Population growth has placed pressure on Sydney, and it has grown outward into geographically limited space. New homes are being built on smaller blocks of land. An article appearing in the *Sydney Morning Herald* in March 2002 reported on how voters associated their concern for 'shrinking space' with 'immigration and border protection issues' (cited in Ang 2003, p. 65).

The argument over immigration and space is not just about how many but also of what type. Ang argues that Australians perceive not only how many are arriving, but also what type – Asian. The Howard government's stance towards border protection demonstrates a fortress mentality that may be motivated more by a desire to preserve the Australian way of life than keeping Australia secure. Howard is keen to boost Australia's population with skilled migrants who are classified as being more likely to integrate with Australia's way of life. Refugees arriving unannounced by boat would seem to not fit this criteria (Ang 1999, p. 200; 2003, pp. 64-5).

Ang provides a recent example of anxiety that was expressed over the swamping of our schools by Asians. Sydney Boys High is a selective school that has a large alumnus of prominent white male Australians. A committee of these people issued a statement, which mentioned that the school's year seven enrolments were 90 per cent Asian. Their concern was that the school's ethos was being undermined by demographic change and they wanted to change the entry criteria in a way that would favour descendents of the old alumni. This incident drew a great deal of criticism including one teacher who pointed out that the school had always attracted migrants. What had changed was the amount of space being occupied by Asian students. This was seen as a threat to the white Australian way of life in this public institution. The alumnus had a perception that the immigrants who enrolled in the past were from Europe, and that they integrated as white Australians (Ang 2003, pp. 67-9).

Concern for the number and type of immigrants was also a feature of Blainey's discourse in the 1980s (Kapferer, B. 1988, p. 190). Blainey believed immigration was endangering the nation, and he demonstrated his concern by producing evidence of local areas that

were losing their identity. He cites a letter from a resident of Cabramatta, which laments the suburb as 'becoming more and more like an Asian town' (Blainey cited in Kapferer, B. 1988, p. 191). Kapferer argues that Blainey is using an *arithmetic of nationalism* in which the logic of *multiplication of difference* suggests a nation is the sum of its individual people. This logic implies that '[nations] must multiply likeness, not difference, otherwise national identity is weakened' (1988, p. 191). Blainey used this logic when he produced the letter above expressing alarm over being swamped by Asians (1988, pp. 191-2). Whilst Blainey's argument is 'couched in the language of equality, equal rights and fair go', it ideologically expresses a desire to preserve a dominant national identity that has an unchanging cultural core (1988, p. 197).

Hage foregrounds the notion of space when he suggests that 'categories such as 'too many'… are primarily *categories of spatial management*' (1998, p. 38 emphasis in original). He argues that Australians are articulating their concern in nationalistic terms when they lament the presence of too many Asians in local space. They perceive of it as a national problem, and often express a desire to return to some imagined past. Hage quotes an *Aussie* 'garbage collector in Marrickville',

> [The] Vietnamese … They're sort of … overpopulating the place, you know. There's still a fair bit of Aussies around, like, but … it's not the same. I'd be lucky to get a can of beer at Christmas. The Vietnamese … well mate, … picking up garbage is not how it used to be, you know … people, like, they leave all sort of things without putting them in plastic bags … I tell you, it doesn't smell like Australia anymore around here … you know what I mean mate? (cited in Hage 1998, p. 39 ellipses in original and added)

This example illustrates a person lamenting the loss of something he considers a national Australian tradition. The ritual of leaving beer out for the garbage collector at Christmas is symbolic of traditional mateship that appears lost when the local neighbourhood is perceived as overrun with another ethnic group (1998, pp. 39-40).

The above argument may be seen as setting the limits for what may be tolerated. Hage argues that the notion of 'too many' is a reflection of the point at which the ability to control or manage national space becomes an individual's concern. He notes that this point differs between individuals and considers this their capacity for tolerance (Hage 1998, pp. 91-5, 112). However, how many is *too many* is an individual assessment. Price noted that very few localities had been exclusively monopolized by one ethnic group. The following statistics that he produced in 1991 confirm this view. All of these areas were shared by other groups. 'Arab speakers are only 12 per cent of the local government area of Canterbury… Vietnamese only 4.5 per cent of Fairfield… Greek speakers only 14 percent of Marrickville' (Price 1991, p. 159). Statistics however, are open to

interpretation. It is probable that there have been some demographic changes since Price's statistics were published. In July 2003, the *Sydney Morning Herald* reported that Birrell from Monash University had argued that Sydney had become divided because Australian-born residents were leaving high NESB[15] areas. The same newspaper article claims that Birrell's report has sparked a debate over whether or not there is a US style *white flight* from urban ghettos taking place. Birrell himself admits that 'it is difficult to ascertain the motives for the exodus' (Millett 2003).

Stephen Castles argues that the incidence of residential segregation along ethnic lines is in fact a 'contradictory phenomenon' (1993, p. 52). It occurs sometimes because immigrants want to form their own community for economic, social and cultural reasons. It also occurs due to processes of exclusion, racism and discrimination exhibited against them by the majority population. Some ethnic groups are forced into congregating by a *not in my backyard* attitude exhibited by the dominant Australian culture. The same dominant group then complains that ethnic groups do not assimilate because they deliberately congregate (1993, pp. 52-3, 9).

On being ethnic in the new millennium

Asians are not the only ethnic categories targeted by nationalist sentiment. Recently, people generically referred to as *Middle-Eastern* have also been included in the debate. Ethnicity has become a confused term as 'racism and anti-Muslim feeling have become conflated' (Jones, G. W. 2003, p. 126). *Muslim* people have been targeted as a generic *ethnic* category as reports of Lebanese Muslim gang rapes, asylum seekers and terrorism confuse a religious category with racial and cultural categories (2003, p. 126).

The recent focus on Middle-Eastern and Muslim as categories of otherness started around the time of the first Gulf War and reached a level of paranoia with the September 11 terrorist attack in New York. Muslims are now perceived by many as being just as undesirable as Asians were. 'According to this logic, Muslims are a community of people always predisposed towards crime, rape, illegal entry to Australia and terrorism' (Hage 2003, pp. 67-8). Reports of rape and other forms of crime have recently grabbed a great deal of media attention. This attention however may be painting an inaccurate picture. Jupp argued in 1991 that race riots and other forms of violent racial disharmony were not

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[15] Non-English speaking background.

a feature of the Australian social landscape and that more violence was common 'amongst unionists and radical youth than in ethnic communities' (1991, pp. 148-9). Castles *et al* argued similarly in 1992 that 'Australia is still comparatively a quiet place, at least compared to Belfast or New York, Jerusalem or Liverpool' (1992, p. 1). My concern however, is with the public's perception of such links. Some Australians, including some in the media, believe that there is an association between crime and immigration.

For example, Hage provides an account of two interviews with Sydney people from which he concludes that the scarf worn by Muslim women is a symbol of Islamic culture that is considered undesirable by some Australians. One of these people had 'torn the veil off a Muslim woman' and the other had wanted to (1998, p. 36). Both of these people articulated racial stereotyping using terminology like 'Muslims are dirty', 'Arabs are savages', 'They smell' and '… they're too dumb to understand', amongst other remarks (Hage 1998, pp. 36-7). Hage argues that a belief that Muslims are undesirable propelled the two to action because Muslims were seen as a danger to the perpetrators own well being. Hage links the notion of undesirability to the notion of space that I discussed above. He argues that the concept of *too many* is related to how many people of a given type are undesirable in a given territory (Hage 1998, pp. 37, 47).

Institutional and technological contributions to national identity

In this section, I briefly present a montage of images that have helped construct national identity through the eyes of various social institutions and technologies. My intention is to demonstrate how the agency of some moulds the perception of many in a core culture. Or as Larbalestier argues, how 'ideas of whiteness circulate in unexamined and unexpected ways in television, film and radio, and as part of our everyday experiences' (1999, p. 147).

The push of the Internet

Before examining traditional technologies, I want to refer to the Internet. Accessibility to the Internet is high in Australia as schools, tertiary education and libraries provide electronic facilities that most people may use. Web sites present both positive and negative messages related to Australian multiculturalism and immigration policy. Some present extreme points of views and others a more balanced argument. Some are official, such as the fact sheets produced by DIMIA (DIMIA 2003b, 2003a, 2004). Others are produced by political parties such as *One Nation* (Pauline Hanson's One Nation NSW

Division 2004). Non-government organisations such as the *Australian Made Campaign* (2004) are also on-line. The labour movement is represented through *LaborNet* (2004). Other web sites are produced by groups or individuals who just have something to say such as the *Union Against Multiculturalism* (2004) and the *Australian Nationalism Information Database* (2004). All of these sites have something to say about multiculturalism and immigration. Also, the major daily newspapers have web sites that produce articles, opinion pieces and letters to the editor that enter into the debate.

There are many other Internet related technologies such as chat rooms. What all of these technologies have in common is that their messages are limited to those audiences who actively seek the information they provide. Unlike other technologies such as radio or television, they will not change public opinion unless the public is inclined to read what they have to offer. This is not to say however that they do not influence public opinion since word of mouth and other methods such as advertising do bring this knowledge to the public's attention. However, Internet technologies tend to attract people into a community of like-minded people; that is they are *preaching to the converted*. The same could be said of other forms of media but to a lesser degree[16].

The popular press

The most frequently cited example of white Australian supremacy in print is *The Bulletin* magazine, which published articles opposing non-European immigrants from 1908 under the masthead slogan "Australia for the White Man". The editor, Donald Horne, finally dropped the slogan in 1960 (Ang 1999, p. 191; 2003, p. 54; de Lepervanche 1984, p. 73; Jayasuriya *et al.* 2003, p. 207; Jones, G. W. 2003, p. 113). Even before 1908, *The Bulletin* asserted that 'All white men who come to these shores – with a clean record – and who leave behind them the memory of the class-distinctions and religious differences of the old world … are Australian' ([1887] cited in Stratton 1999, p. 174).

Rural newspapers also promoted white supremacy in opposition to so called black and dark-skinned races. de Lepervanche describes how the *Richmond River Times* and *Richmond River Herald* discriminated against Indians working in the cane mills around the Clarence River during the 1890s (1984, pp. 86-7).

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[16] Analysis of the Internet as a social phenomenon is still relatively new. The social dimension of these technologies constantly changes as the technology changes.

Criticism of multiculturalism was common in the press during the 1980s. The *Quadrant*, *The Australian* and *The Bulletin* were all conservative publications typical of those in which Blainey and the New Right would express their opinions (Castles *et al.* 1992, p. 132; Jupp 1991, p. 144). An example of such criticism was written by Des Keegan and published in *The Australian* on September 9, 1986:

> If we do not do something we will continually see government surrendering to special interest groups like the ESL. Its clients routinely slaughter goat kids facing Mecca in living rooms in suburban Lakemba… (cited in Castles *et al.* 1992, p. 3)

Articles in mainstream daily newspapers can express the thoughts of people both supportive of and in opposition to multiculturalism and immigration policies – sometimes at the same time. The following article in the *Sydney Morning Herald* on May 5, 1987 read:

> Discrimination against women and immigrant workers remains deeply entrenched at Australia Post despite its equal employment opportunity policies… many workers believed that discrimination was necessary for the organization to function effectively (cited in Castles *et al.* 1992, p. 3).

Here we have a criticism of workers who discriminate against women and immigrant workers – note the term *despite*. We can assume that the generic *many workers* are the dominant Anglo-Australian worker community at Australia Post. The intent of the article is clearly to criticise discrimination. However, the message is soft and could reinforce discrimination suggesting it is commonplace or normal.

In 1994, Joan Sutherland publicly expressed her concern at having to get an Australian passport since she had only needed a British one in the past. She added her displeasure 'at the prospect of being interviewed by 'Indians and Pakistanis' at the post office to obtain her passport' (Hage 1998, p. 180). In October that year, the *Sydney Morning Herald* published a series of letters supporting her point of view. Some cynically suggested for example that in multicultural Australia one did not have the right 'to espouse our love and respect for our ancestors' homelands'; or 'she will now realise that the only race in Australia that one is allowed to insult and vilify with impunity are [sic] the British' (cited in Hage 1998, p. 180).

Movies, television and radio

Talkback radio in Australia contributes to the construction of public perceptions. However, caution should be used in determining just how much it shapes opinion. Murray Goot questions the extent to which it is representative of popular opinion, pointing out

that 'the audience for commercial talkback radio looks very like the audience that is most receptive to Hanson…' (Goot 1999, p. 220).

Hage provides an example of the type of racist discourse that talkback radio personalities engage in. He quotes Ron Casey, a radio celebrity in the 1980s, from his autobiography:

> Wait until the white-born Australian becomes the minority, mate, the world will be ours. We'll be able to do anything we like, but first of all we've got to get enough slopes in here so that we become the minority (cited in Hage 1998, p. 182).

This same person said:

> The older I get, the more rooted in the British traditions I seem to become. I suppose it's just a hang-up from those early days in Lismore – the Light Horse Brigade members always marching so proudly at the front of the Anzac Day march… (cited in Hage 1998, p. 200)

Despite what Casey says above, he claims to be not racist because he believed all people were equal (1998, p. 188).

Above, I discuss how late nineteenth century nationalists promoted British heritage as the basis for a unique Anglo-Australian identity. This created a paradox that persisted until at least the Second World War as is illustrated by the 1937 Ken G. Hall film, *It Isn't Done*. This comedy sends up 'the English toffs' giving 'the message that colonials are morally superior…' (Cochrane 1995, p. 12) This film illustrates our historical ambivalence between our Anglo-Saxonness and our unique Australian character.

Mainstream Australian movies continue to play a part in maintaining Anglo-Australian hegemony, even whilst appearing to accommodate cultural diversity. The movie *Strictly Ballroom* mixes a touch of Spanish culture into an Anglo-Australian setting. Similarly, *Death in Brunswick* explores the intersection of Greek and Anglo values amongst Greek-Australians. Both of these movies feature a white male hero who is opposing a dominant Anglo character. The hero is however, suppressing the same dominant characteristics himself, and accepts ethnic difference only on his own cosmopolitan terms (Hage 1998, pp. 201-2).

Statistics, polls and debate

Goot argues that we need to use caution when interpreting the results of polls. Like Blainey before her, Hanson's credibility rested on such results when she claimed that she spoke 'for the majority of Australians' (1997, p. 8). However, the interpretation of data presented by such polls is not necessarily an accurate reflection of public opinion.

> The mistakes made by polling organisations, the misleading nature of some of their data, and the ways in which they create opinion in the very process of measuring it,

are not only of academic concern. They affect the way public affairs are discussed in the media (and beyond), they influence judgements about which policies have been vindicated and which discredited, and they powerfully shape the sense of what is politically possible and what is not (1997, pp. 13-4).

During the 1980s, public opinion polls were conducted which were interpreted as indicating 'strengthening reactions against immigration from any source, against Asian immigration in particular and against official support for cultural variety' (Jupp 1991, p. 144). Castles *et al.* however, argue that the concern being expressed was not about ''Asian'-ness itself' but about 'the relation of immigration to unemployment' (1992, p. 131).

Demographic statistics are another form of data that is often misinterpreted. Demographer, Charles Price estimated in the late 1980s that the Australian population of Asian origin would reach 26 per cent within 50 years if the then current rate of Asian immigration continued. The media associated Price and his data with the concern expressed by people like Blainey (Castles *et al.* 1992, p. 170). However, Price also argued that 'the real task is… to ignore the great diversity that prevails on peripheral matters and to make sure that the over-arching framework of core values is sound, strong and flexible' (1991, p. 161). Also at a colloquium in 1995, Price 'argued that no other country had absorbed such a high proportion of migrants so successfully' (Kane 1997, p. 557). In other words, Price is producing statistical projections to argue for the continuing need to accommodate a changing Australian demographic, not as reasons to exclude 'Asians' as Blainey would have us do.

Novels and popular literature

A growing anxiety over fear of invasion had become a common theme in the literary fiction of the late nineteenth century (Ang 1999, p. 56). Such anxiety is hardly surprising when writers such a C.E.W. Bean in his 1913 book *Flagships Three* wrote of the superior qualities of Anglo-Saxon blood inherent in Australians. This image of superiority was so extreme as to compare it to the inferiority of other races such as French and American (Cochrane 1995, p. 15).

In the 1980s, popular authors were still expressing a similar point of view. Donald Horne, the editor of *The Bulletin* magazine in 1960, published his book *The Perils of Multiculturalism as a National Ideal* in 1983.

In conclusion, not only has the perception of many in a core culture been influenced by the media, the media itself has had to respond to changing influences.

In the next chapter, I will analyse the ethnographic data that my study revealed of a particular cohort's perception of Australia's popular image and its relationship to other cultures.

Chapter 4   A case study: new ethnographic data

My ethnographic study was of a particular cohort of six people residing in the Northern
Beaches of Sydney. In Chapter 1, I discuss the methodology that I used to study these
people and their demographic background. In this chapter, I discuss the data that I
collected during this study.

My interviews started with an exploration of the perceptions that the participants had of
multiculturalism, both as a concept and as government policy. I then turned my attention
to determining what they thought of New Right critics of multiculturalism and
immigration policy. These topics tended to preempt and lead the discussion easily to my
next line of enquiry which was to examine what they thought of the notion of Australian
culture, and how they perceived other cultures in relation to it.

Throughout the interviews, references were made by the participants to media reports,
which made my following topic a natural progression. I asked them what they thought of
the mass media's influence on their understanding of the subjects discussed earlier.

At different points in the discussion I asked the participants questions that related to
immigration policy to determine what their position was towards accepting people of
other cultures into the country. I analyse the answers in the subsequent discussion in this
chapter. I conclude with a discussion of how the participants reflected upon their own
answers.

Perception of government policy and multiculturalism

When asked how they would define multiculturalism, most participants spoke of
Australia accepting other cultures to some degree or another. In other words they accept
the ideology of cultural diversity. Peter[17] suggested 'I suppose it is where you try to get
different people from around the world and get them to live in one place'. Mary added,
'and all getting along'. Susan agreed, also adding that there is 'an acceptance of the
culture from which they come'. Cathy observed that they bring 'their culture, their habits,
their food styles, their backgrounds, together'. John had a more sophisticated perspective,

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[17] I use pseudonyms in this report to ensure the anonymity of individual participants.

he said 'the whole idea is not necessarily to absorb them and blend them into everything… [But] to accept them as a different culture… The fact that they are there, changes what is Australian in its own right'.

Paul had a sophisticated perspective very different to John's. Paul believed multiculturalism,

> Is to not entirely abandon our Anglo-Celtic origins but to be inclusive of all the other cultures and indeed the other peoples that have settled here… Sorting those folk who the government believes are fair-dinkum and not going to cause a lot of problems into the best country in the world.

What Paul suggested was that we accept cultural diversity but only to the point that it does not remove the dominant Anglo-Australian culture. He is describing a degree of assimilation expected of immigrants that most of the other participants also expressed later.

Having established what they thought multiculturalism was, I then asked the participants a series of questions to ascertain what they knew of the government's implementation of multiculturalism as policy.

Many were confused about when and how the government became involved in multiculturalism. I found it necessary to provide a brief historical account to those who needed it which jogged their memories of some events. All of the participants remembered Al Grassby, the first Minister for Immigration in the 1972 Whitlam government as a colourful character. Mary recollects, 'He used to wear bright ties.' Paul remembered him as 'a flamboyant character, wore loud clothes'.

John had a reasonable recollection of the history of multiculturalism. He described the White Australia Policy as discrimination that 'became internationally unsustainable'. He also remembered Al Grassby 'as being very different than all the politicians we had seen before'.

In summary, most of the participants had difficulty recalling the introduction of multiculturalism. Mary summarised the difficulty for many of them, 'I think most probably the age I was it wasn't… that high on my list of priorities… I didn't have the time.'

After establishing what the government had implemented, I asked each participant why they thought the government had done this.

Pressure from global opinion was a reason given by a number of participants. Paul suggested the United Nations refugee organisations may have had something to say. Peter had an interesting variation on the global opinion theme. He believed it was to demonstrate that we were not isolationists. He was suggesting that if we welcomed the world with open arms, then we would not be inviting them to 'have a go at [us]… The best way to keep the enemy at bay is to try to be nice to them…'

Another common reason given for why multiculturalism was introduced was because it was felt by some that public attitudes had changed. Paul expressed this 'an inclusivity of different cultures… that we should be doing the right thing because that has always been the Australian way'. Cathy emphasised a more cosmopolitan outlook saying that, 'as a country we were becoming involved with the world'. Susan thought multiculturalism was introduced to create harmony. However, she believed this was to be achieved by '[having] people assimilating into society'.

In summary, it appeared that most of the participants were ambivalent to the government's introduction to multiculturalism. They did not perceive its introduction as particularly relevant to their lifestyle and political choices during the 1970s and 1980s.

Perceptions of political opposition to multiculturalism

I then asked the participants what they thought of the views of political opponents to multiculturalism and immigration policies. I made particular reference to Geoffrey Blainey in the 1980s and Pauline Hanson in the 1990s.

Some of the participants didn't agree with Blainey or Hanson, considering their views to be either bigoted or extreme. Cathy found it interesting how Hanson brought extreme people 'out of the woodwork…' Susan added, 'Hanson was pushed in our face by the media all the time… I don't like extremes.'

Other participants however, took a less critical view than Blainey or Hanson. Peter was sympathetic to Hanson's 'point of view' without actually agreeing with her. He thought she may have been misinformed based on what she observed in Queensland. Mary gave Hanson credit for bringing into the open things people feared talking about because of political correctness. She added that her views may have been extreme five years ago but maybe not now.

John had clearly thought a lot more about Blainey and Hanson. Whilst he did not agree with their views, he was quick to suggest that what was happening was an emotional reaction to the impact globalisation had on the way people led their lives.

One common theme in the participants' reactions to Blainey and Hanson was none of them agreed with what these people stood for. None of them however, appeared to be well informed about their views either. They appeared to have a limited media constructed image of them as extreme people.

Personal and community effects of these policies

First, I asked the participants what social contact they had with people of different cultural backgrounds to help establish how they perceived the effect policies had on them. The experiences they described had a spatial dimension and differed depending on the domain of social encounter. Their experiences depended on whether the encounter was in the workplace, in the participants' local neighbourhood or when travelling.

They described considerably different experiences in the workplace. This was possibly a result of their type of industry or occupation. The person who worked in the family business had contact with the public, but she had a mostly Anglo-Australian clientele. On the other hand, the nurse/counsellor felt she had 'an average exposure'. She encountered people of different backgrounds often for short periods of time. However, as a colleague she was able to establish and maintain a friendship with 'a very nice person from Thailand'.

The participant who worked in the clothing manufacturing industry had the least positive perspective of contact with another ethnic group. She worked as a paymaster for a staff of 60, of which 40 were of non-Australian background. She complained that,

> The woman who was in charge of the machinists… was very quick to take advantage and abuse the system … She was Asian background… [And she would] try to get away with things…

The participant who worked in the information technology industry most of his life mentioned that he had considerable contact with 'people from different ethnic backgrounds'. He said, 'anywhere I have worked in the last 20 years it has been a case of [working with many different people]. I don't know why, maybe it is the industry'.

It seemed that those who encountered different ethnic groups at work, managed to keep a separation between those encounters and their private lives. The marine engineer said he did not have a lot of contact with people from other cultural backgrounds, even though he

worked with Chinese, Japanese and Filipino people on the ships. He considered that another part of his life saying 'back here no… I don't think about it'.

When I shifted the focus to their local neighbourhood, most participants observed as Mary did that 'out here we live in a cocoon'. Mary thought a Muslim woman wearing a veil in the local 'Woolies… sticks out like a sore thumb…' Paul observed that,

> We are the insular peninsula… We have very few folk on the peninsula from different ethnic background [other] than Anglo-Celtic… There are a few Chinese, but they are usually running restaurants, you don't see them very much on the street… I don't actually come into contact now with many people of Middle-Eastern origin for instance and only some Asians.

John considered his isolation from other cultures to have more to do with class, observing that all his neighbours were of the same socio-economic group.

In summary, all of the participants acknowledged having very little interaction with people of other cultures in the areas in which they lived.

Some participants had travelled locally and overseas. Mary had '[travelled] a fair bit and… come across many different people from other countries.' Paul had 'spent a little time in Darwin and [it had] a reputation [of] being entirely, completely multicultural…' However, none of the participants who had travelled gave any impression of engaging with the culture of another ethnic group.

When I asked if they had visited Chatswood, nearly all of them commented on the sizeable Chinese population there. However, most seemed ambivalent towards their presence. They either acknowledged them without saying any more or observed as Paul did, 'that is little China town isn't it?'

Cathy who had lived in Chatswood many years earlier observed that the 'racial mix' had changed over 30 years. She exhibited disinterest towards the Chinese population of the suburb, observing that the Asians were up near the railway line and she did not normally see them. Behind this apparently innocent observation there was a concern. She went on to say she had been house hunting with her son and they stayed away from places too close to Chatswood. She did not want to reflect on why.

I would argue that the way the participants describe their experiences of other cultures reflects what they expect from the encounter in different spatial domains. When their lifestyle is not disrupted, they take an ambivalent posture towards people of other cultural backgrounds. When they are confronted with difference at work, they deal with it there and leave it behind when they go home.

The low-levels of contact reported above, probably explain why the participants thought little had changed as a result of multiculturalism. When asked to describe activities that are different for them because of change, they were mostly only able to describe food consumption, art and other activities that may be described as folkloric. Only several of them considered this form of cultural enjoyment as an expression of cultural diversity enriching the community.

Five participants mentioned that multiculturalism had changed their experiences of food. Cathy thought multiculturalism hadn't changed her lifestyle much but she enjoyed the different foods it brought. Peter thought the changes gave 'a broader outlook on life'. However, when pushed further to describe change, he could think of none on a local level. John felt that by 'trying a lot of different foods and experiences… you do end up in the Leichhardts [sic] having Italian food, Chinese places having Chinese food, Turkey, you name it … you end up experiencing something of their culture'.

In summary, food consumption stood out to most participants as a changed experience. Some thought it was just an isolated experience whereas others thought it changed their perspective of Australia and other cultures.

Susan gave a view of change that described how multiculturalism and immigration had changed Anglo-Australian perspectives. She felt 'Europeans [had] brought us a deep appreciation of our own country and broadened how we live within this country' by writing about their experiences in Australia.

When I asked if things had changed much in the community rather than for them personally, all of them felt little had changed in their local community. They had very little more to say. Paul thought that he observed 'a drop in… standards.' John thought 'political correctness' and 'anti-discrimination laws' were making people behave differently. But he thought that did not have much to do with multiculturalism.

Mary thought things had changed in Sydney in general. But the only example she provided was Chinese New Year. She said, 'Twenty to thirty years ago I don't think we had a Chinese New Year.' Cathy suggested that you read about things like 'the Italians with their blessing of the fishing season'.

After some thought, Susan said, 'there are so many different activities that have been introduced by multiculturalism … the Chinese Dragon races… the woman who introduced belly dancing… teaching English to migrants … gosh, cooking, religion,

spirituality… sport. Right across the board, I would never have thought about it. Music, the arts!!!'

In summary, the discourse about change turned to the discussion of the folkloric aspects of cultural diversity enriching the community.

Burden on government social benefits

I asked the participants if they believed immigration policies had affected the burden on government social benefits. I asked this because they had not volunteered any views regarding historical discourses that immigrants in the past had unfairly manipulated the social benefits system.

There was no clear consensus on this question. Two disagreed with the notion that immigrants place an unfair burden on government social benefits. One suggested that they do cause a burden, but it is fair. The other two believed that they do place an unfair burden on government social benefits.

Paul didn't think they were an unfair burden saying, 'We are all bludgers, some of us'. John thought that the burden on social benefits is affected more by economic circumstances than by immigration policy. He thought most people immigrate to Australia to get jobs, not to go on the dole.

Mary gave mixed messages. She mentioned that the first thing immigrants do when they get here is to go on the dole and 'get a Medicare card, [which] is a drain'. However, she went on to argue that 'we are a pretty prosperous country… we should share'. She thought it was an equitable drain on resources; that is they don't get any more than other Australians.

Peter on the other hand was of the opinion that the first thing immigrants learnt when they arrived in Australia was how to collect their social welfare benefits. He had read that Turkish people were 'the greatest bludgers on the social system'. He felt immigrants are an unfair burden on the system because,

> The brothers and sisters are allowed to come here too… I don't think it happens now but it is not so long back where people come here, got the pension on back injuries…

Cathy expressed a similar concern. She pointed out that whilst all immigrants are hard-working they also want the benefits they believe they are entitled too.

These last two people believed that immigrants have a cultural propensity to take advantage of the social welfare system. The other people interviewed made no such association. They believed that all Australians are entitled to the benefits the state provides.

Satisfaction with changes

After exploring the changes that the participants thought may have taken place in Australian society, I examined how satisfied they were with these changes. First I asked if any of the changes brought about by multiculturalism had made their lives more pleasurable. Their responses were unenthusiastic with two saying it had little effect because of where they lived.

Only three identified their changed experience of food as a source of satisfaction. Cathy associated this experience with a better lifestyle indicating that improved cultural diversity was a positive influence. She didn't feel this was her experience of food in Britain which had a similar cultural mix.

Paul thought that changed perspectives of religion were for him more pleasurable. He emphasised the enrichment of our lives. He said that 'if we were not exposed to the teachings of Jesus Christ and Buddha and other prophets… we would be very, very sorry and bereft of spiritual persona'.

The former nurse mentioned how she valued a friendship she had made with a person from Thailand at work. She thought this had been made possible by multiculturalism.

Apart from the experiences mentioned above, the participants had very little to say about any satisfying effects caused by multiculturalism and changed patterns of immigration.

I then asked if any of the changes had made them dissatisfied. Three participants expressed dissatisfaction with violence and crime which they associated with ethnic groups. Peter expressed dissatisfaction with problems in the south-western suburbs that he thought were being 'kept under wraps'. Susan was also concerned with violence associating it with 'certain ethnic groups… not being assimilated into society and causing problems…' Cathy also expressed alarm with what she thought was the Lebanese people's propensity towards violence based on what she read in newspapers.

In summary, half the participants expressed no dissatisfaction with any changes that multiculturalism had brought about. The other half, were concerned about violence, but

not in their own neighbourhood. However, all of them generally exhibit concerns related to their perceptions of other cultures, which I discuss next.

Perceptions of Australian culture and the Other

Every participant believed that the concept *Australian culture* had meaning for everyday life, with some saying that it is important and relevant. Mary thought 'we should hold on to the way we are. In a way we are quite unique.' Some expressed some uncertainty as to what *Australian culture* is these days. However, they all described some common features.

Mary said, 'we are an open people… believe in a fair-go… more understanding of things'. Peter thought, 'one thing unique about Australians is they are friendly.' Susan thinks 'of the Australian person as being forthright, accepting… part of a strong open society, fair-dinkum.' Cathy thought about what it means to be Australian as 'the image of the Anzacs… the heroics … prepared to do something for the next person… not self-centred … very layback … mateship …' And John felt that Australians 'are relatively relaxed… not sort of driven… the mateship thing…'

In summary, the participants thought Australians exhibited qualities that bear a close resemblance to those that the Fitzgerald report said Australians considered as attributes of an Australian way of life (Fitzgerald report cited by Kapferer, J. 1996, p. 255). These are attributes that the respondents potentially saw as being at risk if cultural diversity was permitted to subsume the dominant culture.

Peter felt that there had been a decline in the Australian ideals of a fair-go and mateship. He thought multiculturalism caused this decline and suggested we should hold on to the security afforded by the comfort zone of the Australian culture. Paul similarly thought that there had been an unfortunate decline in attitude, which he described as 'I'm all right Jack'.

John was more direct saying 'that if you accept… there is an Australian culture' it is worth hanging on to because he liked Australia. He contrasted desirable Australian attributes with what he believed were undesirable attributes in Asian cultures.

> The mateship thing… Other cultures have… a get it while you can type of thing… Asian culture… has to be, somewhat more aggressive and they're not too concerned about the impacts that they're having. It's because, if they are not aggressive they disappear. It is very, very hard for them because of the stresses in their society… Australians aren't pushy… Indians and Chinese, a lot of those cultures are incredibly out for what they can get out of things… I think their cultural past… [has] been driven by economic conditions for a long, long time.

In summary, all of the participants identified an Australian culture which they thought worthy of protecting. Some articulated this feeling more strongly than others.

Other cultures as complementary or threatening

Some of the participants identified other cultures, and consequently multiculturalism, as a potential threat to Australian culture.

Mary said she didn't think other cultures actually threatened the Australian way of life. However, she expressed concern that people from Middle-Eastern countries do not want to assimilate like the Italians in the 60s and 70s did. When concluding the interview, she said that she hoped we could all 'live on the planet together' and gave the situation of unrest in Israel as something she hoped would not occur here. She wanted Australia to retain its 'dinkydi' characteristics.

Cathy felt Islam religion was a higher source of threat compared to Christian beliefs. She said 'I think religion is very divisive… a lot of problems with Islam… where religion is such a strong cruel belief, as opposed to our normal… Christian type belief'. She had a lot more to say about how she perceived Muslims as having a 'fanatical side', feeling that 'a lot of them… [would not] even contemplate any assimilation.' She concluded with a similar observation as Mary did about conflict in Israel, suggesting we do not want it here.

Susan felt that other cultures both complement and threaten Australian culture. But she emphasised the threat, indirectly suggesting assimilation as a solution. She said, 'there is that element that is threatening … we hear more and more of it in the papers with gangland shootings… I think the threat is there and it won't be corrected unless we have the children mixing on an ethnic level and growing up in a society where there are not the differences.'

The three people above believed assimilation to some degree was a desirable requirement for accommodation of other cultures in Australia. John was not so accommodating. He suggested that if he had to have other cultures, then they should assimilate. He argued that 'you would have to say that different cultures would threaten Australian way of life, because by introducing them they automatically are changing them'. He did not think this was a good thing because he grew up in Australia and likes it the way it is because it provides him with his comfort zone.

Paul saw any changes to Australian culture as complementary. He spoke positively about how Chinese parents in Australia were changing public attitudes towards learning by demonstrating through their children 'a scholarship based, achievement based ethos'.

An important theme that emerged from the interviews is that every participant believed that other cultures have different moral perspectives to Anglo-Australians.

Peter thought there was nothing wrong with getting different people living in one place. But he was concerned that the government allows people who are different into the country 'and [pretend] that everything is rosy on the surface.' He focused on Muslims as a cause for concern referring to newspaper reports of a rape case. He focused on 'their different religious backgrounds… [And] their attitude towards women… Some are quite primitive by our western standards'. Mary felt 'sorry for the teenage daughter, because [the father's] come from a background where he lives things a certain way and she's living life in the present… that girl's torn'. Susan would agree, thinking it immoral 'the way the Middle-Eastern, the Arabic male treats the female…'

Cathy singled out Lebanese immigrants blaming the 'fervour' behind their actions as a source of violence. She found it 'quite alarming' what she read in the paper. She related a story of violence told to her by a Lebanese tiler she had hired and went on to talk about the tiler's more violent interpretation of life, talking about the wife and kids and smacking them.

The participants above had a negative moral perception of an ethnic group which is variably labelled as Muslim, Arab, Lebanese or Middle-Eastern. They focus on interrelated topics of religion, violence and the treatment of women as something very different to the Australian way. Paul also mentioned Middle-Eastern people, but in a different context that includes Asians as well. He expressed concern that we have had 'a South-East Asian crime busting… section of the police force… centred on Cabramatta… [And] there is now talk of having to have a Middle-Eastern [one]'. Peter believed it is unfortunate that 'we have had to employ Asian police officers to get onto the language and the cultural basis… of the criminal within that society, and now the Middle-Eastern one …'

John spent six months working with a woman from India and concluded from a conversation he had with her that people of different cultural backgrounds have different moral outlooks that he can't always agree with. She told him that she believes it is acceptable to 'import' people into Australia to act as domestic servants on low salaries

because they would be better off than they would be in their own country. John's reaction was, 'I think well yeah, but it kind of reeks of slavery to me…'

In summary, all of the participants are concerned about what they see as different moral perspectives that immigrants bring into Australia. It challenges their sense of social harmony.

Perceptions of crime activity can be a useful indicator of how people comprehend social harmony as well as their own security. I asked the participants if they thought immigrants increase the crime rate or types of crime in Australia.

Peter didn't think the crime rates were any higher as a result of immigration. However, he did believe that in Cabramatta they turn their houses into fortresses to protect themselves against their own kind. He believed that in some immigrant cultures, if something is there, you can just take it.

Mary had 'a heightened awareness of crime'. She associated this with the role she thought 'drugs have played… with the Asian community.' She didn't feel however that this kind of crime had any impact on her. Susan also thought there was an increase of crime amongst some groups, and like Mary, associated it with 'the drug situation… in the ethnic population…'

Paul thought there was more crime in some immigrant groups. He conceded however, that only some immigrants 'are bad eggs' as you would find in any society. On this point, Paul expressed some desire for immigrant communities to desegregate and assimilate more into Australian culture because he felt congregation was responsible for creating the need for special police task forces.

Cathy said she did not have an opinion on the level of crime but she did express alarm over what she thought was the upbringing of some groups. She talked about cruel and sadistic male domination and associated this with a 'dominant feature' of hatred which she attributed not only to 'Lebanese rapes' but to people from other countries around Eastern-Europe. She associated terrorism with this form of hatred suggesting it is handed down from 'century to century'. It 'is happening in our own backyard and it is not being controlled and there is not really any way you can control it'.

John thought the media had a great deal to do with our perceptions of crime and Asian gangs but he associated crime as being 'more to do with overall economic functions and

stability, and how well people are off…' He added that he was more concerned that crime was tending to be 'much more violent'.

In summary, all of the participants were reluctant to suggest official crime rates were higher. Some blamed the media for such a perception. However, they all expressed concern to varying degrees about crime within immigrant communities. I would argue that they are distancing themselves from events that they do not experience first hand whilst still experiencing some uneasiness.

Because certain suburbs have been identified in the media as having certain types of problems related to immigrant groups, it seemed worthwhile to get the participants reactions to a proposition that multiculturalism may create suburbs with high concentrations of ethnic groups.

They all believed there was a tendency for people of a similar cultural background to congregate together in local areas. John and Paul felt it had nothing to do with government policy and the government need not be involved.

Mary gave an account of a time that she drove to Blacktown, and she described the experience as an eye-opener.

> I don't think I saw one Anglo-Saxon person… I could have been [downtown anywhere but Sydney]... I suppose living out there is cheaper. The supermarket had things specifically for that demographic… They have obviously set the supermarket for the needs of the people out there. The needs of people here are different.

Susan could understand the desire for people to congregate. However, she felt they were '[isolating] themselves by being different'. She distinguished between different groups by suggesting Asians 'tend to assimilate a little more easily than the Middle-East'.

Cathy thought people in high concentration areas should make some attempt to assimilate, believing language was an important key to this. She felt it was understandable that people would congregate to areas where they spoke the same language. However, she felt they should be compelled to learn their host country's language. This would help them learn more about their new country and remove the need for them to congregate.

Those participants who had no direct contact with areas of high concentration of ethnic groups tended to talk about them in terms of a need for people to assimilate. On the other hand, those who had some brief contact seemed to talk of them in an almost tourist like manner. They all exhibited a certain detachment from the potential realities of these areas.

I asked the participants to what degree they thought people who came to Australia should change their behaviour to be more like other Australians or be able to behave in accordance with their own cultural beliefs.

In general, no participant arbitrarily thought people from other cultures should fully assimilate. But they felt there were limits to what cultural practices should be tolerated. Peter believed any practice was acceptable as long as it did not 'interfere with other people.' Mary, Cathy and John all related acceptable behaviour to whether it observed Australian laws. But these pragmatic answers did not provide a feel for where they would personally draw a line as to what was acceptable.

I asked some participants about a hypothetical scenario based upon some facts reported in the press. I asked them what they thought about the rights of Muslims to build a mosque in a suburban area, and the rights of local residents who opposed such a development. Peter felt the residents were right to complain because the Muslims would 'be interfering with other people… It is alright in their own country.' Mary had heard of the debate and said, 'I wouldn't like it in my back yard.' She believed it would be alright in an area which had people of the same cultural background. Susan had heard of the debate on television and thought it was difficult to see both sides of the story. She thought they had a right 'to build their own religious community' and she wouldn't oppose it. Cathy thought the local resistance may have been based on being afraid of how Muslims had been portrayed as a race and religion in the media. She indicated she would have a similar fear. John thought it depended on whether any law was being broken or not.

Another specific scenario I asked some of them to comment on was whether female Muslim children should be permitted to wear their veil to school. Mary felt they should, believing it would be discrimination to do otherwise. Cathy also thought it was acceptable. Susan thought it would be inappropriate in school because it was not part of the uniform and did not conform to 'a certain code of appearance'. However, she said she 'wouldn't stop it in the streets. That's personal expression…'

I am unable to draw any specific conclusions from the answers related to the veil. There is however, a clear message from the answers to the building of the mosque. Regardless of the particular criteria given, each participant seemed reluctant to permit any activity that would encroach on their own lifestyle in their own space.

The perceptions the participants had of other cultures has been one that was mostly mediated by what they had read and heard second-hand. Apart from a few chance

encounters, they live a fairly isolated cultural existence in their own suburbs. This means that they have little direct agency with people of other cultures, which may explain their ambivalent feelings towards them.

Effect of media portrayals of other cultures

Because of the influence that the media may have on the way people think about multiculturalism, I asked the participants if they thought newspaper articles or television and radio shows played a part in how they thought about other cultures in Sydney.

Two participants claimed that the media had no affect on the way they thought but their interviews suggest otherwise. Peter said 'not now because I don't watch the news. I turn it off'. But then he said 'I get my news off the Internet and listen to the radio more.' Cathy thought it didn't influence her. But she admitted that because of her sheltered life on the North Shore, the media was the only way to get information about areas like 'Lakemba or Cabramatta or Marrickville'.

All of the other participants accepted that the media influenced how they thought. John mentioned the media portrayals of Iraq and September 11 and the effect that they had on his perception of Middle-Eastern people, even though he knew it was not an accurate portrayal. Paul thought media reports made him think a lot but he considers multiple sources and makes his own assessment. He was clearly influenced by them, because he referred to how annoyed he became about the need to create special police task forces. Susan agreed that they influenced her because she would otherwise be isolated from 'what is going on in the packed societies of some of the western and southern suburbs…'

In summary, all the participants were influenced by media reporting of news. This occurred notwithstanding the fact that they all believe such reports are inaccurate. Peter felt they 'focus on the negative side'. Mary said 'it is all sensationalism'. John summed up well what everyone else was saying. 'I guess I've a big mistrust of anything I see on TV, papers and everything else, and I know damned well you are getting a very biased view on it.'

Outlook towards accepting others into the country

The people I interviewed did not hold the extreme views expressed by people like Pauline Hanson, but they did resist unlimited immigration as I will illustrate below.

I asked the participants if they thought the Australian government should accept more or less migrants into Australia

Three participants believed we should permit more immigrants into Australia. Mary said 'we are in such a huge country that I think we are underpopulated'. She also thought that with the world getting so much bigger, we should be more open and accept more people. Peter was somewhat ambivalent saying he did not mind if they came 'as long as they try to fit in', but he was concerned about sustainability. Paul thought immigration 'was a good thing'. However, he was also concerned that it should be done slowly '[maintaining] economic stability and… [the] lifestyle we currently enjoy.'

Three participants did not want more immigrants and they gave concern for sustainability and lifestyle maintenance as reasons for not wanting them. Susan said, 'we have got a huge country but a hell of a lot of it is desert and our population can only sustain comfortably a number of people…' Cathy said, 'I wonder about the sustainability, of our existence. [Sydney's]… population is increasing and you just wonder… [about] services for that amount of population.' John linked sustainability to the enjoyment of his current lifestyle, and for that reason wanted to reduce immigration to Australia. He said,

> What's a good lifestyle?… Would more people in Australia make my life easier? I don't think so… The things that I like about Australia is that… there's relatively lots of space per person, even in Sydney… Do I want to live like they do in Hong Kong? Not particularly, they are very, very crushed together, and I do not like that...

With the exception of one person, all participants linked the number of immigrants in the available space with their enjoyment of a lifestyle.

When asked if the implementation of multiculturalism and immigration policy could have been done better, all the participants said it could have been. Mary said she would like the government to let her know that, 'there is a plan … towards multiculturalism. Not just give you bits and snippets… [but a] 20/20 of what they expect Australia to be.'

Peter thought policy should be changed to encourage immigrants to mix more with Australian society and avoid congregating into their own suburbs. He said, 'you want a homogenous society. You can't have a… society when you have places like Cabramatta where there is [sic] a hundred thousand of them ...' Susan had a very similar view,

> There should have been some policy where immigration said to people that if you want to come to Australia you have to assimilate to a certain extent… I am talking mainly about the Muslims … They should have been more restrictive… in how people were expected to live in our country and society.

Cathy also favoured tighter restrictions, wanting 'Australians' to remain the dominant population.

All of the above suggestions express a desire to return to some level of assimilating immigrants into the dominant Australian culture. In each case they link this to a desire to preserve their lifestyle in the Australian suburban space. John thought government policy was telling Anglo-Australians to change their lifestyle and he wanted to know why. I would suggest that the people I interviewed do not have a deep suspicion of immigration, but they would like to think that it is more controlled.

I asked the participants if they thought we should have a different approach to accepting European people than Asian people or people from the Middle-East. Three said we should not. Susan said she did not believe we should discriminate against any particular immigrant group, *but against them all*. She was concerned about all immigrants who appeared as different, particularly Arabic communities. Her suggestion was to link immigration policy with education policies to ensure that differences were eliminated amongst school children. She thought that Muslim girls wearing veils to school were 'keeping themselves different in the society… [they should] go to the schools, dress in the uniforms we dress in and not set them apart as being different'.

The other three participants thought we should treat different groups differently. Mary thought we should give preference to Europeans because they assimilate better than people from Asia. Cathy preferred that we not increase immigration levels in Middle-Eastern and Croatians groups because we are having trouble with them. John suggested something similar arguing that we are statistically less likely to have problems with people 'from America, England, [and] different parts of Europe'.

In Chapter 2, I argue that the government has taken an inconsistent approach toward the equitable treatment of cultural diversity. They exhibit a contradictory position between their hard-lined approach to refugees and the messages that they promote through multiculturalism. Because of this, I asked the participants what they thought about accepting *boat people* into Australia and how they thought they should be treated if they arrive.

Four participants believed boat people should not be accepted at all. Peter said, 'there are ways and means of getting into this country and these people try to circumvent it…' Mary and Cathy said something similar. John could 'see the other side of the coin… but, if you are going to have immigration laws… stick with it and people who don't abide by it you

have got to reject.' The other two participants were less direct in answering but expressed a need for caution.

Some of the participants were unsympathetic when asked how boat people should be treated if they managed to arrive on Australian soil. Peter thought, 'probably the way they treat them now.' Cathy remarked, 'we should [not] roll out the red carpet.' John thought that until you accept them as political refugees you have to hold them as you would a suspected criminal.

Even those who were sympathetic to the refugees' circumstances believed that caution should be used and they should be held in detention until they were *checked out*. But Mary thought the way they were being treated in detention was a 'bit harsh'. Paul said, 'they stick them on Nauru and that is a bit miserable… They could treat them better.' Susan felt the same way adding that, 'putting them behind barbed wire is not the way.'

The range of possible responses given above from people of similar socio-economic backgrounds would indicate that the government's messages have left many Anglo-Australians in a confused state when considering their position towards multiculturalism, immigration, refugees and other ethnic groups.

Self image - reflections

I asked no specific questions of the participants regarding racism. Several however, did reflect upon their own perception of their thoughts.

Peter made the point that the white Australia approach enabled the rest of the world to 'point a finger at Australia. [But] they will call us racist anyway… everybody's a racist, whether they say so or not…' It is my impression that Peter was talking about a type of racism that is associated with any form of difference, not just biological race. For example, he was of the opinion that when immigrants arrive in Australia they learn how to collect social welfare benefits and we are expected to accept that. This disturbed him because he thought we would not get the same treatment in their country of origin. This logic does not discriminate along biological lines; it is economic or political discrimination.

Cathy was also concerned about sounding racist. She thought she had a racist attitude towards morality and security because she wanted to ban people who cause trouble. But she had a moral dilemma because she also acknowledged the moral necessity to treat people as equal, which she believed multiculturalism was about.

Regardless of whether they expressed it in racist terms or not, all of the people interviewed had a dilemma similar to Cathy's. Their lives are essentially determined by the space in which they live. They usually only encounter a mediated form of cultural difference which is suggested to them by a third party such as the media, or indeed by my study, which I discuss further in my conclusion. They all accept the desirability of multiculturalism and cultural diversity. Despite this, they still value a degree of cultural homogeneity, which they believed could be attained through assimilation. In fact, what they sought was peaceful integration.

Frank Jones published statistical data in 1999 that asked questions similar to some I asked and his data is roughly consistent with my data. Overall, one of the propositions made in that study was, 'it is impossible for people who do not share (Australian) customs and traditions to become fully (Australian)' – 42 per cent of Australians agreed (Jones, F. 1999, p. 25). It also proposed that 'it is better (for society) if groups adapt and blend into the larger society (rather than maintain distinct traditions)' – 83 per cent agreed (1999, p. 25). These propositions would be consistent with what my study participants believed.

Chapter 5   Conclusion and discussion

In the chapters above, I examine how historical constructions of national identity have contributed to Australian nationalistic thinking. Australian governments have had a large role to play in this context. However, popular images have also circulated to construct unofficial meanings. I also examine the literature on the subject of white nationalist discourse and multiculturalism. Here I take a multidisciplinary look to discover the tensions that exist in how intellectuals have perceived and analysed nationalist discourse in Australia (cf. Morton 1999, p. 252).

I conclude from the literature that certain groups of people have been excluded from the analysis, hence my study. Anthropology has tended to distance itself from anthropology at home[18]. As a result, rich sources of data in Sydney on subjects of 'political and ethical significance' have been overlooked (Morton 1999, p. 254). I would argue that it is legitimate to conduct an anthropological study of nationalism and multiculturalism in the researcher's home territory. It is also legitimate to study a particular geo-socio-economic group of people within the larger community even though they are not an identifiable subculture (cf. Marcus 1990, p. 4).

My study is an example of anthropology at home that is intended to broaden our understanding of how multiculturalism is being accommodated in Australia. It does this by giving a voice to the broader social relationships in an otherwise ignored group of people (cf. Marcus 1990, pp. 8, 11). Whilst I refer to my fieldwork as ethnography, I actually used a structured interview technique as an alternative methodology to traditional anthropological method[19] (cf. Morton 1999, p. 251). Rather than studying *the other*, I chose to study what Morton describes as a 'study of *self-other relationships*' (1999, p. 244 emphasis in original).

The people I interviewed in the insular setting of the Northern Beaches of Sydney appeared to have no notable agency in their social relationships with other ethnic groups.

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[18] Anthropology at home is a term used to describe ethnographic studies undertaken in the locality of the researcher's home.

[19] The traditional anthropological method is participant observation through prolonged immersion in the field away from home.

The interviews suggest that they only had a visual and social account of ethnic people within their locality. This suggests an axiomatic paradigm, a juxtaposition of space, cultural site and agency in what we are trying to understand of their experience.

One clear message came from my study. The people I interviewed were motivated by a desire to preserve their way of life. They spoke in positive terms about their encounter with multiculturalism when they did not encounter diversity in their own neighbourhood. In these circumstances, they did not perceive their life style as being threatened. However, their total experience drew meaning from both local and national contexts (cf. Morton 1999, p. 255). In the local context, their experience was often a folkloric experience of food, dance and art. In some cases, even that experience was sparse. In this context, they did not think much about multiculturalism and immigration. When asked to comment on encounters in their everyday life, they spoke in egalitarian terms suggesting a desire to let other cultures get on with their own lives. This expression was made with the qualification that it did not interfere with the lifestyles that they enjoyed in their culturally isolated suburbs. This was one view that they had of multiculturalism, as a positive expression of equality.

This view contrasted with their responses to questions regarding immigrants in other parts of Sydney. Their knowledge and thoughts regarding these people was mostly subliminal. It only came to mind when triggered by the occasional flash of information that they encounter in the media. My research and the questions that I asked extended that consciousness to make them think more about topics they had only considered in a detached manner. In that regard, I became a part of the self-other relationship that I was examining (cf. Marcus 1990; cf. Morton 1999). I must stress that some of the feelings they expressed regarding multiculturalism and immigrants were mediated by my questions combined with what they had previously learnt from the media. I would argue that their responses are valid because they exposed an articulation of how their thinking would respond to media stimulation. However, it did construct in their minds a chequered picture of other cultures. I believe this incomplete picture motivated them to use nationalist discourse when asked to talk about events they did not experience personally, such as perceived crime and violence in other suburbs of Sydney. Nationalist discourse provided them with an explanation that made sense out of something they found difficult to comprehend. It provided a convenient context in which to consider incomplete knowledge that made them uncomfortable. In other words, political understandings serve a purpose in the national and global context when individual agency is limited. This was not true in the local setting when their sense of control over lifestyle was relatively intact.

It is in the wider context that the participants expressed a contradictory desire. Their perception of multiculturalism was of a policy that welcomed people in cultural diversity. But they also felt multiculturalism should ensure social harmony by asking immigrants to assimilate with Australian culture at some level. Their rationale was not unlike the 1960s integration policy and the responses that it created (cf. de Lepervanche 1984, pp. 110-2).

In Chapter 1, I discuss Ang's theory that the cultural anxiety exhibited by whites expresses a concern for the spatial control of territory. She argues that Australia cannot continue to live in fear and that 'the alignment of race and space… will have to be disarticulated' (Ang 1999, p. 200). My study would indicate that this suggestion is a long way from becoming a reality. Ang's emphasis is on national discourse whereas my study focused on a very select area. My data suggests that people think both nationally and locally depending on the context. de Lepervanche argues that 'ethnicity and race are criteria *some* Australians use to evaluate others socially in *some* circumstances' depending on different ethnic and class population mixes (1984, p. 32 emphasis in original). I would expand this idea to include individuals embracing both national and local circumstances. Ang's suggestion is problematic. How do you disarticulate race from space when people shift from the local to the national? What would occur if Anglo-Australians in culturally isolated areas did engage actively with other cultures in a social relationship that increased their understanding of a shared reality? Inter-ethnic clashes in suburbs where this is already occurring such as Cabramatta and Lakemba would suggest that it is unlikely that shared social circumstances would lead naturally to shared values in the short term. It is only likely to contribute to the existence of racism.

Perhaps an emphasis on culture and race has caused previous studies of multiculturalism to see Australians as immutable fixed identities. Hage describes the façade of tolerance that some Anglo-Australians exhibit and the outright racist discourse that others exhibit but he does not describe the sources of political agency that motivate conflict.

An objective of this paper was to discover some of the ways that the target audience had responded to the politics of a rapidly changing culture and society in an era of globalisation. What I discovered was that to ask people to accept cultural diversity as a moral principle is one thing. Asking them to accept cultural diversity as a lived experience may be quite another thing if it involves conflict. My questions challenged their thoughts on these subjects and left them in a confused state, forcing them to consider how they felt when they encountered the ethnic other.

A real moral dilemma arises from the argument surrounding different value systems. It is beyond the scope of this paper to examine this dimension. However, the participants in my study expressed a great deal of concern over perceived different value systems. Maybe future studies should focus on the diversity and accommodation of different value systems rather than rework discourses of racism that inevitably arise from state sponsored ideologies of accommodating cultural difference. We need to discover what moral dimensions frame Anglo-Australian attitudes towards others in the wider sphere of historical and emerging social relationships.

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